

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary

**A Case Analysis of the Foundational Ministry
Principles of Rev. Jerry Falwell from 1956-1966**

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A⁺

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A Case Analysis of the Foundational Ministry

Principles of Rev. Jerry Falwell from 1956-1966

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This research examines principles employed by Dr. Jerry Lamond Falwell between 1956 and 1966, the early developmental stages of his church, Thomas Road Baptist Church (TRBC). The foundation built during these formative years facilitated precipitous growth within the church plant for decades, allowing TRBC to become one of America's most prominent mega-churches and to found Liberty University, the world's largest evangelical university.

As church plants are more likely to fail than to succeed, this research aimed to investigate key characteristics of a church planter who was highly successful, which can be replicated. Using primarily twenty-three interviews of TRBC congregants from these years, the writer qualitatively analyzed findings to report the principles Falwell employed. This research produced a grounded theory illustrating the principles a pastor, church planter, or leader should demonstrate to create synergy between themselves and their followers.

“The fruit of a Christian is another Christian.

The fruit of a church is another church.”

~ Dr. Jerry Falwell, 1964 ~

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Abbreviations

BBC	<i>Baptist Bible College</i>
BBF	<i>Baptist Bible Fellowship</i>
Elim Home	<i>Elim Home for Alcohol and Drug Addicted Men</i>
LU	<i>Liberty University—the institution’s name has changed from Lynchburg Baptist College or Liberty Baptist College (LBC)</i>
OTGH	<i>Old Time Gospel Hour</i>
PABC	<i>Park Avenue Baptist Church</i>
PTL	<i>Praise The Lord or People That Love—Television Ministry of Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker from 1974–1989.</i>
SBC	<i>Southern Baptist Convention</i>
TTU	<i>Tennessee Temple University</i>
TRBC	<i>Thomas Road Baptist Church</i>

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Finally, I submit this project as an act of worship, with thanksgiving to God for the gift of transformation through a new life offered because of Christ. God has provided the energy, strength, and direction to endure. My constant prayer is always to be able to say, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful” (2 Tim 4:7 NLT).

Iain Lyttle

Chapter 1

Introduction

Jerry Falwell was one of the most influential church planters of the twentieth century. Falwell successfully planted one of the few mega-churches in a small rural town. Today, the church he planted, ranks the seventh largest Southern Baptist Church in the country, with an average attendance of 13,500.¹ Additionally, Thomas Road Baptist Church (TRBC) birthed the seventh largest university in the United States, Liberty University (LU),² with enrollment topping 100,000.³ This research analysis reveals principles employed by Falwell during the foundational decade from 1956–1966, which created a foundation for exponential growth. Based on the primary perceptions of foundational church members, this examination of characteristics employed by Falwell in the planting of TRBC gives implications for current church planters who wish to create a significant impact in their church, community and country.

Falwell transformed Lynchburg, a city located in central Virginia with an colorful past, which one typically would not associate with spiritual stalwarts. One eccentric evangelist Lorenzo Dow going as far as saying, “Lynchburg, where I spoke in the open air, in what I

¹ Thom Rainer, *2013 Update: Largest Churches in the Southern Baptist Convention*. Updated August 3, 2013. Accessed December 8, 2013. <http://thomrainer.com/2013/08/03/2013-update-largest-churches-in-the-southern-baptist-convention>.

² Liberty University, “Liberty Ranks No. 7 in Nation for Enrollment,” *Liberty University News Service* (May 25, 2012). Accessed December 8, 2013., <http://liberty.edu/news/?PID=18495&MID=56085>.

³ Liberty University, “Liberty University Quick Facts,” accessed April 13, 2014, <https://www.liberty.edu/aboutliberty/?PID=6925>.

conceived to be the seat of Satan’s kingdom.”⁴ He added, “Lynchburg was a deadly place for the worship of God.”⁵ Undoubtedly this has since changed, in 2013, Barna Research listed Lynchburg as the eighth most “Bible-minded” city in America.⁶ This was superseded in 2014, when the American Bible Society, ranked Lynchburg as the third most “Bible-minded” city.⁷ The researcher desires to understand how Falwell and TRBC, the largest church and one of the largest employers in the city,⁸ may be a primary catalyst for the a change in religious-orientation.

Readers of the will receive a overview of the Life of Jerry Falwell, then gain an overview of an integrated system of spiritual disciplines focused on salvation, tenacious leadership focused on momentum, and relational ministry focused on serving others. The project concludes with a summary showing the interconnecting of these three primary aspects, which produce an exponential opportunity to transform lives. The preceding overarching principles and focuses will help church planters understand the three primary areas required to create synergy between pastor and parishioner in a young church. As each area unites it results in greater results for the Kingdom of God.

⁴ Lorenzo Dow and Peggy Dow, *The Life, Travels, Labors, and Writings of Lorenzo Dow: Including His Singular and Erratic Wanderings in Europe and America: To Which is Added His Chain Journey from Babylon to Jerusalem; Dialogue Between Curious and Singular; Hints on the Fulfillment Of Prophecy, Etc., Etc., and the Vicissitudes, or, Journey of Life, and Supplementary Reflections by Peggy Dow* (New York: R. Worthington, 1881), 136. In 1804, Lorenzo Dow passed through Lynchburg, noting the lack of churches. Later he gave five hundred dollars he raised to building a church.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 141.

⁶ Barna: Cities, “America’s Most (and Least) Bible-Minded Cities,” accessed February 9, 2013, <http://cities.barna.org/americas-most-and-least-bible-minded-cities/>.

⁷ American Bible Society, “The Most (and Least) Bible-Minded Cities in America,” accessed February 9, 2013, <http://www.americanBible.org/features/americas-most-Bible-minded-cities>.

⁸ Thomas Road Baptist Church continues to be number six in the largest Southern Baptist Convention, in America. The Southern Baptist Convention is the largest Protestant denomination in the world. Thom Rainer, “Largest Churches in the SBC” (January 26, 2013); accessed February 4, 2013, <http://thomrainer.com/2013/01/26/largest-churches-in-the-southern-baptist-convention/#.URaa-eh20lQ>.

Statement of the Problem

The research question this project asks is, what can and should a church planter learn from Falwell, a master church planter? C. Peter Wagner argues, “the single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches.”⁹ Wagner contends that new churches are more effective in evangelism than existing ones, because they bring vitality and life. Additionally, participants have a vested interest and a desire to make their endeavor succeed. As a result, the pastors typically grow their parishioners in the spiritual disciplines, push harder with zealous leadership, and connect everyone they can through relational ministry—not only out of respect to others and duty, but it should be a pastor’s calling and passion.

Although we see the value of church planters, there is a far-from perfect track record for newly planted churches. A statistic frequently discussed in church planting books, blogs, and discussions is that anywhere from 50¹⁰ to 80¹¹ percent of all church plants fail within the first five years of being planted; a further 80 percent may fail in the following five years. Very few church plants in history have made such a lasting impact. Falwell did what thousands of other pastors do every week; however, God chose Falwell to grow one of the largest churches in the country and to begin one of largest universities in the world. Falwell, as a subject who warrants additional research and currently a lack of qualitative research exists in the area of Falwell and the foundational years of TRBC. These perspectives represent a source never before researched.

⁹ C. Peter Wagner is the Donald McGavran Chair of Missions and Church Growth, Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990), 11.

¹⁰ Carl George, “Perspective on Winning a Continent,” in *How to Plant a Church Syllabus* (Pasadena, CA: Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth, 1985), 5-9.

¹¹ James Emery White, *Why New Churches Fail*, accessed December 8, 2013, http://enrichmentjournal.org/200004/022_why_new_chuches_fail.cfm.

offering additional insights into the life characteristics and decisions of Falwell, dictated the impact of one of the most replicable church planters in history.

Throughout the project when stating “foundational years,” the researcher is referring to the early years of TRBC. The researcher determined the foundational years,, to be the first decade of the church, from 1956-1966. Members of the church or individual who were closely aligned with Pastor Falwell during this period were of the greatest importance to the research. They were addressed as the “foundational members,” “participants,” or “interviewees.” These members include the charter members and anyone who joined TRBC within the first decade of the church plant. After 1966, the researcher believes that Falwell and TRBC were firmly established in the Christian community; therefore, had less involvement with the pioneering effort of the ministry and were not included in the study.

Value of Research

This research will cover some of what Falwell did to create a healthy system of growth. Elmer Towns writes, “Men use a different formula in building each church. Yet, many patterns are similar because certain timeless principles transcend space and culture.”¹² This project hones in on the specific principles that a church planter can and should implement in order to help grow their own church.

Jerry Falwell passed into eternity on May 15, 2007. Although he had the opportunity to write and co-write a number of biographical works based on the founding of TRBC, this study approached the founding of the church from a differing perspective. The researcher analyzed the foundational members’ perceptions, many of whom had significant influence on the early years

¹² Elmer L. Towns, *Getting A Church Started*, 3rd ed. (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty University School of LifeLong Learning, 1993), 6.

of the church. As members of the congregation, their accounts are valuable, because the actions and results seen often vary in interpretation from what was projected by leadership. The perspectives and information offered in this research lend insights into the life of the church from the perspective of laity with a high level of involvement.

One reason to conduct this research is physiological; only a limited number of TRBC's foundational members are still alive. Although most are aged, most still recall the highlights of starting at TRBC in their teens through their early thirties. This research helped to preserve the oral histories, primarily based on an interpretation of first-hand biographical data. As a result of his positions on the staff at TRBC, the researcher was able to gain access to individuals not generally willing to share with strangers. The researcher selected participants for this study, who watched, listened, co-labored, or supported Falwell over the course of half a century. They followed him before anyone else followed him. No other study includes participants with as much early first-hand-knowledge on the subject being researched. Jonathan Falwell, the current senior pastor of TRBC and son of the founder, Jerry Falwell, granted the researcher permission for the study to be conducted.

Theoretical Basis for the Project

The research finds its roots in qualitative biographical and phenomenological study through exploration of the interpretation of events in the lives of the participants. The method of qualitative analysis followed the research path of grounded theory study. Creswell notes that the distinction between traditional phenomenological research and the centerpiece of grounded theory is the “development of regeneration of a theory closely related to the context of the

phenomenon being studied.”¹³ This inductive form of research included:

creating and organizing files of data; reading through texts, making margin notes, forming initial codes; engaging in axial coding, casual condition, context, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences; followed up by engaging in open coding—categories properties, dimensionalize properties; ultimately engaging in select coding and development of stories, and developing a conditional matrix; resulting in presenting a visual model or theory.¹⁴

The themes and patterns, developed during the interviews, analyzed by to find the common experiences of participants, the goal being to capture as accurately as possible the participant’s perceptions of the foundational years of TRBC and the foundational principles of its pastor. The foundational members studied amassed over one thousand combined years of primary observed history.

Statement of Methodology

The research method combined in-person and phone interviews from foundational members, the researcher’s personal observations, and adds archival materials to support common themes from participants. The project falls within the realm of a qualitative analysis, relying significantly on narrative collections by twenty-three members during the foundational years of TRBC. Once collected, the researcher indexed and notated behavioral themes and patterns Falwell portrayed during these years, according to information gleaned from the participants’ interviews.

The researcher implemented the use of research software, developed by a team at UCLA

¹³ John Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998), 56.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 148-49.

called *Dedoose*,¹⁵ to correlate and extract the data from transcribed interviews.¹⁶ When this project refers to “the documents,” it is referencing the text of the twenty-three transcribed personal interviews. Documents are the core resource data upon which the other study is conducted. Excerpts are the section of a document that contains the important data about research questions—much of the analyses focuses on the content of the excerpts. Establishing the common themes and concepts in the excerpts, the researcher applied the code system, which indexed like-statements. Codes are then used to label the emphasis and meanings found in the documents.

The research interprets the key characteristics of Falwell and his leadership of TRBC. The researcher understands that synergy was created between the pastor and his congregation to enact such an influence. This synergy of leadership style and personality, connected with the people and developed into works of a relational ministry, an emphasis of spiritual growth, and a desire for transformation emerges as central focuses.

The collection of the research was achieved through the use of semi-structured interviews (Appendix F), with each participant involved during the early years of TRBC. Additional insights were also offered from those who have knowledge of the early years. Where possible, interviews were conducted face-to-face, while others were done through telephone interviews. Although a website trbcsurvey.com and printed version of the interview was made available to each participant, none of those interviewed chose either method. Ultimately, the participants’

¹⁵ This study will help to understand how he created a church, which thrived despite the obstacles that were present.

¹⁶ *Dedoose: Dedoose: Great Research Made Easy*, “About Us: Qualitative Research and Mixed Methods Research Using *Dedoose*”; accessed December 8, 2013, <http://www.dedoose.com/AboutUs>. *Dedoose* was conceived, designed, and developed by Eli Lieber, Ph.D., a research psychologist, and Thomas S. Weisner, Ph.D., a professor of anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in the Department of Anthropology and the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences.

unfamiliarity with web-based resources caused them not to choose a digital method. The researcher conducted almost thirty interviews; however, only a portion fit within the established constraints of the foundational years of the church, from 1956-1966. Ultimately, the excerpts of twenty-three interviews of foundational members were used.

The interviews were semi-structured with thirty-two potential questions (Appendix F). Frequently, the participants covered the answers through discussion without the need to ask each question. The quantity of questions allowed the researcher to illicit participant interaction if they could not easily recollect events, or were attempting to give simple “yes” or “no” answers. The loosely structured interview style common on qualitative analysis, allowed the interviewee to determine much of the direction of the conversation. Later the researcher could deduce core concepts from interview content and gain insight into the primary influences and important factors.

Interviews were designed to take about forty-five minutes online. However, on multiple occasions, the interviews lasted well over an hour as member’s recounted funny stories and anecdotes from their recollections of Falwell. All the participants understood that the purpose of the research was to offer a resource to church planters, offering proven principles based on the life of Jerry Falwell and TRBC, to be implemented in their own churches *Dedoose* facilitated in the qualitative research by showing the extraction of the statistical data from within the transcriptions of the interviews. By noting patterns in the interviews, which reflect thinking, perceptions, memories, action words, and statements of the foundational members, analyses could begin. The researcher had to cluster similar terms, as participants did not use exact wording to describe their perceptions. These perception clusters are the coding data. Textual

analysis and statistical methods were both employed to interpret responses and determine the foundational ministry principles of Falwell.

Coding, or indexing, is relevant, because repetition frequently if not explicitly tells of the importance of emphasis given.¹⁷ A lot of additional effort was given to the interconnectedness of concepts in the coding. The initial codes developed (Appendix G) are considered a priori candidate codes, revealing the raw coding with no additional details applied. Codes are initially applied, then evaluated and compared to other codes, and ultimately, the researcher clustered these into emergent codes.

A parent code or overarching principle is the result of the qualitative clustering of data. The process followed separating similar from dissimilar codes. Ultimately, the codes fell into three major categories: traits of spiritual disciplines, leadership, and ministry personality. Through reinvestigating the data with the inclusion of code presence, co-application, and co-occurrence charts (Figures B-E), the parent code or overarching principles were established by the researcher. Coding was then categorized into as few parent codes as possible. Parent codes or overarching principles show the bones or structure of the study, and the child codes add the skin on the bones of the study.

The researcher employed Cohens Kappa coefficient against each excerpt to test the inter-rater reliability within *Dedoose*. This testing gave credence to the applied excerpting codes and offers greater reliability to the code applications and the interpretation of the codes. The codes rated was an 8.6 on excerpts tested, determining the probability of agreement as statistically sound, specifically in the upper levels of “good” for low-stakes qualitative testing.

¹⁷ Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis* (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 57.

Initially, close to one hundred codes were overlaid with the data totaling over one thousand codes. Each code was tied to one specific excerpt from the seven hundred, which were taken from interviews. Codes were then clustered into similar concepts, bringing the number of codes down to seventy-nine.

The presented principles rise out of situations, actions, and consequences rather than the antecedent conditions. The use of data-collection methods and data-analysis methods¹⁸ and the concluding merger of the forms of research, as proposed by Creswell in 1998 represent a case study and narrative inquiry.¹⁹

The first chart necessary for interpretation was the code presence chart (Appendix B). The researcher used this to determine the usable data by limiting the study to the excerpt coding referenced by at least 33 percent of the participants. This removed nineteen codes referenced by less than one third of participants. The second step was determining what the primary data of the project was by removing any excerpt not appearing at least fifteen times throughout the research. These steps resulted in the removal of around 50 percent of the coding data from this research. The researcher believes that both of these steps ensure that only predominant qualitative data was assessed from which characteristics of principal importance were determined.²⁰

The code application chart (Appendix C) has been organized under the titles as shown in the member research. Codes have then been organized from the highest application count to the

¹⁸ Linda Dale Bloomberg and Marie Volpe, *Completing Your Qualitative Dissertation: A Roadmap from Beginning to End* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications 2012), 10.

¹⁹ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007), 10.

²⁰ For more detailed analysis of the coding datasets, review Code Presence Report (Appendix B) and Code Application Report (Appendix C). Code presence (Appendix B) represents the determining of the codes of importance to the majority of the interviewees. Code Application (Appendix C) represents the number topics referenced most frequently across the study, including multiple references by the same interviewee.

lowest value. This code-presence chart (Appendix B) reveals how excerpts have been indexed. Codes have then been organized from the highest to the lowest frequencies and clustered into researcher parent codes. The code-presence data was used to determine the order of items in each growth circle. In other words, where the majority of members mentioned similar themes, the item was given higher priority than others.

The third crucial element to the interpretation is the code co-occurrence chart (Appendix D) which shows where interrelated codes are present. This was especially helpful in determining the interconnected codes from which the parent codes or the three overarching principles of the research project as well as the principle focuses of each category.

The fourth element, which was of secondary importance to the research phase, was the code-weight statistic chart (Appendix E). This chart shows which of the excerpts received greater emphasis by the participants. Applied to each of the more than one thousand codes in the data was a one-through-five rating scale. A rating of “one” reflected that the interviewee notated a strong negative emotion or description toward the topic in the excerpt; a “two” was a somewhat-negative emotion or description; a rating of “three” was determined as average or a not-expounded-upon description of the item; a “four” reflected a somewhat fairly emphatic response to an excerpt; and a rating of “five” reflected a strong emphasis to that particular quote.

Once the researcher determined the primary codes, the focus moved to grouping codes into clusters. The three emerging parent codes or overarching principles were spiritual disciplines, tenacious leadership, and relational ministry. Each of the parent codes subdivides that section of the research and helps readers grasp a complex structure in a broader context. These parent codes were created by the researcher as understood from the co-occurrence of participants’ data.

Statement of Scope and Limitations

A limitation of this study is the bias of many of the foundational members. Many or most of those interviewed are life-long family, friends, and admirers of Falwell; therefore, their transparency or willingness to share negative comments could be limited. All forms of biographical research have the potential to fall victim to “blurring the lines between fact and fiction.”²¹ This reality requires a high level of skepticism during analysis, along with a balanced view of the historical and contextual life of the individual being researched. One author contends, “His most devout followers think of him as a great man of vision who can do or say no wrong—to the point, I contend, where he can do and say anything he wants.”²² A closely connected limitation is a spectrum of demographics represented in the research. Almost everyone who participated in the study was elderly, due to the church’s founding being in the mid-fifties. Additionally, since TRBC did not have much ethnic diversity, opinions from one ethnic group may lead to some limitations in applying principles learned to all ages, ethnicities, and nationalities.

The Institutional Review Board Waiver (see page 148) from Liberty University granted the researcher permission to name participants for the study. However, the researcher determined for privacy purposes to use a numerical pseudonym. This protects each person surveyed and allows the researcher to use any negative opinions or contrarian quotations without bringing embarrassment to participants.

Falwell had a vivacious personality and sharp wit, traits not always duplicable.

²¹ Creswell, *Research Design*, 50.

²² Perry Deane Young, *God Bullies: Native Reflections on Preachers and Politics* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1982), 204.

Additional limitations would be the transference of principles and characteristics from Falwell to the average church planter. Some church planters will need to compensate for the lack of these characteristics by complementary staffing choices or focusing on their other talents or gifts.

Review of the Literature

Much has been written on the founding of TRBC, as well as biographical and autobiographical works on Jerry Falwell, one of the most influential pastors of the past century. Elmer L. Towns contributes books dealing with the founding of Thomas Road, which contain chapters about TRBC, including *The Ten Largest Sunday Schools and What Makes Them Grow* and *America's Fastest Growing Churches*. Towns and Falwell co-wrote *Capturing a Town for Christ*. This book detailed the methods employed by Falwell in the early years of the church.²³

Another useful resource, which Liberty University has made available to the public via the Jerry Falwell Library website, are the oral archives, which include a couple of early church members, Harold Knowles and Jim Moon, along with other nonmembers, like Jack Dinsbeer detailing their recollection of events.²⁴

A number of authors have written in clear opposition to the impact Falwell has made on Lynchburg and the world. The first of these would be *Jerry Falwell: An Unauthorized Profile* by William R. Goodman Jr. and James J. H. Price. This book attempts to degrade anything Falwell did or even considered. John Killinger's *The Other Preacher: My Life Across Town from Jerry Falwell* is a book by a local minister, whose disdain for the influential Falwell is palpable.

²³ Elmer L. Towns, *The Ten Largest Sunday Schools, and What Makes Them Grow*, (Grand Rapids: Baker House Publishing, 1969); idem, Elmer Towns, *America's Fastest Growing Churches* (Nashville: Impact Books, 1972); and Elmer L. Towns and Jerry Falwell, *Capturing a Town for Christ* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1973).

²⁴ Harold Knowles, *Liberty University Oral History Project*, Liberty University Digital Commons, Recorded April 4, 2010, accessed January 27, 2011, http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/ohp_knowles_h/.

Ultimately, this book accuses Falwell of everything one could think of, including insinuating murder. Amongst these, one can also find *God Bullies: Native Reflections on Preachers and Politics*, *The Moral Majority: Right or Wrong?* from the early 1980s. These works seem to blend into a voice of criticism of Falwell, based on differing religious and political points of view.²⁵

In addition to the vitriolic biographers, many focused on the positive in Falwell. These included: Gerald Strober and Ruth Tomczak's *Jerry Falwell: Aflame for God* in 1979; and Dinesh D'Souza's *Falwell: Before The Millennium*. Under this category would fall Jerry Falwell's autobiography, *Falwell: An Autobiography*, updated in 1997; the fiftieth anniversary picture and storybook, *An Incredible Journey: Thomas Road Baptist Church and 50 Years of Miracles*; and Macel Falwell also penned *Jerry Falwell: His Life His Legacy*.²⁶

A number of recent biographical pieces have come out. These books frequently are released around an election, due to Falwell's importance in stimulating the religious conservatives to vote. Reporter Michael Sean Winters wrote *God's Right Hand: How Jerry Falwell Made God a Republican and Baptized the American Right*. His book emphasizes the shift in the Republican Party as a result of the influence of Falwell and the religious right. Additionally, Matthew Avery Sutton took a historical perspective of Falwell's life in *Jerry Falwell and the Rise of the Religious Right: A Brief History with Documents*. This includes some early source documents, which are not covered in many places. William Martin wrote *With God*

²⁵ William R. Goodman Jr. and James J. H. Price, *Jerry Falwell: An Unauthorized Profile* (Lynchburg, VA: Paris and Associates, 1981); John Killinger, *The Other Preacher: My Life Across Town from Jerry Falwell* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2009); and Young, *God Bullies*, from the early 1980s.

²⁶ Gerald Strober and Ruth Tomczak, *Jerry Falwell: Aflame for God* ((Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1979); Dinesh D'Souza, *Falwell: Before The Millennium: A Critical Biography* (Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1984); Jerry Falwell, *Falwell: An Autobiography* (republished from *Strength for the Journey*) (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty House Publishers, 1997); and the 50th anniversary picture and storybook, *An Incredible Journey: Thomas Road Baptist Church and 50 Years of Miracles* (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty University, 2006); and Macel

on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America. This is more of a broad book, as only part of it pertaining to Falwell and the Moral Majority.²⁷

David Hirschman, the Associate Dean for Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote one additional dissertation of note. This dissertation, “An Examination of the Significant Factors Motivating Early Liberty University Ministerial Graduates to Envision and Pursue Ambitious Ministry Opportunities” focused on the leadership principles, which Falwell and other members of the early teaching faculty at Lynchburg Baptist College (later Liberty University) imparted to students to help them achieve greater things for God.²⁸

The researcher believes the correlations offered from Paul’s teaching provided additional biblical perspective to this study. Throughout the study, correlations are drawn between Falwell and the Apostle Paul, a prolific church planter. The biblical record does not inform readers of the number of churches Paul planted; however, the New Testament shows he spoke in Pisidia where people were converted.²⁹ Thereafter, Paul preaches in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch,³⁰ returning to appoint elders to lead these fledgling churches.³¹ In Troas Paul received a vision to go

Falwell, *Jerry Falwell: His Life His Legacy* (New York: Howard Books, 2008).

²⁷ Michael Sean Winters, *God’s Right Hand: How Jerry Falwell Made God a Republican and Baptized the American Right* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 2012); Matthew Avery Sutton, *Jerry Falwell and the Rise of the Religious Right: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2013); and William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1997).

²⁸ David Hirschman, “An Examination of the Significant Factors Motivating Early Liberty University Ministerial Graduates to Envision and Pursue Ambitious Ministry Opportunities” (D.Min. diss., Liberty University, 2010).

²⁹ Acts 13:14-50. Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the New King James Version

³⁰ Acts 13:51-14:5.

³¹ Acts 14:21-23.

Macedonia, located in modern day Greece.³² In Philippi, the first convert was the businesswoman, Lydia, whose entire household was saved and baptized.³³ He proceeded to begin congregations in Thessalonica,³⁴ Berea,³⁵ then Athens.³⁶ Later, with Pricilla and Aquila, he founded the church in Corinth.³⁷ Leaving Greece, Paul travelled with Pricilla and Aquila, making a brief stop in Ephesus, on his way to Jerusalem. Later, Paul returned to Ephesus for an extended period.³⁸ While there for two-to-three years,³⁹ he taught daily in the School of Tyrannus.⁴⁰ Many scholars believe that during this period he and his students helped to plant churches in Colossae, Hieropolis, Laodicea, (Ninty miles east of Ephesus in the Lycus Valley).⁴¹ Within the same distance towards the north he very likely started the churches of Pergamum, Philadelphia, Sardis, Smyrna, and Thyatira.⁴² The Book of Acts recounts, “so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.”⁴³

³² Acts 16:6-10

³³ Acts 16:11-40.

³⁴ Acts 17:1-9.

³⁵ Acts 17:10-14.

³⁶ Acts 17:15-34.

³⁷ Acts 18:1-18.

³⁸ Acts 19:1-12.

³⁹ Frank Leslie Cross,, and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 2005), 553.

⁴⁰ Acts 19:9.

⁴¹ H. L Willmington, *Willmington's Guide to the Bible* (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1995), 474.

⁴² P. W. L. Walker, *In the Steps of Saint Paul: An Illustrated Guide to Paul's Journeys*. (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2008), 147.

⁴³ Acts 19:10.

Paul outlines his plan for church planting in Romans, “So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation.”⁴⁴ In this letter to one of his closest confidants and trainees, Timothy, Paul outlines principles that pastors and church planters must follow,

“ . . . be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity . . . give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you . . . Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”⁴⁵

In this passage, Paul encouraged Timothy to teach his parishioners by example, with faith and spiritual depth, and to relate in love through actions, constantly striving for integrity. Then he encourages Timothy to pursue spiritual depth with the tenacity of his entire being. Paul instructs Timothy to use the God given gifts he has to developing the spiritual lives of others; ultimately, Paul’s goal was to see spiritual transformation in himself and everyone who heeded his teaching.

Throughout the research, biblical correlations are drawn from the book of Philippians. The book of Philippians was a prison epistle written to encourage the church at Philippi, which Paul had planted a number of years earlier. When requested, Falwell would autograph Bibles with his life verse, Philippians 1:6. The interpretation of this study is attempting to offer a holistic view of spiritual disciplines, tenacious leadership and relational ministry which to exponentially transforming lives during the foundational years of one church, establishing one of

⁴⁴ Romans 15:19-20.

⁴⁵ 1 Timothy 4:12-16.

the greatest global impacts on the past two millennia of Christendom.⁴⁶

Because interpreting someone's actions often is tied to where someone is coming from, the next section provides readers with a brief biography of highlights from Falwell's early life and major transitional points of interest in one young man's rise to prominence from the small industrial town of Lynchburg, Virginia. The researcher encourages church planters to glean from Falwell's expertise and allow themselves to become better church planters as a result. To understand the characteristics and traits of a church planter, it is helpful to examine his background. In the coming chapters, the researcher will guide a church planter through a biographical overview of Falwell's life. The researcher believes that environmental forces in his upbringing influenced many of the traits and personality characteristics displayed by Falwell. To understand Falwell, it is important to understand where he came from, the transformed life, which led to exponential transformation in tens-of-thousands, if not millions of lives.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Rod Dempsey was quoted as stating to New Members of Thomas Road Baptist Church in the Connect Class, in 2010, that they were joining a church that would more than likely go down in church history as one of the most effective for the Kingdom. His contention was that TRBC would eventually be viewed as an epoch in church history.

⁴⁷ Don Cusic, *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Christian Music: Pop, Rock, and Worship* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press, 2010), 434; and Nielsen ratings stated in November, 1980, Falwell's "Old Time Gospel Hour" had 1.21 million viewers.

Chapter 2

A Biographical Overview of Jerry Falwell

Patriarchal Influence—Early Years (1933–1952)

Lynchburg, Virginia, and the surrounding area has been called home by many of the Falwell family, dating as far back as the 1600s. The Falwells were among the first to pioneer this region of the United States.¹ With many buried in cemeteries or in the hills around Lynchburg, a deep Falwell history is known by many in Lynchburg. Until the spiritual rebirth and redirection of Jerry Falwell, this was often not a very positive history.

On August 11, 1933, Jerry and his twin brother, Gene, were born to Carey and Helen Falwell. They had been born into a long line of successful entrepreneurial businessmen. At various times, his father owned a bus line, gas stations, rental properties, and a dance hall.² During the Great Depression, Jerry's father Carey had been a bootleg alcohol distributor, transporting much of the illegal alcohol in and around Lynchburg. Helen, Falwell's mother was a very religious woman and attempted to instill her Christian values in the children. The Falwell family had a harsh reputation in Lynchburg. A couple of years before Jerry's birth, his father Carey was forced to decide whether to live or kill his brother in a gun fight. Choosing his life and

¹ Falwell, *Autobiography*, 15.

² *Ibid.*, 49-50.

ending that of his brother³ in self-defense eventually led to Carey's downward spiral into severe alcoholism. He subsequently died of cirrhosis of the liver when Falwell was a teenager.

The young Falwell boys started early with their entrepreneurial training; at age eleven, their father Carey helped them to set up a live bait stand at the family homestead. Fishermen would call ahead to place their order, then in the early morning hours would pull up and honk. One of the Falwell twins would run to the small river out front to retrieve the prepared order. Macel Falwell recounts that each week from April to October, Gene and Jerry made \$150-\$200, "an enormous amount of money for kids in the 1940s."⁴ While attending public school, Falwell excelled at sports, especially baseball, and earned a 98.6 percent average from Brookville High School. He was named valedictorian, but unfortunately could not give the valedictorian address because he was in trouble with the school authorities.⁵

Preparations for the Future—College (1952–May 1956)

After graduating from high school in 1950, Jerry began studying journalism and engineering at Lynchburg College in his hometown. A close friend of Falwell's from his teenage years recalled Falwell's aversion to public speaking, saying it was something he was not comfortable doing. He had a brilliant mind for mathematics and an interest in journalism.⁶ While in college, Falwell lived at home with his mother Helen, a born-again-believer. On Sunday

³ Blaine T. Browne, Robert C. Cottrell, *Modern American Lives: Individuals and Issues in American History Since 1945* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2008), 281.

⁴ Macel Falwell, *His Life His Legacy*, 11.

⁵ Strober and Tomczak, *Jerry Falwell*, 19.

⁶ Foundational Member Interview 09, 9:57.

mornings she would set the radio in his room to the *Old Fashioned Revival Hour*, by Charles E. Fuller from Long Beach, California. On occasion, Falwell would listen to the radio program rather than get out of bed to turn off the radio.⁷

On the morning of January 20, 1952, Falwell heard a sermon that he later said moved him to tears. As a result, that night Falwell and a group of his friends decided to attend the evening service at the local church named Park Avenue Baptist Church (PABC). At this service, the pastor, Paul Donaldson, preached the Gospel that he had heard so often from Charles Fuller. That night Jerry and his friends found God.⁸ One member interviewed suggested that the Wall Gang, which Jerry led at the time, only attended Park Avenue because of the pretty girls and good singers that attended the church. Falwell also took note of one auburn-haired young lady playing the piano named Macel Pate. Through a series of planned events, she would later become his wife. After his salvation experience, Jerry turned his life around. He immediately became the janitor at PABC in order to spend more time there.⁹

Upon Falwell's conversion, he realized that he needed to learn as much as possible about this new life he had in Christ. Although he was forced to attend church as a child, he had never owned a Bible. He asked his pastor and mentor Paul Donaldson what Bible he should procure. Donaldson was a Bible Baptist College (BBC)-trained fundamentalist and the *Scofield Reference King James Version* was the best, if not only choice recommended. Macel Falwell noted, "Jerry

⁷ Falwell, *Autobiography*, 104.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 120-23.

⁹ LBN Charter Member Interviews, FB-AIN-048,12:10.

was ravenous for the Word of God. He memorized the Gospel of John and then the book of Romans.”¹⁰

Declining an offer to play baseball with the St. Louis Cardinals, Falwell transferred to the BBC in Springfield, Missouri. Leon McBeth described the Bible Baptist Fellowship (BBF) as “the moderate wing of Southern Fundamentalism” as compared to the World Baptist Fellowship.¹¹ This was where his pastor, Paul Donaldson, had advised him to enroll. Falwell learned a great deal in those years, including the power of prayer, the importance of a Christian education, and that (as with any business or other employment) ministry is hard work. Additionally, he learned the preeminence of the Word of God in a Christian’s life; this greatly influenced his future ministry.

In 2001, the Biography Channel did a segment on the life of Falwell. His fundamental views had not changed. He believed “the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is the inerrant Word of God, and totally accurate in all respects,”¹² and he believed that “the Bible is the inerrant. . . . word of the living God. It is absolutely infallible, without error in all matters pertaining to faith and practice, as well as in areas such as geography, science, history, etc.” These views are some of the basic tenants of any fundamentalist group. Falwell would have been seen by many as one of the premiere leaders of the fundamentalist movement in the second half of the twentieth century.

¹⁰ Macel Falwell, *His Life His Legacy*, 28.

¹¹ Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), 766.

¹² BIOGRAPHY [Online Database], “Jerry Falwell,” Crystal Reference, 2001; accessed January 14, 2014, http://search.biography.com/print_record.pl?id=14647.

While at BBC, Falwell was wise enough as a young Christian to seek guidance from those older and wiser in their faith. In Lynchburg, some of his mentors have included Jack Dinsbeer, his first youth pastor, and Paul Donaldson, his pastor at PABC. At BBC, Wendell Zimmerman, pastor at Kansas City Baptist Temple; William Edgar “Bill” Dowell, pastor at Jacksonville Baptist Temple; John Rawlings, pastor at Landmark Baptist Temple; and G. Beauchamp Vick, pastor of Temple Baptist Church in Detroit. Later Falwell learned from B. R. Lakin, a one-time circuit-riding evangelist and his life-long friend; and also Lee Roberson, pastor of Hyland Park Baptist Church and TTU, as well as Bob Jones, the founder of Bob Jones University. Evangelist influences included Oliver B. Greene and Lester Roloff.¹³

Planting and Preaching (June 1956–1963)

The conditions under which Falwell planted the church were by no means perfect. Dissention existed among the parishioners from their previous church, which had split. The church had to initially recover from the moral failures of a past pastor, and was left to deal with dissention and disunity among close families within that local body. Families were torn apart through this disunity; however, TRBC ultimately emerged as a uniting force in the community.

Falwell established TRBC, on June 21, 1956. They met for their first service in the Mountain View Elementary School.¹⁴ That first Sunday Falwell gathered with thirty-five former members of PABC.¹⁵ By the Sunday of the following week, they met in the thirty-by-fifty-foot

¹³ Knowles, *Liberty University Oral History Project*, 46:21.

¹⁴ Foundational Member Interview 15, 13:35.

¹⁵ Falwell, *Autobiography*, 194.

former Donald Duck bottling company on Thomas Road in Lynchburg, Virginia. The church became sarcastically known by the local school children as Donald Duck Baptist Church.¹⁶

Falwell immediately started with a goal of knocking on one hundred doors a day, inviting the inhabitants to church. Falwell would then offer to pray for the family and leave a business card for them to contact him if they needed a pastor. As a development from visitation, he did “on-the-job training” of a group of men each day on how to do visitation.¹⁷ In addition to the visitation program and phone ministry, a simple newsletter was added to communicate with members and supporters of about what God was doing in and through the church.

In the first few months of the church, he began to broadcast the popular “Old Time Gospel Hour” radio program. After a little over a year, Falwell expanded into television ministry, which was the start of the Old Time Gospel Hour (OTGH).¹⁸ This was Falwell’s first step into mass-media evangelism. The OTGH started broadcasting from within the church in 1968. In 1971, the program went national and soon reached an audience estimated in the millions. Over the years, Falwell had the opportunity to spread the Gospel to millions of people through radio and television. From a congregation of just thirty-six adults in June, of 1956, things quickly grew. Within one year, the number was 864 people present for their annual homecoming,¹⁹ a number that in twenty years would rise to a staggering 16,000.

¹⁶ Knowles, *Liberty University Oral History Project*, 1 (1:25:17). The researcher’s personal interview with Harold Knowles tells that because TRBC began meeting in the defunct Donald Duck Bottling Plant on Thomas Road in Lynchburg, Virginia, the Schoolboys used to make fun of them being the Donald Duck Baptist Church, joking that they used Donald Duck soda for communion.

¹⁷ Rod Dempsey, “The Ministry Methods of Jerry Falwell,” *Eruditio Ardescens* 1, no. 1, Article 2; accessed January 15, 2014, <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/jlbts/vol1/iss1/24>.

¹⁸ Falwell, *Incredible Journey*, 2.

¹⁹ Falwell, *Autobiography*, 239.

On April 12, 1958, Falwell was married to Macel Pate. He describes Macel as his “leading critic, finest teacher, dearest friend, and the love of my life.” Additionally, he states, “She, more than I, is responsible for producing our great and godly children.”²⁰

The needs-based ministries at TRBC began with Elim Home for Alcoholics in 1959, which is a live-in rehabilitation center for alcoholics, which has now been expanded to help drug-addicted men. In early 1960s, Falwell began a free summer camp for children with 1,500 in attendance the inaugural year. Before this, a bus transportation ministry was started, which brought to church those who did not have cars.

Most people who had spent any amount of time with Falwell noticed that his busy schedule would run many to an early grave. However, Falwell’s work ethic is hard to compare to any other, because, as Elmer Towns puts it, “Falwell’s commitment to work grows out of a driving conviction that people are lost and going to hell.”²¹

Numerous trends have been attributed to the fast growth of TRBC, not the least of which is the belief that is summed up in the phrase Falwell coined “saturation evangelism.” Simply put, “saturation is preaching the gospel to every available person, by every available means, at every available time.”²² Thomas Road used every available means of evangelism, including: telephone, Sunday School bus, cassette, radio, television, printing, promotion, camping, deaf, educational, alcohol, and prison. One reason Falwell claims his church has had so much growth is the church’s commitment to a continuous building plan. Falwell states: “The church buildings are only a means to an end—the purpose of a church is to use its facilities to reach the lost for Jesus

²⁰ Falwell, *Autobiography*, 224.

²¹ Towns, *America’s Fastest Growing Churches*, 28.

²² *Ibid.*, 31.

Christ and nurture Christians.”²³ If people see these buildings being built, they see that people are being reached and Christians are being nurtured. Falwell cites his staff as another reason for growth, “A pastor cannot build a large and aggressive work without competent help.”²⁴

Principal and President (1963–1969)

Falwell sparked controversy when he said, “I hope I live to see the day when, as in the early days of our country, we won’t have any public schools. The churches will have taken them over again and Christians will be running them. What a happy day that will be!”²⁵ In his response to the belief that children needed a quality spiritual education, as well as intellectual-focused curriculum, he felt was no longer being offered to them by the public schools, as prayer was removed from the public school houses by law in 1962,²⁶ he started Lynchburg Christian Academy in 1967.

In 1968, the Thomas Road Bible Institute was begun and, by 1972, expanded to include full-time, qualified staff. This is now known as Liberty Bible Institute. Falwell knew that the only way he could reach the world for Christ is through training hundreds and thousands of people to catch the vision. In 1971, he founded the Lynchburg Baptist College (LBC), which would become Liberty University and Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. His dream led to

²³ Jerry Falwell and Elmer L. Towns, *Church Aflame* (Nashville: Impact Books, 1971), 170.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 184.

²⁵ Jerry Falwell, *America Can be Saved! Jerry Falwell Preaches on Revival* (Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1979), 52.

²⁶ Prayer removed from the public school houses by the law in 1962 in *Engel v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421 (1962); accessed January 5, 2014, <http://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/370/421/case.html>. Following suit was *Bible reading and the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer in 1963*. *Justia U.S. Supreme Court, School Dist. of Abington Tp. v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203 (1963); accessed January 5, 2014, <http://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/374/203/case.html>.

the formation of each of these educational institutions, where spiritual wholeness would be taught to coming generations.

Political Activist and Prophet (1969–1986)

This research project will not focus on Falwell as the political activist; however, this is a huge part of his biography. This area of his life separates Falwell from most other mega-church pastors. He became the leading voice, if not the founding member, of the “religious right” in America. The core principles of this movement were what moved fundamentalism back into the mainstream, since its influence in the era of prohibition went awry, resulting in giving conservative Christians a political voice in their nation.

Falwell said, “I had been taught in school, religion and politics do not mix. A Christian should not be involved in politics. . . . But I came to realize whatever makes a good Christian, makes a good citizen.”²⁷ He did not change to become this voice; he became this voice, because he was not changing with the culture. To Falwell, family structure was a bedrock principle, as it had been when he was growing up. Another member mentioned that things were different when they were younger; students were rarely sexually active, parents were almost always came home after work, and people ate around the dining room together at night.²⁸ Dinsbeer noted, “Young people back then dealt with movies, dancing . . . no drugs, etc.” Falwell desired this America to stay the same.

In 1979, the Moral Majority began what would perhaps become Falwell’s most publicized venture. The late Jeffery K. Hadden said, “Seldom in modern history has the

²⁷ Jerry Falwell, “Returning to the Faith of our Fathers,” *Recording at Canton Baptist Church*, (July 03, 1996), 45:00.

emergence of an interest group attracted so much attention so swiftly as this group of conservative Christians who have been labeled the New Christian Right, headed by Jerry Falwell's political arm, the Moral Majority."²⁹

To understand better the Moral Majority, it is important to see the issues that caused its establishment and the statements to which adherents should agree. These were: "we believe in the separation of Church and State," "we are pro-life," "we are pro-traditional family," "we oppose illegal drug traffic in America," "we oppose pornography," "we support the state of Israel and Jewish people everywhere.," "we believe that a strong national defense is the best deterrent to war," "we support equal rights for women," "we believe the ERA is the wrong vehicle to obtain equal rights for women," and "we encourage our Moral Majority state organizations to be autonomous and indigenous."³⁰ Falwell made his goal clear in this Moral Majority report,

If we are going to save America and evangelize the world, we cannot accommodate secular philosophies that are diametrically opposed to Christian truth. . . . We need to pull out all the stops to recruit and train 25 million Americans to become informed pro-moral activists whose voices can be heard in the halls of Congress. I am convinced that America can be turned around if we will all get serious about the Master's business. It may be late, but it is never too late to do what is right. We need an old-fashioned, God-honoring, Christ-exalting revival to turn America back to God. America can be saved!³¹

He received his greatest public recognition in response to politicking for Ronald Reagan. While not a perfect candidate, Reagan held many of the fundamental beliefs Falwell

²⁸ Foundational Member Interview 09, 1:19:06.

²⁹ Jeffrey K. Hadden and Charles E. Swann, *Prime Time Preachers: The Rising Power of Televangelists* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1981), 126.

³⁰ Ed Dobson, and Ed Hindson, *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon: The Resurgence of Conservative Christianity* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co.,1981), 189-90.

³¹ Jerry Falwell, *Moral Majority Report* (September 1984), quoted by Austin Cline, "Biography, Jerry Falwell," Agnosticism and Atheism web-site on About.com; accessed February 12, 2003, http://atheism.about.com/%20library/glossary/western/bldef_falwelljerry.htm?terms=cal.

espoused, not the least of which was the right to life and a strong America. Some try to say that Falwell was more of a figurehead, and not actually the driving force behind the organization, and that the political and ideological muscle seems to have come from the financial backers Bob Billings, Paul Weyrich, Ed McAteer, and Howard Phillips. However, the biography channel points out “that the man at the helm of this movement was Jerry Falwell. His supporters called him a moral leader; his enemies called him a religious zealot.”³²

Martin Fishwick reveals that “a name change came along for the Moral Majority. In 1986 it became known as the Liberty Federation.” He shows Falwell’s importance to the organization, “Now for over six years the name Moral Majority, as much as the brilliantly combative persona of Jerry Falwell, had served as a cannon and a lightning rod—both dishing it out and taking the heat.” Additionally, he explains well the purpose and effect of the group. “The name Moral Majority served also as a battle cry arousing conservative Christians and encouraging them to become involved in the political process. And it also sent tremors of fear and indignation into the hearts of millions of liberals.”³³

The Moral Majority took a religious and political stance against abortion, pornography, feminism, homosexuality, and a variety of other things. This belief system caused any in this lifestyle to oppose the movement; however, their beliefs were similar to what most Americans believed at the time. By the late seventies, the conservative Christian movement had grown substantially. Newsweek stated it was “a phenomenon that can no longer be dismissed or

³² Jerry Falwell, *Minister of Morals*, Biography Channel, 7:00 PM, November 7, 2000; accessed January 18, 2014, http://www.biography.com/tv/listings/falwell_j.html.

³³ Marshall Fishwick and Kenneth Martin, eds. *The God Pumpers: Religion in the Electronic Age* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987), 101.

ignored.”³⁴ Falwell had taken on a series of political causes such as voluntary prayer in schools, free enterprise or capitalistic economy, balanced budgets, military strength, and aid to Israel. Further, he was against the Equal Rights Amendment, pornography, abortion, homosexuality, pari-mutuel betting, and rock- and-roll music. Arguably the greatest accomplishment of the Moral Majority occurred during the election of Ronald Reagan, in 1980, something that most analysts considered impossible due to his conservative views. However, he won the election by a fair margin due in great part to the conservative support rallied behind him by the Moral Majority.

Robert Webber’s book explains how the Moral Majority did not go far enough into the Bible to be effective. He claims that it was not the prophetic voice that Christ would have used and that was so common in the Old Testament. A common thought was that thought it was too narrow, and quite a few thought it did not go far enough.³⁵

In an article, Ed Hindson points out, “sensing the impending moral crisis, various conservative groups, including the Moral Majority, were formed to combat any further legislation that could be viewed as being detrimental to Christian churches, schools, and families,”³⁶ in part because of the drop in gifts to all televangelists, and in part following the Jimmy Bakker and Praise The Lord (PTL) scandal, the Moral Majority was officially disbanded in 1989. It will remain a mystery here on earth just how much Falwell and the Moral Majority actually accomplished for the kingdom of God in just under a decade. Many groups that believe

³⁴ Allan J. Mayer, “A Tide of Born-Again Politics,” *Newsweek* 15 (September 1980): 36.

³⁵ Robert E. Webber, *The Moral Majority: Right or Wrong?* (Westchester, IL: Cornerstone Books, 1981), 14-19.

³⁶ Ed Hindson, “Thunder in the Pulpit; The Social-Political Involvement of the New Right,” *Foundations* 15, no. 2 (April-June 1982): 146.

civil duties and religious/moral belief should be integrated have grown out of, or had their way paved by, the Moral Majority. One example would be the Christian Coalition.

As all this happened, the prophetic ministry of Falwell continued with his confrontation of sin and the uplifting of morality. Not the least of all, Falwell promoted his views from his pulpit at the almost historic TRBC, which, in turn, fed through the television to hundreds of thousands of listeners. Falwell once said, “To the three and four hundred thousand pastors in America, I say, ‘Preach the Word of God unashamedly and fearlessly; call sin by its right name, and declare Jesus Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection, and His shed blood as the only atonement for sin,’” and “Your first responsibility is to please God. If you don’t please anybody else in the world but God, you can go to bed at night with a clear conscience and if you please everybody else and don’t please Him, you’re a failure.”³⁷

Falwell is seen as one of the most controversial men of the twentieth century. Mentioning Falwell’s name in almost any setting, immediately elicits a reaction, sometimes positive and other times negative. It has been said that “Jerry Falwell got where he is today by his instincts, energy, wit, and sharp tongue.”³⁸ The researcher finds it clear that the passionate leadership of Falwell has led him through the heights of the Christian and secular worlds. He has dined with multiple United States presidents and other leaders from around the world. In addition, he had the opportunity of leading at least one world leader to Christ. Falwell’s impact on the United States, the world, and the kingdom of God is immeasurable during this lifetime. Patricia Pingry possibly put it best when she said about Falwell, “He knows the answer to man’s salvation and is

³⁷ Strober and Tomczak, *Jerry Falwell*, 185-86.

³⁸ Fishwick and Martin, *God Pumpers*, 115.

obligated to spread the word. It is not his life's work, it is his life. And he will continue on the move toward that day when his work here will be finished.”³⁹

Falwell was not one only to speak with those with whom he agreed. Having friendship with people of polar-opposing views was a marked trait of Falwell. Although his opinions were seen as polarizing, he had a kind and genuine personality, which those he met appreciated. Cal Thomas described Falwell as “the most intriguing person I had ever met. His personality was infectious.”⁴⁰ Relationships with those well outside of the fundamentalist Christian camp included a famous friendship with Larry Flynt.

Falwell's faithfulness in Lynchburg, Virginia, transformed not just a small town, but the face of a nation for decades to come; ultimately, he made a great impact for the Kingdom of God. Church planters are called to make an impact on the locale God has ordained for them to be. In the coming three chapters, the researcher will lead through the three overarching principles, which created the synergy between pastor and parishioner for the impacting of the Kingdom of God.

³⁹ Patricia Pingry, *Jerry Falwell: Man of Vision* (Milwaukee, WI: Ideals Publications, 1980), 80.

⁴⁰ Cal Thomas and Ed Dobson, *Blinded by Might: Why The Religious Right Can't Save America* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 17.

Chapter 3

Falwell's Principles of Spiritual Discipline

In this chapter, analysis begins on the primary emphasized principles of spiritual disciplines gleaned from the perception of the foundational members in the first of the parent-code categories. None of these sections are more or less important; however, within each overarching concept, characteristics are present, which are important statistically.

The first parent code or overarching principle is spiritual disciplines. These are principles, which will help church planters and their parishioners grow deeper in their walks with God. From the research conducted, nine primary spiritual disciplines were highlighted by the early members as especially important in the establishment of TRBC. These were prayer, biblical preaching, discipleship, generosity, declining legalism, spiritual depth, salvation focus, faith, and vision.

Each principle or constituent part will be covered by a brief analysis, along with the researcher's perspective, multiple supporting examples from the analysis data, supplemental support from literature, testimonials from non-participants, and biblical correlations, and concludes with a brief application for the life of the church planter. As readers look at each principle gleaned from the interview data, the author has drawn parallels for each component to similar precepts found in Paul's book to the church in Philippi.

Prayer

In the early days, TRBC was described as having a prayer meeting for everything: prayer meeting before meetings, during meeting, and after meetings. An atmosphere of continual prayer was seen as the duty of the core members. Falwell asked people to focus the prayer service on growing people spiritually and praying for the unconverted. One member tells of the prayers spoken by attendees in unison, saying these concerts of prayer were unusual for reserved Independent Baptist churches.¹ These services became common in revivalist circles, and prayer was positioned as an active part of any believer's relationship with God.² Prayer, mentioned a total of thirty-five times in the study, was the most predominantly emphasized spiritual discipline.

In 1969, Elmer Towns asked Falwell why the church had been so successful in these few short years. Falwell replied, "God has honored a combination of faithfulness to His Word, continuous dependence upon prayer, and hard work. We have prayed as though everything depended upon God; we have preached, visited, and worked as though everything depended upon us."³ Falwell recalled in a sermon of his intercessory prayer team who met in an old compressor room at the Donald Duck Bottling building and prayed an hour before the Service.⁴

¹ Foundational Member Interview 21, 59:31.

² Joseph Tracy notes that leading revivalists in Scotland recommended concerts of prayer as a step in seeing the entire world saved. These influenced Jonathan Edwards and the First Great Awakening. Joseph Tracy, *The Great Awakening* (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 399. Also in William C. Conant, *Narratives of Remarkable Conversions and Revival Incidents Including a Review of Revivals* (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1858), 167. This was tied to revival of the Indians. Falwell was employing early revivalist methods to the founding of TRBC.

³ Towns, *Ten Largest Sunday Schools*, 100.

⁴ Jerry Falwell, "Building Dynamic #3," *Messages at TRBC - Sunday Morning at TRBC*, Asset ID: 253248, FB-CMS-0710. (May 14, 2006), 1:08:40.

The most frequent of all recollected quotes by Falwell throughout the study was, “Nothing of eternal significance ever happens apart from prayer.”⁵ Quotes members used to describe prayer culture were, “He leaned on the Lord all the time, did nothing apart from prayer, and always started with prayer.”⁶ “He [Falwell] emphasized prayer all the time and encouraged other people to pray, also.”⁷ “All of our failures are prayer failures.” “The Lord answered his prayer, because he was faithful.”⁸ One example of a prayer he prayed was quoted by one member, “‘God, if you’ll give me this city for Christ, I’ll do it; I’ll do what you want me to do.’ And God has blessed the man.”⁹

The first foray of the young church into the idea of decentralized ministry was the starting of “prayer cottages” around the city. These were initially organized in advance of any revivals or important days at TRBC. These cottage prayer meetings were called for as late as the May 14, 1968, issue of the TRBC Newsletter, “Word of Life.” In preparation for a large-tent meeting with Oliver B. Greene, Falwell urged people to open their homes for many of the men of the church known as “Prayer Captains,” who would be conducting cottage prayer meetings all over the city. Falwell said, “We cannot expect God to work unless we pray. Revival comes when God’s conditions are met. We want to see Lynchburg shaken spiritually by this crusade.”¹⁰

⁵ This was the primary quoted phrase from Falwell, quoted from memory by five foundational members: 04, 05, 17, 02, and 03.

⁶ Foundational Member Interview 17, 1:09:48.

⁷ Foundational Member Interview 02, 06:57.

⁸ Foundational Member Interview 05, 19:34.

⁹ Foundational Member Interview 06, 28:07.

¹⁰ Jerry Falwell, “Mass Prayer Effort Begins,” *Word of Life* (May 14, 1968), 1.

In the early years, Falwell wrote, “The primary ministry of any church is not preaching, teaching, visiting, singing; but praying. The pastor, who learns to spend more time on his knees than he does doing anything else, will be a successful pastor.”¹¹ Prayer was mostly mentioned as his vehicle for bolstering the faith of others. In the early days, prayer services were going on while church services were in session. One letter reveals Falwell had a Sunday evening prayer room meeting at 6:45 pm in addition to a missionary prayer meeting every Wednesday evening at 6:30 pm in the basement of the old sanctuary where people would pray through all the missionaries they knew and were supporting, by name.¹²

This emphasis of the prayer cottages culminated in the planting of chapels in the mid-sixties.¹³ This was an integration of Falwell’s entrepreneurial side and an attempt at multi-site ministry, before it had gained traction elsewhere. The Madison Heights, Cabell Street, Blackford Street, and a number of other chapels, characterized a period of decentralization of the daily leadership, visitation, service opportunities, and most of the locations of worship. Each chapel was rented by TRBC or hosted by local families and led by a chapel pastor. Additionally, the church paid the primary lay leader a small monthly stipend. On Easter of 1965, attendance records show about 250 persons at the chapels, including the Blackford Street Chapel, where seven accepted Christ.¹⁴

¹¹ Jerry Falwell, *Advancing Through Prayer* (Lynchburg, VA: Old Time Gospel Hour Press, 1964) 8.

¹² Jerry Falwell, Letter to Thomas Road Baptist Church (believed to be September-October of 1965). Russell Booth Collection.

¹³ Foundational Member Interview 16, 1:10:24.

¹⁴ Jerry Falwell, Letter to Thomas Road Baptist Church, April 21, 1965.

Falwell was influenced by two ministry concepts in the development of the chapels. First, the leader training and development system was employed by Tennessee Temple University (TTU) to train their ministerial students, who received practical preaching training at various chapels around their area.¹⁵ According to one intricately involved member, Armin Gesswein, who was a revivalist and cottage-prayer-ministry expert connected to the Billy Graham Association, encouraged the cottage prayer ministry concept at TRBC. When Falwell saw or heard of a new idea, he was quick to learn how it could work at his church and reinterpret the method with minor adjustments to match his local context.

Although short-lived, these chapels were placed in communities that TRBC had not traditionally been able to reach. However, with the growth of the bus ministry and the determination that nonmembers were missing the exceptional and attractional experience by not attending TRBC, the efforts were moved elsewhere. At least one of the chapels later became an independent church in Madison Heights, Virginia.¹⁶

A frequently quoted verse says, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:6-7). Paul believed in the power of prayer. Prayer was the foundational activity being done when the church in Philippians was being founded.¹⁷

¹⁵ Foundational Member Interview 06 and 08.

¹⁶ Foundational Member Interview 16, 11:32.

¹⁷ Acts 16:13, 16, 25.

For church planters, it is important to emphasize personal and corporate prayer in every stage, especially the foundational stages of the church. As a church planter, Falwell understood this power and prayed a minimum of forty-five minutes to an hour daily.¹⁸ The only way a church planter will make this a priority is by having a specific time and place for daily prayer, such as a prayer closet or vehicle during a longer commute.¹⁹

Biblical Preaching

The focus on biblical preaching and teaching is closely tied to the discipleship and training, albeit with less discussion of oriented learning. Falwell initially taught verse-by-verse²⁰ through the Bible. He was disciplined and studied hard for each sermon. Additionally, he subscribed to the “Bible-Only” method of teaching. Bible-only teaching held that all the lessons, preaching, and teaching were to be straight from the Bible; this was a belief held by other fundamentalist churches like Temple Baptist in Fort Worth and Detroit.²¹ On an early Old Time Gospel Hour show, Falwell’s voice is heard in the introduction, “And the Bible is the only textbook we use. The Bible is all the quarterlies you need.”²² Some interpret this as ridicule of the dependence Southern Baptists and other denominations had on the use of quarterlies in their Sunday School programs. Another time he stated, “We must not be preaching the Baptist

¹⁸ Macel Falwell, *His Life His Legacy*, 87.

¹⁹ Falwell talks of his prayer closet, as well as turning the steering wheel of his car into an altar as he commuted fifty minutes regularly to the Whittemore Farm (Appendix H).

²⁰ Foundational Member Interview 05, 17:41.

²¹ A thesis in history by E. Ray Tatum, *The J. Frank Norris Murder Trial of 1927* (Lubbock, TX: Texas Technological College, 1968), 28.

²² Jerry Falwell, TRBC Historic Footage, Grady Wilson, Asset ID: 253211, FB-CHF-013, (November 26, 1967), 0.09.52.

doctrine, or the Methodist creeds, or the Presbyterian Catechism, but Christ and Him crucified.”²³

One member recounted, “I was always impressed with the preeminence that was given to the preaching of the Word.”²⁴ Another recounted, “He believed and followed his Scriptures. If the Bible said something in it, people ought to believe it!”²⁵ Almost thirty times, members referenced the importance of having Falwell preach and expound on God’s Word, “Sundays—he was preaching the Gospel; he was preaching the Word of God and teaching the Word of God.”²⁶ “Jerry taught every Wednesday night . . . a song and a proverb, until he completed them . . . and then, he taught Scripture memorization.”²⁷

Falwell’s writings and sermons were transformation-oriented with the objective of transporting listeners from one place to another. The researcher describes them as goal-oriented, simple, logical, emotionally-charged, relational, sympathetic, and literal. Falwell’s message to the congregation implored listeners not just to bring people to church, but to bring Christ to people.

Paul teaches, “What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice” (Phil 1:18). The emphasis here is that the primary objective of the church must be the preaching of Christ, setting aside any ulterior motives of the preacher.

²³ Falwell, *Advancing Through Prayer*, 4.

²⁴ Foundational Member Interview 04, 45:31.

²⁵ Foundational Member Interview 15, 32:36.

²⁶ Foundational Member Interview 21, 46:11.

²⁷ Foundational Member Interview 07, 55:01.

One of the most important things a church planter could learn from Falwell is the necessity of preaching to the hearts of the needs of the people. He stated, “Eloquence will not keep you addicted to a church only the communication of spiritual provision to the point of your need.”²⁸ Preaching must satiate a need in the heart of the listener; the method by which this satisfaction comes is the Bible. Preaching on and from the Word of God as in Jeremiah, “Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts” (Jer 15:16).²⁹ Having biblically-literate adults was of great importance to Falwell, and his discipleship methods expose this. Members made reference to the preaching of the Word being given preeminence and said Falwell would get on the worship leader’s “case” if he cut into his preaching time.³⁰

Discipleship

Falwell’s preaching always maintained a priority for outreach.³¹ One of the major challenges young church planters will face is the automatic refocusing of their messages from outreach-focused primarily to in-reach-focused. Although the verse-by-verse messages in the early years were pertinent to the church, they had a heavy evangelistic emphasis. Falwell was sensitive and passionate about seeking the lost. One young member recalled how passionate

²⁸ Jerry Falwell, SuperConference 1990, Thursday AM *Video Archive*, Asset ID 262149, F1-ASC-037, (October 25, 1990), 25:15.

²⁹ Also see John 6:50-71.

³⁰ Foundational Member Interview 04, 41:28.

³¹ Jerry Falwell, *Sermons on Life Now and After* (Lynchburg, VA: Thomas Road Baptist Church, 1960) 3, 12, 17, AND 22 includes sermons on hell, heaven, Jesus’ return, how to be saved—and know it, and how to be happy and stay happy (p. 7). Also idem, *What it Means to be Saved* (Lynchburg, VA: Old Time Gospel Hour Press, undated 1960s), Jerry Falwell Library, 9.

Falwell was for seeing souls transformed; he saw his mentor weep one Sunday night, because no one was getting saved. Falwell responded, “We cannot have this at Thomas Road”³²

Another member says of Falwell’s sermons, “the messages were designed to build you in the Christian life. I mean, you were growing up spiritually. Everything was a spiritual lesson to you.”³³ “He’s just a natural-born leader. He just had a way about him that he could lead—and he showed people by doing the things he did.”³⁴ He was willing to, and did, anything he asked or expected you to do. . . . I know at the end he could call and designate certain things to people. But, in the beginning . . . I never saw him turn his back on being a part of anything.”³⁵ Church members in twenty-six instances mentioned this developmental principle.

Falwell emphasized personal and spiritual development; he desired that new believers be disciplined and trained. This was clear in his description of the church’s mission, “What then is the mission to which God has called the church? . . . Jesus Christ commissioned the church to preach the Gospel to every creature. The fruit of a Christian is another Christian. The fruit of a church is another church. The Christian individual and the Christian church who are not reproducing other believers are missing the mark entirely.”³⁶ Falwell offered regular counseling and evangelism training, teaching all the TRBC counseling attendants how to lead someone in a salvation decision by sharing with them the “Romans Road,”³⁷ which is a basic explanation of Christ’s

³² Foundational Member Interview 21, 44:01.

³³ Foundational Member Interview 05, 46:54.

³⁴ Foundational Member Interview 15, 31:49.

³⁵ Foundational Member Interview 01, 29:56.

³⁶ Falwell, *Advancing Through Prayer*, 6.

³⁷ Foundational Member Interview 07, 31:35.

atonement for sinners by walking through Bible verses found in the book of Romans. These classes merged into what became the Thomas Road Bible Institute (today much of this subject matter is taught in evangelism classes which are a required part of Liberty University's curriculum).

Falwell was creative in how he allowed growth and development of the church body. While still in the old bottling company, on Sunday nights R. B. and Anne Whittemore led a gender-specific, small-table group meeting focusing on deep and intentional prayer, with no leader or headship. These meetings included each group member sharing what God was teaching them in the Word, and sometimes praying in unison.³⁸ These types of meetings were generally not found in the Baptist churches. Falwell seemed more interested in seeing disciples develop more disciples, rather than checking the theological restraints often placed on the church body.

In a letter, Falwell encouraged each member of the church to be involved in the highly successful "Whole-Bible Study Course" on Wednesday evenings. The plan was to go through the entire Bible in three or four years.³⁹ Falwell was already offering accredited college credit for those interested. Although, this was seven years before the start of LBC,⁴⁰ Falwell already had a vision for seeing a college start at TRBC.

The entire book of Philippians is written to teach the believers there how to live in the light of God's love in their lives. Paul sums up much of what this study entails by saying, "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight,

³⁸ Foundational Member Interview 21, 59:20.

³⁹ Falwell, Letter, September-October of 1965.

⁴⁰ Jerry Falwell, letter to Thomas Road Baptist Church, October 28, 1965, Russell Booth Collection.

so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God” (Phil 1:9-11). Paul is sharing that he prays for the members to grow relationally and spiritually so that the believers can effectively serve God with excellence. This is the essence of discipleship, growing to be like Christ.

Falwell’s theology conveyed that humanity is living in the premillennial period and in the pretribulational rapture of the church, after which comes the destruction of the earth and all unsaved humankind.⁴¹ This prophetic view was a catalyst for the outreach emphasis of the church. Over the years, TRBC became a feeder church for many of the churches in the area, because of emphasizing the spiritual growth of each believer. The purpose of training is reproduction. Falwell jokingly said in one sermon, “We started forty-some churches in the area, not all of them intentionally, preaching the Gospel, but their pastors are our friends. When we started this church this was virgin territory for the Gospel.”⁴²

Church planters can learn much from Falwell’s discipleship model within the church, primarily through his teaching and preaching, but he also discipled outside of church services. On visitation nights, he met with a different man each time. He taught by example, each evening sharing an example by bringing another person along with him. A church planter must integrate others into a lifestyle of ministry; otherwise, ministry seems daunting to the uninitiated. Falwell

⁴¹ William H. Brackney, *Historical Dictionary of the Baptists* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1999), 234-35.

⁴² Jerry Falwell, “The World’s Greatest and Most Sacrificial Offering,” *Messages at TRBC—Sunday Morning at TRBC*, Asset ID: 256265, FB-CMS-0613 56:20.

developed journeymen opportunities to allow for observation of a master, which resulted in confidence and skill development.

Generosity

Jerry Falwell's generosity was of paramount importance in the foundation of the church; it reached almost legendary status in the hearts of those surveyed. Once after leading one woman in the sinner's prayer, Falwell invited her husband to attend TRBC. The man's excuse was he did not have the proper clothes to attend. That teenage member watched as Falwell took off his suit, shirt, tie, and shoes, and gave everything to the man. Falwell walked back to the car with only his t-shirt, shorts, and socks. The man did come to church and was transformed the next week.⁴³ Each interviewee had a story to tell or an example to give of his magnanimous personality. This was a cornerstone in the development of a pervasive culture of generosity, "loving your neighbor," the theme of many early sermons. Falwell accomplished two goals by focusing on generosity; he brought lasting hope to families in crisis and need. Second, he taught the value of helping others, oftentimes by example.

Members brought up the connection between Falwell and generosity a staggering number of fifty-two times. One said, "He was downtown . . . some guy came up to him who was cold. . . . Jerry took off his brand new raincoat and he gives it to him! That was Jerry."⁴⁴ Another member exclaimed, "He would give the shirt off of his back to another."⁴⁵ "I saw him when he worked. He would take his money and go down off Fifth Street . . . and knock on doors. First,

⁴³ Foundational Member Interview 08, 08:12.

⁴⁴ Foundational Member Interview 22, 45:48.

⁴⁵ Foundational Member Interview 18, 32:30.

they wouldn't come; [they] didn't have clothes. So Jerry bought them clothes. He bought them shoes!"⁴⁶ "He knew we had nothing and he'd put fifty cents or a dollar in our hands and told us to run down to the Texas Tavern. He might see us on Main Street and he might give us a couple bucks."⁴⁷ One jokingly said, "As soon as we got saved, we started paying."⁴⁸ Another said, "But over time, God had taught me just the grace of giving. I would attribute that to Jerry."⁴⁹

The research showed the emphasis of this area is closely tied to the personal generosity of Falwell and the church members reciprocated with a culture of generous giving. Multiple members recall Falwell frequently using the statement, "I have found in my own life that you cannot outgive God."

One-hundred percent of those who gave monetarily said they primarily gave out of obedience to God. Almost all the giving was in general tithes and offerings as opposed to special tithes given to other projects. Falwell compelled his church members to be involved in giving generously of their "time, talents, treasure, temple and testimony."⁵⁰ In these acts of generosity, he believed they would find value in life.

An entire section of the book of Philippians is dedicated to celebrating the generosity of the church. Paul writes, "For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. . . . I seek the fruit that abounds to your account . . . a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God." The section is concluded with a promise, "And my

⁴⁶ Foundational Member Interview 15, 1:18.

⁴⁷ Foundational Member Interview 20, 47:04.

⁴⁸ Foundational Member Interview 17, 36:46.

⁴⁹ Foundational Member Interview 16, 31:40.

God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:15-19). The generosity from Philippi was a great encouragement to Paul, but the promised blessings were great in return.

One of the most poignant parables Christ taught was of the rich man and Lazarus, the example of an ungenerous and uninvolved person.⁵¹ He was not actively doing anything against Lazarus, but he received the punishment of God for his lack of generosity. A life of generosity is key to living a fulfilled and God-honoring life. Falwell implemented this and encouraged this form of worship within his church.

Church plants most frequently fail due to lack of financial support.⁵² Falwell was a master at teaching biblical stewardship, while helping listeners understand that this was a spiritual act of worship to God. Since Falwell was an extremely generous person, it was easier to trust him with a monetary investment. Falwell often quoted Paul’s promise to those believers in Philippi living generously, “And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:19). Planters can help their members make an impact on culture through again helping understand and grow in the grace of giving.

Declining Legalism

Members normally mentioned legalistic tendencies as a declining trait of the early TRBC, including the unhealthy emphasis of the fundamentalist movement regarding purity and spiritual depth in the life of the believer being placed on articles of clothing, hairstyles, make-up, musical

⁵⁰ Jerry Falwell, “Lordship & Stewardship Where Do You Stand on Both Part 1,” *Program—Old Time Gospel Hour*, Asset ID: 280228, F1-POT-1154NC (September 13, 1995), 37:35.

⁵¹ Luke 16:19-31.

⁵² Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 181.

preference, and other life matters. The rules to live by were something that fundamental Christians had been taught for decades. A biblically-literate congregation would sometimes get lost in the words of the text, rather than see the emphasis of the biblical author. Often well-meaning ministers preached the removal of a cultural trend they felt were detrimental to the spiritual growth of their congregations, and made removing this a step toward spiritual depth. The false implication is that the removal of these cultural trends alone would result in spiritual growth.

Declining legalism was mentioned by about a third of the members. This was in response to the culture of the church in the day. A member stated, “Back then it was hymns and that was it. . . . There was no such thing as a band. You brought a guitar to church and you would get kicked out. It was your voice, a hymnal, and that’s it. Maybe a piano or an organ and the organ was questionable. . . . They brought an organ in and that was a big deal . . . almost caused the church to split.”⁵³ Another said about the general climate of the day, “legalism that was so pervasive . . . it was back there through the Fifties and through the older years of the War.”⁵⁴ “I remember one night the music director and another guy had a big argument over a quartet who had sung some southern gospel song, making some people mad, and others were upset. Jerry just kind of sat there mediating as the two guys argued. He did not say anything, but he just kind of took care of it. He did it smoothly, but he did it.”⁵⁵ “I remember him preaching against Hollywood movies, preaching against even mild rock-n-roll music . . . like the Everly

⁵³ Foundational Member Interview 03, 31:20.

⁵⁴ Foundational Member Interview 19, 56:38.

⁵⁵ Foundational Member Interview 20, 52:07.

Brothers. . . . But, those things changed. . . . He determined, ‘I’m not going to major on the minor, I am going to major on the major.’”⁵⁶

Lifestyle expectations are especially hard on teenagers. One member mentioned that TRBC had a very strict expectation on their lifestyle choices. Another member described the pain felt from a few of the other members while the participant lived outside of God’s will. The member felt undesirable at TRBC, due to high expectations of the church in the very early years. The researcher recalls Falwell making it clear, when your child is living in sin, you need to let them know it is not alright, but always love them. A tension exists between inviting a person to do life with you hoping to help them out of harmful lifestyle choices, limiting their freedoms, and majoring on the minors.

Although legalism is only addressed indirectly in the book of Philippians in the emphasis Paul placed in the pre-conversion years when he persecuted early Christians, he celebrates in 3:6 that he would be found blameless in the sight of the laws of the Pharisaical laws.⁵⁷ In verse fourteen, he says, “All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you” (Phil 3:15 NIV). Paul celebrates that as a believer becomes more firmly rooted in the Christian walk, the emphasis switches from legalism to true spiritual depth, and areas of dissention will be clarified through spiritual maturity.

Church planters must be wise in balancing the positive desire for piety in a believer’s life, which can be easily misguided as following a set list of rules, and as a result you have spiritual depth. As a Christian grows in their relationships with God, the understanding of the love of God

⁵⁶ Foundational Member Interview 20, 39:32.

⁵⁷ Phil 3:6; Gal 1:13-14; and 1 Cor 15:9.

often outstrips the need to perform certain tasks and actions for Him. Falwell learned, as Richard Foster in his treatise on discipline states, “Stop trying to impress people with your clothes and impress them with your life.”⁵⁸ One of the side effects of spiritual growth is a decline in the need for the rule-centric lifestyle that is frequently a marked trait of many fundamentalist movements. The increase of spiritual depth in the lives of believers aids their return to godly principles.

Spiritual Depth

While still at PABC, Macel Pate (later Falwell) introduced Falwell to R. B. Whittemore and his daughter Ann Whittemore (later Malir).⁵⁹ Falwell described their spiritual walk as his introduction to “spiritual pulse-taking.”⁶⁰ Falwell and the Whittemores would pray, meditate the Word of God, and then share what God was teaching them. Falwell was a young believer at this time and a new church planter. He later compared the “new beginning” of communing deeply and seeking after God to his own salvation experience.⁶¹ Mr. Whittemore’s primary question to Falwell was, “What’s happening between you and the Lord?”⁶² He exhorted, “Be sure . . . that your inner spiritual life keeps up with all the tasks that you have appointed for yourself. Be sure you stay close to the Father as you rush about doing your Father’s business.”⁶³ Falwell stated,

“From my teachers in Bible College and from the pastors who trained me, I had learned the very important techniques of ministry, about evangelism and church growth, about Sunday School administration, raising funds, and preaching. . . . The Whittemore’s and

⁵⁸ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1988) 18.

⁵⁹ Ann Whittemore Malir, telephone interview by writer, from Lynchburg, VA to Wenatchee, WA, February 9, 2013.

⁶⁰ Falwell, *Autobiography*, 239.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 240.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 243.

their friends taught me about personal holiness, about prayer and waiting, about living by faith, about trusting God and His Holy Spirit to accomplish in and through me what I could never accomplish by myself.” And “Little by little I learned how to incorporate both worlds into my life: the practical world of action and the continuous fellowship with my Lord.”⁶⁴

This became the cornerstone of the founding of the needs-based ministries of TRBC. The Elim Home was birthed from a burden for alcoholics whom he had initially brought down to the Whittemore Farm for prayer and Bible study.⁶⁵ Falwell’s prayer in response to God was this, “Slow me down Lord. . . . You don’t need me to break my neck building a church, You need me just to love You.”⁶⁶ Falwell read and studied authors like Andrew Murray and Watchman Nee and more (for a more complete list, see Appendix I).⁶⁷ All the books will help underpin the necessity of a church planter to seek out depth in their spiritual walks with God. Falwell had grown to be a deeply spiritual individual. Falwell later understood the preeminence of the Holy Spirit working daily in the life of the believer.⁶⁸

One young participant told of one night in particular. While living in the Falwell home, he went to the living room in the middle of the night and saw Jerry lying prostrate on the ground. Thinking Falwell was not well, he went to check on him. Falwell reassured him not to worry, he

⁶⁴ Falwell, *Autobiography*, 249.

⁶⁵ Malir, telephone interview, February 9, 2013.

⁶⁶ Falwell, *Autobiography*, 244.

⁶⁷ Falwell, *Autobiography*, 246-47. Books recommended by Whittemore were Andrew Murray, *Waiting on God* (San Diego: Merchant Books, 2013); idem, *The Full Blessing of Pentecost* (Fort Washington, PA: CLC Publications, 2005); idem, *With Christ in the School of Prayer* (San Diego: Merchant Books, 2013); and *The Deeper Spiritual Life* (North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013); and Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Life* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997).

⁶⁸ Falwell, *Autobiography*, 247. “I know deeply spiritual Christians who differ with one another on eschatology, church polity, or other non-essentials; I have never met a Christian who lived a powerful and productive life who didn’t credit everything to the presence of the Holy Spirit living and working in and through his or her life.”

was just praying.⁶⁹ While addressing growing spiritually, another member said, “I think it was just obeying Scripture.”⁷⁰

Falwell stood strongly on holiness in the lives of believers. He found it impossible to avoid controversy, since he took a strong stance on many of his beliefs, which largely diametrically opposed the beliefs of the liberal church and media. Criticism was often multiplied by the “sins” Falwell sermonized against. To many secularists, these were major lifestyle choices or life-altering decisions. The use of alcohol, pornography, homosexuality, abortion, gender roles, prayer in schools, and separation of church and state, and communism versus capitalism were commonly preached sermon topics from which Falwell did not shy away. Falwell attempted to use humor sometimes to soften his criticism to allow it to be received. During a 1982 speech to the BBF, Falwell was attacked on the stage with a cream pie, while exclaiming he was pro-choice, “the choice is made before you get into bed and sin.”⁷¹ Falwell was often criticized for his ardent stand against the failings, sins, and state of mankind. The major distinction between Jerry Falwell and most fundamentalists and even liberal pastors was that Falwell did not just preach against sins, he provided a method of escape from those besetting sins. These active escapes include the Elim Home, Godparent Home, Christian Counseling Services, and many additional ministry programs designed to offer transformed lives.

Falwell’s life verse is “being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:6). Regarding sin, he embraced

⁶⁹ Dan Manley, whose missionary parents entrusted their son to Falwell from the time he was fifteen years old, had the opportunity to live with Falwell before and after he was married to Macel. Dan Manley, interview by writer, Lynchburg, VA, December 20, 2012.

⁷⁰ Foundational Member Interview 03, 16:22.

⁷¹ Jerry Falwell, Speech to the 1982 Baptist Bible Fellowship Convention, Fort Worth, TX, *Baptist Bible Fellowship*, Asset ID: 255691, F1-ABB-001 (February 24, 1982),16:01.

1 Peter 1:14-16: “. . . as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’”. Falwell believed that winning the battle of the will meant putting to death whatever belongs to the flesh nature of the old man by removing the sin, allowing God to change your desires, and walking in devotion to God. The alternative is to be given over to one’s sin nature and the lusts of the flesh, lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life. Following these pleasures leads to destruction and disunity.

Falwell’s central focus was that spiritual life impacted every facet of an individual’s being—defining who they were at worship, at work, at play, and at the voting polls. His extreme integrationist perspective of the spiritual with the temporal is what has caused many authors to desire a stronger separationist view between his religious and political stances.

Falwell mentioned a constant tension that he felt during the first five years of the church, but, managing this positive tension between spiritual activity and spiritual depth is a step of discipleship. This tension is punctuated by the principle of seeking the will of God and finding Him, through searching for Him with all one’s heart.⁷² This was possible through concentration on prayer and meditation.

A church planter must be communing with God. In 1964, Falwell wrote, “It is not the great talent that God blesses, but the heart that learns to dwell in the Holy of Holies.”⁷³ The Whitmores encouraged Falwell to worry about the depth of his ministry, saying God himself would worry about the breadth. With these encouragements, Falwell made alterations for a time.

⁷² Jer 29:13.

⁷³ Falwell, *Advancing Through Prayer*, 12.

His radio show was entitled “The Deep Things of God.”⁷⁴ One author writes, “Most church planters are zealous about evangelism and committed to helping fulfill the Great Commission; however, in their pursuit of fulfilling the Great Commission, many have made the fatal mistake—and have neglected the Greatest Commandment.”⁷⁵ Church planters must be keenly aware of their responsibility to go deeper spiritually.

One of the primary characteristics of a healthy church planter is that they have a close relationship to God; without this, a church planter cannot be successful. This relational connection with God must extend to the members within the church. Planting a church will test a planter’s faith many times. The roots will have to go deep in order to weather the storms.

⁷⁴ Knowles, *Liberty University Oral History Project*, 1:12.

⁷⁵ Jim Griffith and Bill Easum, *Ten Most Common Mistakes Made by New Church Starts* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2008), 6.

Salvation-Oriented

Falwell started TRBC in Lynchburg, because “Lynchburg did not have many evangelistic Churches.”⁷⁶ He continued to explain that Lynchburg has been evangelized finely for the last fifty years. A frequently heard phrase during the altar calls at TRBC was: “Do you know that you know that you know, that you are ready for Heaven?” Falwell wanted to make sure that everyone within the sound of his voice had triple-checked that they were ready to meet their Creator. TRBC had a strong desire for revivalist zeal. From the very first year of Thomas Road, concerted efforts were made to usher in revival through that local church. Ultimately, the goal of revival is the exponential transformation of lives impacted by the Gospel of Christ and growing in right relationship with him.

This code describing the church as salvation-focused was described almost sixty times by members in the research. One member exclaimed, “I know he had a vision for souls; he had a vision for Lynchburg, itself.”⁷⁷ “God gave him a ‘hungry’—a deep ‘hungry’ [*sic*] for seeing men’s lives and hearts, and he saw his duty, and his upbringing he saw the other side.”⁷⁸ Jerry did lots of revival meetings, sometimes “two a week, they were always consistent and a month never went by without us holding at least one or two.”⁷⁹ “He made it grow and was never satisfied for things to be as they are. He was always looking for new ways and means to reach people.”⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Jerry Falwell, “50th Anniversary Sunday Morning Service” *Messages at TRBC - Sunday Morning at TRBC*, FB-CMS-0725 (July, 01, 2007), 10:45.

⁷⁷ Foundational Member Interview 22, 5:05.

⁷⁸ Foundational Member Interview 07, 101:31.

⁷⁹ Foundational Member Interview 19, 43:11.

⁸⁰ Foundational Member Interview 04, 1:04:19.

One member celebrated the results of visitation in seeing someone coming to church, “you’ve simply taken the time to go to somebody’s door and then you see them when you’ve invited them.”⁸¹ Finally one celebrated, “I got saved that Sunday. . . . That next Wednesday, my dad got saved, and a week later my mom got saved. And in those first years, about eighteen members of our family came to Christ at Thomas Road.”⁸² “Falwell was never happy with the status quo; he was rarely contented. “He constantly strove for new ways and means to reach people.”⁸³

Falwell practiced expanding the focus of his members, encouraging them to bring the lost in with them. One interviewee stated that her mother-in-law would invite every single person in her shoe factory to Friend Days at TRBC.⁸⁴ TRBC constituted primarily engaged parishioners and members, who were mutually connected to each other and to the broader community. Almost every new convert was relationally connected. Most participants told their reason for attending TRBC was initially extrinsically motivated. Some examples are through visitation, invitation from a friend to a special day, hearing Falwell on the radio, or seeing him on the television. Very few stated they decided they should go to church and picked the closest one.

Bob Roberts Jr. contends that the dominant areas of society are: economics, agriculture, education, family, communication, arts and entertainment, governance and justice, medical, and

⁸¹ Foundational Member Interview 11, 40:31.

⁸² Foundational Member Interview 04, 1:00:47.

⁸³ Foundational Member Interview 04, 1:04:19.

⁸⁴ Foundational Member Interview 07, 1:01:31.

science and tech.⁸⁵ These are fundamental areas in which people in modern societies spend the majority of their time. A church achieves success much more easily if it shares Christ through and within those areas of interest.

Charles Brock states, “A clear understanding of one’s theology makes his methodology predictable. The heart of a practical, biblical methodology, or strategy, lies in a biblical theology.”⁸⁶ In 1964 Falwell wrote, “If your local church has the right message and the right mission, then all that is required, if the revival fires are not burning, is for the right method to be employed.”⁸⁷ Falwell’s recipe for revival included the right message and the right mission, plus stating the right method should bring revival fire.

In the first decade, Falwell had already coined the term for which he has become famous in church-growth circles, “saturation evangelism.”⁸⁸ “Saturation is preaching the gospel to every available person, by every available means, at every available time.”⁸⁹ At TRBC, this form of outreach used every available means by doing the following and more: visitation, telephone evangelism, newspaper, transportation ministry, radio, television, tract and book print ministries, direct mail, promotion days, special event, revival ministries, friend days, homecomings, an under-privileged boy’s home, summer camping, sign-language ministry, educational evangelism, an alcoholic treatment program, a prison evangelism, and many other. The church had always

⁸⁵ Bob Roberts Jr. *The Multiplying Church: The New Math for Starting New Churches* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 121.

⁸⁶ Charles Brock, *The Principles and Practice of Indigenous Church Planting* (Neosho, MO: Church Growth International, 1981), 15.

⁸⁷ Falwell, *Advancing Through Prayer*, 13.

⁸⁸ Jerry Falwell, *Ten Years of Miracles*, Thomas Road Baptist Church 10th Anniversary booklet (Lynchburg, VA: Thomas Road Baptist Church, 1966), 19.

⁸⁹ Towns, *Americas Fastest Growing Churches*, 31.

followed these principles of saturation evangelism. The culture of the church was heavily focused on transformation. This was the key ministry philosophy that Falwell developed.

In the early letters, Falwell consistently communicated the numbers of people who responded to an offer of salvation. One example of this is the documentation of thirty-five being saved in the services on Easter Sunday, April 18, 1965,⁹⁰ and again on “Children’s Day” where sixty were saved.⁹¹ This form of communication had two results; first, it elevated the importance in the minds of the readers. Second, it encouraged others to support the ministry. Third, it would encourage others to invite their family, friends, and acquaintances to TRBC.

Paul knew the life of good living was not an event. He writes,

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead (Phil 3:7-11).

The church planter must realize that salvation focus should be a driving force behind many of the activities of the church. Falwell said, “Let me tell you what keeps the church straight . . . what keeps the Christians straight . . . if you stay out winning souls day and night . . . will keep everything else right.”⁹² The efforts of keeping the church heading in the right direction can be greatly diminished by keeping it outreach-oriented.

⁹⁰ Falwell, Letter, April 21, 1965.

⁹¹ Jerry Falwell, letter, November 4, 1965, Russell Booth Collection. Falwell notes where sixty were saved during Children’s Day in November of 1965.

⁹² Jerry Falwell, “Three Great Dangers in the Christian Life.” *Old Time Gospel Hour*, Asset ID: 254394, FB-POT-0111 (November 24, 1974), 51:29.

A member recalled that, on a number of occasions, Falwell would send the church out to knock on every door in Lynchburg.⁹³ Falwell wrote, “I will expend all my energies to win as many as possible to Christ, so long as God gives me strength. I would like to preach the gospel on every TV station in the free world. That would be carrying out the command of Christ.”⁹⁴ Once a church is established, often an unhealthy shift in focus moves from evangelism and connecting the lost to Christ, to the daily and weekly functions of operating a church. This was not the case with TRBC.

Faith and Dreams

Faith and Dreams was the first crossover principle as it was discussed frequently, united with fulfilled dreams or visions of Falwell. Since that was equally a spiritual discipline in the church as well as a principle of tenacious leadership, it made sense to merge them into one unit. This area was a primary area of discussion for the early TRBC members.

Falwell’s vision or dreams did not appear in a vacuum. He would take any opportunity to hear from and see some of the greatest workings of God in his day. During his days at Baptist Bible College under President George Beauchamp Vick, Falwell had the opportunity to catch a larger vision for church ministry. Vick was the pastor of the mega-church Temple Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan, up to five thousand in attendance in Sunday School. One member told of the Fall of 1956, when Falwell drove to TTU to witness the ministry of Lee Roberson. During the visit, Jerry arguably caught the initial vision for Liberty University (LU). The member stated, “He came back that next week—he went up on Madison Heights, up on top of

⁹³ Foundational Member Interview 11, 18:30.

⁹⁴ Towns and Falwell, *Capturing a Town*, 7.

the hill by the river there. He said, ‘God, if you’ll give me this city for Christ, I’ll do it; I’ll do what you want me to [do].’”⁹⁵ The church planter must seek vision-generating opportunities and adventures, gleaned ideas from other churches, businesses, and multitudes of other available resources.

One participant quoted Falwell who quipped, “It doesn’t matter that the rabbit can’t climb the tree. The rabbit must climb the tree!” Falwell was always goal-oriented; rarely had he achieved one level by faith before he was believing God to provide for the next goal, level, or hill to conquer. His members watched as he achieved the seemingly impossible. “We were in our 20s and ready to go! I’m sure God gave him the visions he had; he was just a man of visions! . . . He never ran out of projects.”⁹⁶ Falwell’s attitude in the face of obstacles seemingly insurmountable was one of a vibrant faith in his God. One participant described Falwell saying, “it was the greatest reason she would invest in any new vision.”⁹⁷ This was a similar theme. Early members believed that Falwell was a great investment, because he was a producer and a reproducer.

Falwell’s book *Building Dynamic Faith* says, “What’s the secret to a life of faith? What’s the secret to great answers to prayer? It’s not about your faith-ability; the secret is not in you or your heart. The secret is in the object of your faith. That object is Jesus Christ.”⁹⁸ Falwell willingly served a big God, and he listened to the vision and the dreams that God gave him. As a result, his perspective on faith was merely to allow God to take the reigns in his life, trusting God with each area of his life.

⁹⁵ Foundational Member Interview 06, 28:07.

⁹⁶ Foundational Member Interview 16, 24:10.

⁹⁷ Foundational Member Interview 11, 1:31:39.

Philippians 3:13 reads, “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Paul felt it was good to stretch and strive for what was next for the Kingdom of God.

Falwell had great faith in God; he never feared that God was not involved with what he was called to do. His members perceived him as never being anxious to follow what God had laid on his heart. Stetzer says, “The planter who does not have faith that God is planting a church through his efforts should not be a planter.”⁹⁹ In Falwell, we see the spiritual disciplines of faith reached a chorus level in the minds of early members as they spoke of the vibrant faith exhibited in the life of this church planter. Members understood that nothing was too large for Falwell to ask, and they watched and believed God would fulfill his desires.

The overarching principle of spiritual disciplines will create a healthy spiritual perspective in the pastor and his parishioners, acting upon the principle, growing deeper with God, and maintaining a focus of the desire for all men to be saved.¹⁰⁰ Early members remind the church planter to concentrate on prayer, biblical preaching, discipleship, generosity, declining legalism, spiritual depth, salvation focus, and faith and vision. These simultaneously created a foundation and a mechanism for the furtherance of the tenacious leaders and relational ministry.

⁹⁸ Jerry Falwell, *Building Dynamic Faith* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2005), 21.

⁹⁹ Ed Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003), 81.

¹⁰⁰ 1 Tim 2:3-4, and 2 Pet 3:9.

Chapter 4

Falwell's Principles of Tenacious Leadership

The parent code covered in this section will delve into the most frequently addressed area of Falwell's life. This is the area most outsiders took note of due to the staggering accomplishments of one man's life. Defining this parent category or overarching principle, this principle deals with the traits and skill set involved in setting the focus, direction, planning, and organizational structure in a church or organization. As with the other two overarching principles a reader will grow in a depth of knowledge from what others have done, modify for context, and practice imitation of leaders highly skilled. Tenacious leadership generates great reward in the momentum and direction of the church.

The principles noted in the surveyed members indicated these areas: zeal and passion, integrity, entrepreneurial and marketing, persuasion and motivation, mentoring, strategic planning, and team building. Each of these traits carried with them the intention to bring momentum and growth within the church. This was also the case of the spiritual disciplines of the last chapter, which culminated in transformed lives.

Zeal and Passion

The zeal and passion of Falwell encouraged and required stamina in each person at TRBC. The perception of members was that Falwell would work around the clock on establishing TRBC. Additionally, passion was bolstered by self-discipline and the priority of spiritual disciplines.

“Keep on, Keepin on”¹ was a quote recollected by members as one of Falwell’s favorites. Another member said, “He just never doubted he could do it! Although there were many difficult days . . . many obstacles. . . . But, to be around him, to talk to him; to listen to him talk—he was never discouraged. . . . He just had no idea that there was not going to be some way that there would be a solution to the problem.”² “Jerry was a very disciplined individual. He made sure he had time for his personal study and doing the necessary things. Those didn’t necessarily show up on paper.”³ “But he marched out under that banner of love, knowing that if that door isn’t open today, it will be one day and I will keep knocking on it. . . . If God said he wanted something done, Jerry usually got it done. If he had the idea and it didn’t come off the ground right away, he didn’t give up. He kept working on it until he got his way.”⁴ “He never wanted anything small. He thought that if you asked for large things and wanted large things and were serving his God, he [God] would give you those things. He was never satisfied.”⁵ “If he wanted to do something, he’d just do it! He was marvelous. It didn’t make any difference if he there was money there to do it or not! He decided if he had enough faith and if the Lord led him do it, he’d go ahead to do it and, suffer the consequences later!”⁶ Another eloquent summation was, “I think God blessed it because of his passion for the Bible, passion for the Gospel, passion for people,

¹ Foundational Member Interview 02, 24:41.

² Foundational Member Interview 04, 19:44.

³ Foundational Member Interview 09, 1:07:31.

⁴ Foundational Member Interview 19, 50:44.

⁵ Foundational Member Interview 18, 25:09.

⁶ Foundational Member Interview 05, 35:40.

passion for families, passion for Christian education. . . . He was just a uniquely passionate man!”⁷

Self-discipline in Falwell’s life was closely tied to his zeal. Discipline can have a negative connotation. However, it is an important aspect of the Christian life and walk. Further, determination was a principle tied closely to Falwell’s faith in God’s leading in his life as well as the life of the church.

Falwell in his zeal encouraged, “Wise-persistence, which includes perspiration and supplication to the will of God. Only those who have successfully substituted care of prayer are able to receive the peace of God . . . contentment is not complacency.”⁸ Falwell was extremely self-disciplined. His background in athletics allowed him to push beyond where others wanted to push. One participant, who was a young boy at the time of the church’s founding, mentioned that everyone wanted to be on Falwell’s team, because he always won. Even if they were behind, he would keep playing until the opponent lost the will to keep pushing. In ministry, Falwell considered the darkness of this world to be his opponent and refused to capitulate even in the face of odds seemingly insurmountable. When all of his spiritual mentors abandoned him in his efforts to found TRBC, Falwell followed his heart, and God’s call on him to plant in Lynchburg, Virginia.⁹

Philippians addresses the zeal and passion of Paul in a negative way when he writes, “as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless” (Phil 3:6). After Paul was converted he did not lose his zeal, it was reapplied. He writes, “according to my earnest

⁷ Foundational Member Interview 20, 46:27.

⁸ Jerry Falwell, "Verse By Verse through Philippians - Chapter 4," *Messages at TRBC—Sunday Morning at TRBC*, Asset ID: 255382, FB-CMS-0751 (September 24, 2006), 51:23.

expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell” (Phil 1:20). Paul was willing to lay down everything, including his life for the spreading of the Gospel of Christ.

The first chapter of Proverbs tells the importance of discipline as one of two things that fools despise. Towns and a number of other members talked about the importance of the self-discipline of Falwell, who was an person extremely disciplined, and who made time for private study and doing the necessary things. These were private times, which in some ways could not show up on paper.¹⁰ Proverbs also says “Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings” (22:29 KJV). Falwell’s life may be a modern day embodiment of that truth from Scripture, having the opportunity to stand before many presidents and rulers.

Early in his ministry, Falwell determined his strategy for growing his ministry was knocking on one hundred doors a day. One author wrote of the “Falwell applied ‘super-aggressive evangelism’ which means being super aggressive in outreach, super aggressive in faith and super aggressive in sharing Christ.”¹¹ His tenacity superseded that of other churches in the area, but more important than the context of his strategy, was his unwavering implementation of it week-after-week. A church planter must determine how they are going to find and get to serve new individuals in their community. For Falwell, it was knocking on doors, introducing himself, and offering them a pastor if they needed one.

⁹ Foundational Member Interview 18, 1:09:03.

¹⁰ Foundational Member Interview 09, 1:07:35.

Church planting, as with church ministry in general, is a family activity. A planter who desires to be effective must have a healthy family life. Ministry is tough, so this is true for all ministries, but church planting, because of the unique uncertainties and risks involved, places additional stress on a marriage and family. Falwell frequently said, “I’ve seen far too many ministers take care of everyone else’s children to the detriment of their own.”¹² These frequent statements share of Falwell’s dedication to both children and eventually grandchildren, making time for all the important or special occasions in each of their lives. In fact, when Jerry Falwell Jr. was born, Falwell Sr. cut back his evening work so he could be home for the children.¹³ Effective church planters begin with and maintain healthy family lives.

Integrity

Falwell was frequently characterized as a man of great personal integrity. In addition, he was very non-secretive; a number of members joked that Falwell did not like secrecy. Frequently, the Wednesday evening Bible study would hear of all the latest unreleased potential plans, opportunities, or discussions.

“He had the personality people could trust in him and they followed him.”¹⁴ “I saw what he did for my family. I saw food on the table. . . . I saw medical bills being paid. I saw money being put in . . . hands when we were hungry. So nobody could ever convince me in a million years that he was ever guilty of anything shady. Ever!”¹⁵ “If Jerry said it, you just believed it.”¹⁶

¹¹ Elmer Towns, Ed Stetzer, and Warren Bird, *11 Innovations in the Local Church* (Ventura CA: Regal Books, 2007), 115.

¹² Falwell, *Autobiography*, 59.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁴ Foundational Member Interview 18, 54:35.

¹⁵ Foundational Member Interview 20, 1:00:01.

A member mentioned the encouragements of integrity to staff, “He would remind the staff on a continual basis—Morality . . . I would stop and pick a woman up if in the pouring-down rain—he wouldn’t!”¹⁷ Another member celebrated the openness in the church, “I know of pastors that feel it’s important to keep as much hidden from their church congregation as possible. Jerry was not like that. He liked to keep things as much as possible in the open.”¹⁸

Falwell would remind the staff with regard to morality. He would never stop and pick a woman up if it was pouring down rain. He would tell staff members “you are not spending enough time with family.” He would make sure that staff was involved in their personal devotional lives. It was always important to him that they take time with the Lord.¹⁹ Falwell was known to be among the few well-known evangelists who made it to the end without being accused of personal impropriety with money or women.²⁰

In Philippians, Paul addresses Timothy as a clear example of a man of integrity, “For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel” (Phil 2:19-24). Integrity is a key character in establishing trust between people. It is also the only foundation upon which healthy leadership can be built. Additionally, “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good

¹⁶ Foundational Member Interview 16, 44:26.

¹⁷ Foundational Member Interview 09, 1:13:05.

¹⁸ Foundational Member Interview 04, 56:35.

¹⁹ Foundational Member Interview 09, 1:13:05.

²⁰ Foundational Member Interview 16, 1:04:14.

report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” (Phil 4:8).

His personal integrity was paramount. When there is doubt, do not do it! And stay away from that which you cannot resist. Falwell preferred to keep items open and public, things were rarely a secret around him. However, despite attempting to live a life of integrity, controversy will still arise if you raise the ire of those who disagree with you. One story was spread around the Lynchburg area about Jerry Falwell and his “goons” at TRBC murdering one of its members because of a disagreement about bonds.²¹ Falwell often said, “Don’t defend yourself. God will vindicate his servants”²² A leader must be cautious not to waste time defending themselves. The truth will eventually become apparent.

Believability is key to a church planter, in almost every research interview conducted; participants recalled the integrity of Falwell as a key component in choosing to follow him. Francis Schaeffer was quoted as saying, “Of all the guys I’ve met in America, Jerry Falwell is a straight shooter, a man of his word.”²³

Mentoring

Mentoring in this study refers to mature influencers, of whom Falwell had many in his life, as well as influencers possessing spiritual maturity that Falwell brought into the church. Members were often surprised in the early years that Falwell brought in so many well-known individuals. Falwell talked frequently about the mentoring relationships he cultivated; they were

²¹ John Killinger, *The Other Preacher in Lynchburg: My Life Across Town from Jerry Falwell* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2009), 25.

²² Jerry Falwell, “How to Start Over Once You’re Over the Hill,” *Messages at TRBC – Sunday Morning at TRBC*, Asset 223425, F1-CMS-0346, (November 15, 1992), 37:25.

of extreme importance to him. While at BBC, the weekends frequently consisted of an eight-hour trip each way to do a revival service on Sunday. Falwell celebrated the opportunity to hear and see those early giants of the fundamentalist movement. One wise step the BBC leadership took was to bring along the students who could help with driving and learn by watching. There was no staying in hotels; they stayed with members of the congregation. Some of the early influencers mentioned were Fred Donnelson, Bill Dowell, John Rawlings, Art Wilson, Wendell Zimmerman, G. Beauchamp (G. B.) Vick, and John Rawlings.²⁴

Mentors and mentoring was mentioned twenty-nine times during the interviews. One man recommended, “Every young man should have a mentor like Jack Dinsbeer was . . . and Paul was a good preacher, he really was! He was real friendly, real warm, outgoing.”²⁵ “B. R. Lakin was his mentor. B. R. used to say, ‘If there’s a bunch of dogs nipping at your heels, you know you must be doing something! Don’t say anything, don’t do anything, don’t do anything—anything!’”²⁶ “Just all of those old men who are giants in the faith. And he exposed us to all of their teaching. . . . Not so he could say that they were there, but so the people could benefit from the knowledge that they’d gain.”²⁷ “He’s had such a charismatic way about him—he was bringing in top evangelists . . . it looked like you had to be a huge church! Somehow he got involved with Oliver Greene, Hyman Appleman, and brought in those guys.” Additionally, he

²³ Doug LeBlanc, “Faces of Falwell,” *Rutherford* 4, no. 1 (January 1995): 7.

²⁴ Foundational Member Interview 09, 1:28:26.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 28:47.

²⁶ Foundational Member Interview 16, 35:29.

²⁷ Foundational Member Interview 04, 50:04.

brought in the likes of Canadian Bill Weir²⁸ and Englishman, Major Ian Thomas.²⁹ About Jerry another member exclaimed, “just being around him would have a great influence on you; the way he lived his life and the things he was doing would influence you to do better, yourself.”³⁰

Falwell benefitted from the influence of some really good mentors. His first youth pastor was Jack Dinsbeer. Jack served in Korea and then came to Lynchburg after answering the call to preach. On January 2, 1952, the night Falwell had a salvation experience, Jack was informed that he was the leader of the Wall Gang. Jack immediately sought his friendship and taught him that his influence could be used for good. Jack got the boys involved in visitation, and leading the singing in the various levels of Sunday school.³¹ Immediately the new recruits were not just hearing and seeing ministry, they were doing ministry. That is all they knew. In addition to Dinsbeer, Paul Donaldson was warm and friendly and a great preacher, and taught the young boys to strive for excellence.³² Falwell often quoted Lee Roberson, and passed along the quote to John Maxwell who made it famous. The quotation is, “Everything rises and falls on leadership.”³³ Members recalled hearing this quote from the first decade of the church.

Needless to say, Paul understood mentoring. He wrote to the church in Philippi, which he founded, “Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern” (Phil 3:17). The Apostle Paul taught a developmental model of discipleship and

²⁸ Foundational Member Interview 16, 1:39:20.

²⁹ Foundational Member Interview 06, 36:33.

³⁰ Foundational Member Interview 02, 05:35.

³¹ Foundational Member Interview 09, 30:48.

³² Knowles, *Liberty University Oral History Project*, see *Oral History Interview with Dr. Jack Dinsbeer*, 14:03 and 1:24:04.

³³ Lee Roberson, *Double-Breasted* (Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1977), 88.

church growth. In 2 Tim 2:2, Paul lays out a plan for development for a young Timothy: “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (NASB). Paul taught the reproduction of a person’s spiritual life into the life of another, who in turn will reproduce and thereby multiply the effects. The story of Jerry Falwell and the results of his life are a multiplication of this very plan laid out. With the faith entrusted to him, Falwell made it his life work to invest in as many others as he could. Falwell had the foresight to hire older men within the first few years of the ministry. These men were prayer warriors, knew the Bible, were advisors, and relationally connected staff.³⁴

This study addresses what a church planter must do to be successful. As such, a recent research by the Center for Missional Research found a much greater success rate of church plants, which are denominationally connected.³⁵ When comparing this statistic to the normal 50³⁶ to 80³⁷ percent of churches quoted previously, clearly mentoring is an important component for a church planter in learning to lead well. TRBC was not a denominationally connected church during the time period researched; additionally, many of the initial members had undergone a painful split with their last church. This backdrop, upon which Falwell built TRBC, contrasts starkly the ideal church-planting environment, but Falwell quickly added mentoring relationships. Falwell had a methodology for being mentored as well as being a mentor to others.

³⁴ Foundational Member Interview 06, 9:35.

³⁵ Ed Stetzer and Phillip Connor, “Church Plant Survivability and Health Study 2007,” *Research Report a Publication of the Center for Missional Research*, North American Mission Board, Center for Missional Research.

³⁶ Carl George, “Perspective on Winning a Continent,” in *How to Plant a Church Syllabus* (Pasadena, CA: Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth, 1985), 5-9.

³⁷ James Emery White, *Why New Churches Fail*, accessed December 8, 2013, http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200004/022_why_new_chuches_fail.cfm.

Strategic Planning

Falwell’s mathematical mind helped him to plot quickly the next steps for the church as well as himself. The area of strategic planning is tied closely to the need for the spiritual discipline of faith and vision. His strategic plan included a culture of excellence and a marketing strategy, which was implemented daily during the planting of TRBC, contributing to his impact on a generation.

Members recalled a witticism of Falwell, “There are two ways to reach the top of an oak tree—you can climb it or you can sit on an acorn and wait.”³⁸ One member stated, “I think he was a great thinker. He knew what he wanted to accomplish and he’d set those plans within his vision and, whatever it took to get it moving, he was always looking to move somebody there, involving people to get it done. I don’t know of very many things that he didn’t set out to do that he didn’t.”³⁹ Another member explained that he followed Falwell because of his accomplishments, “All I can say is that everything he said he would do, he would get (and then a little more). You couldn’t help but follow a guy like that because you knew where he was going—because he told you beforehand where you were going.”⁴⁰

One member explains, “Jerry’s approach was rarely a reaction, but frequently a response. His strategic plan was to meet the need for a given amount of time. And he would move on.”⁴¹ However, Falwell did not spend undue time determining if something was the right step. One member told of a humorous account, “Jerry wanted to enlarge the School on a Sunday night. . . .

³⁸ Foundational Member Interview 15, 28:48.

³⁹ Foundational Member Interview 11, 1:31:39.

⁴⁰ Foundational Member Interview 12, 26:16.

⁴¹ Foundational Member Interview 08, 1:06:94.

I went right home and started sketching it, so Jerry'd have some plans to take with him to the bank on Monday morning."⁴²

One strategy Falwell did masterfully was writing the vision and history clearly upon the hearts and minds of those who attended his church or schools. Every couple of months, he repeated the stories of where TRBC began, where it was going, and how it would get there. This ensured that those who were not present got a clear glimpse into the understanding and expectations of this organization. Thus, before the era of vision and mission statements printed in the back of newsletters, Falwell brought clarity and focus to the members through the narrative of the church.

One portion of Falwell's strategic plan included a culture of excellence. A member notes, "Jerry would always say he wanted the best of the best to come to Thomas Road."⁴³ From the very first year, Falwell started to bring in evangelists and preachers who would normally speak at larger events. Members attributed some of the exposure offered by these men to the desire to achieve greater things. One speaker worthy of note was Oliver Greene; many credit him for fueling the dramatic growth from four-hundred to eight-hundred attendees at TRBC over the course of one revival service in the late Fifties.⁴⁴ These influencers at the large events would help to spurn a thirst for growth, through a focus on excellence, driven by a desire for seeing more lives transformed.

⁴² Foundational Member Interview 02, 14:03.

⁴³ Foundational Member Interview 04, 48:20.

⁴⁴ Knowles, *Liberty University Oral History Project*, 1 (46:21).

Another part of TRBC's strategic planning was in integration of large attractational events. These events exposed the church to live teachings from the renowned speakers, teachers and leaders in Christianity. Along with an exciting environment, these included TRBC's Feeding of 5,000 Fish Fry, many church revivals, and Friend Days, the first of which was November 1957. His request was that you "by all means, bring everyone you know."⁴⁵ Falwell had a great affinity for attractational events, whether it be the influence of his dad, the entrepreneurial entertainer, or from seeing the church double in size from around four or five hundred in attendance to eight hundred in one week's revival.⁴⁶ Falwell was hooked, but so was the community. One attendee recalled that during revival services, attendees would have to arrive an hour early to get a seat.⁴⁷

Some accused Falwell of being an entertainer. His father had been second to none in the area providing Lynchburg with its first taste of big band music, even at one point bringing in the great Houdini who thrilled the crowds.⁴⁸ The motivation seemed to be very different as he was not selling anything. He was attempting to give something away. For instance, Falwell would give away a Bible to anyone who brought ten visitors.⁴⁹ Attractional events additionally can build excitement, motivate, and provide further prospects for immediate follow-up; fueling further opportunities for growth.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Jerry Falwell, Letter to Thomas Road Baptist Church, July 13, 1965, which references the Brush Arbor Meeting with Lester Roloff.

⁴⁶ Foundational Member Interview 07 28:30.

⁴⁷ Foundational Member Interview 06, 33:15.

⁴⁸ Falwell, *Autobiography*, 51.

⁴⁹ Foundational Member Interview 09, 39:50.

⁵⁰ The Church Plant Survivability Study noted that "conducting a special children's event (i.e., Fall Festival, Easter Egg Hunt)," "conducting a block party as an outreach event," and "mailing invitations to services programs, events," among many other factors resulted in higher attendance.

Additionally, Falwell used TRBC music as an internal attractional ministry. This was always an important component at the church. From the very first Sunday, they offered special music in the form of a trio singing.⁵¹ Almost everyone who could hold a tune was on a music team. Children's groups, youth choirs, adults in quartets and trios, and even Falwell led the music himself, always accompanied on the piano by Macel Falwell. Other early members celebrated the old hymns and choruses that they used to sing. The lyrics spoke to the hearts of those believers, and the accompaniment attracted those who were teenagers around the same time that Falwell was.

Paul said, "I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you" (Phil 2:19). Paul reveals his strategic planning of sending Timothy in advance of coming himself to visit when the church in Philippi. Church planters must have a strategy for how they plan on reaching and integrating new people into their churches. Falwell cast a broad net, hoping to catch as many as possible. Having and implementing a plan for growth will go a long way in reaching and integrating new prospects.

Entrepreneurial and Marketing

Falwell was innovative by taking others' ideas and making them relevant or better. The entrepreneurial side of Falwell was mentioned twenty-six times. One member stated, "He was never afraid to try new things, whether anyone else was doing it or not,"⁵² and "Jerry was probably one of the best innovators, taking something and making it his own and then using it."⁵³

⁵¹ Foundational Member Interview 13, 7:02; and Foundational Member Interview 06, 31:24.

⁵² Foundational Member Interview 09, 1:07:31.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 41:38.

Another said, “I remember the day Jerry gave away a bicycle to the person who brought the most kids in on their bus. . . . I loaded that bus up more than it should’ve been, but I wanted that bike!”⁵⁴

Another skill Falwell learned from his father was that of marketing. From the beginning of the church, he sent regular newsletters. These looked like billboards rather than letters. One member elaborated on why he thought Falwell was successful, “I think the idea of knocking on doors and bringing people to church . . . his philosophy to use every available means, every available time to every available person. He lived that, day in and day out. He seized every opportunity—through media, whether it be through television, radio, newspapers, books, tracts.”⁵⁵ One National Public Radio (NPR) interviewer inquired of Falwell as to why his church had grown so much. Falwell’s response delved into one aspect of the church’s concentration on mass-media evangelism: “Humanly speaking I have always tried to use the most advanced technology that was available at the moment. We started the church on one Sunday, June 17, 1956, within three weeks we were on daily radio and within three months we were on television. . . . A pastor needs to be media savvy if he is going to reach everybody.”⁵⁶ Falwell believed one of the primary human actions, decisions, traits or characteristics, which would help the spur of growth, was the use of mass media. TRBC was the first church in North America to use early punch-card computers to track members, supporters, giving, and so forth. Jerry came up with a

⁵⁴ Foundational Member Interview 14, 28:43.

⁵⁵ Foundational Member Interview 04, 1:03:33.

⁵⁶ Steve Inskip, “Religion, Politics a Potent Mix for Jerry Falwell,” *National Public Radio, Morning Edition*, June 30, 2006; accessed November 16, 2013, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5522064>.

five-fold plan for helping to determine what type of giver each of his supporters were, which was all tracked within the computer system. Falwell was not afraid to invest in something early.

The characteristic of always wanting something new or different will lead to tension in the area willingness to be patient. Patience is part of the fruit of the spirit all believers should be developing. Effective church planters are willing to be patient for God to do His work. The balance between these first two is a constant challenge. Often, successful church planters are wired for growth, but effective church planters develop a good plan, surround themselves with the right people, and then wait as God works.

Paul writes, “. . . but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me . . . forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:12-14). Although not directly addressing being entrepreneurial, Paul possessed a clear desire to move from one stage of life into something new. Seeking the new and orchestrating change generates excitement and momentum.

Falwell’s entrepreneurial ideas included attractional events; the first Friend Day he scheduled was in November, of 1957.⁵⁷ Most statistics TRBC had achieved long before reaching its growth potential for the small city of Lynchburg. Falwell grew his vision to reaching an ever-changing culture of late teenagers heading to college. Immediately upon Falwell’s conversion, he began to serve in the area. During a break from BBC, Falwell came back to help run the youth ministry at PABC. Under his influence, the growth was almost instantaneous and exponential as he reached the kids who were in his circle of friends.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Foundational Member Interview 18, 3:31.

⁵⁸ Knowles, *Liberty University Oral History Project*, 0:35.

Church planters will find themselves striking a balance between taking a risk and having the wisdom and the patience to take the necessary steps to get it done. The best church planter will get tired with the status quo and reach for new opportunities to grow and develop the Kingdom of God. They feel comfortable in the hectic growth stages of their ministries. At no point in Falwell's life and ministry did he "rest on his laurels." His commitment to excellence and desire to achieve the next step God laid before him was unmatched.

Persuasion and Motivation

Falwell was much like an orchestral conductor who makes no music, but creates the sound by empowering his instrumentalists and focusing their energies toward a similar goal with slightly different tempos. Falwell orchestrated by persuasion and then motivation, growing groups of individuals to accomplish the work of TRBC.

Falwell's skill at persuasion and motivation was mentioned twenty-three times in the study. One member said, "He was a great delegator, an unbelievable organizer, an incredible motivator."⁵⁹ "Jerry had a way about him that got you to listen to him, automatically, and obey. Whatever it was that the Lord said he wanted done. And you just did it."⁶⁰ "If he needed something done, he either would hire someone on the spot or he talked them into it. That's it!"⁶¹ "He was a visionary. . . . He always could think of things that other people could never think about. He had a way of getting other people to buy into those ideas. He was a very persuasive man."⁶² "He knew how to motivate people, get them to do something"⁶³ "He did anything to

⁵⁹ Foundational Member Interview 20, 49:28.

⁶⁰ Foundational Member Interview 18, 51:26.

⁶¹ Foundational Member Interview 15, 16:11.

⁶² Foundational Member Interview 03, 11:44.

motivate people!”⁶⁴ “He would lead you through it but he was definitely the leader. . . . It was never ‘You do this’ and ‘You do that,’ it was always ‘we’. He put himself in it just as deep as he expected anyone else to be.”⁶⁵ “I don’t care what he asked us to do, everybody would chip in there. If there was a need, he’d ask for our help. One time, when things were so bad that they needed help, people sold their homes—they did everything they could.”⁶⁶

Enticing quality individuals to buy into small plans can be harder than convincing individuals to invest in an audacious goal or vision. One member recalled Falwell’s brother-in-law asking, “‘Jerry, don’t you think you’re asking too much?’ and he’d tell’m, ‘No, because God wants it. And whatever God wants, well, we ought to be willing to give it!’”⁶⁷

Falwell frequently quoted, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13), to motivate his members and staff. Falwell used his leadership foundation to motivate and persuade one’s followers to accomplish the dream and visions the leader sets forth. Falwell was a master motivator; he loved to encourage his team to accomplish great goals beyond the expectations of most ministers. A principle closely related to the persuasion and motivation is the zeal and passion to work hard. Paul wrote, “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ” (Col 3:23-24).

⁶³ Foundational Member Interview 09, 8:45.

⁶⁴ Foundational Member Interview 16, 1:00:20.

⁶⁵ Foundational Member Interview 11, 1:06:10.

⁶⁶ Foundational Member Interview 05, 35:02.

⁶⁷ Foundational Member Interview 17, 51:45.

One of the messages Falwell became known for was entitled, “The God of All Encouragement.” Falwell understood the power of encouragement versus discouragement. Members recalled he would quote D. L. Moody, “I have never known God to use a discouraged person.”⁶⁸ Members stated another of Falwell’s quotes they loved to say is, “Don’t judge a man’s greatness by his talent or wealth, as the world does, but rather by what it takes to discourage him.”⁶⁹

Falwell used classical Pavlovian behavioral conditioning of reward and punishment (punishment would be lack of reward). The behavior that Falwell wanted members to be serious about was inviting their family, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances. Those who performed the best on “Family Days” or “Friend Days” at the church were rewarded with bibles. Frequently everyone in attendance would receive a gift.⁷⁰ This activity could be construed as bribing or coercing a response. However, it endeared him to his members, established rewards for behaviors Falwell felt were important, and used the word-of-mouth marketing that was even more critical in the early 1960s. Numerous interviewees celebrated how they got their Bibles from Falwell.⁷¹ Falwell understood that to create a culture of invitation and growth in the behavior of Bible study would help to build confidence and understanding of biblical principles. The culture of invitation resulted in relationally interconnected members.

⁶⁸ Jerry Falwell, *Wisdom for Living* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1984), 63.

⁶⁹ Robert D. Miller, *A Legacy of Church Planting* (Bloomington, IN: CrossBooks, 2009), 11.

⁷⁰ TRBC Newsletter, (June 23, 1963) noted each person in Sunday School would receive the Poem named “My Choice.” Each family of five or more will receive one “very fine Christian book on the family,” and the largest family in attendance would receive a Scofield Reference Bible.

⁷¹ Foundational Member Interview 09, 37:17.

One of the early paid staff members shared his disappointment with Falwell's lack of dealing with the smaller details of the ministry.⁷² This establishes a warning to visionary and big-picture leaders that they need the support staff or volunteers implementing the detail-oriented tasks of the ministry. Without dealing with the details, some emotions, promises, or expectations will eventually go unfulfilled.

Paul employed only mild persuasion on the church in Philippi, "Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me" (Phil 2:17).⁷³ Paul already knew this church had joined him in ministry, supplying him with financial and prayer support for many years. Falwell encouraged, "Church planting ought to be the most exciting thing that we are doing. It is alright to assume an existing church, but it is better to plant in a spot where there is no witness for Christ . . . put a flag down . . . plant a local church."⁷⁴

Growth and Momentum

The outcome of the implementation of the previous steps of tenacious leadership was a great momentum. The researcher uses the word "momentum," because the benefit to momentum is that the inertia expands beyond the initial force's capabilities, therefore, requiring less force to accomplish the task. The achieved results can be even greater because things are already moving toward a goal, or are continuing to apply the same amount of force. Smart leaders desire

⁷² Foundational Member Interview 23, 39:17.

⁷³ Phil 2:17,.

⁷⁴ Jerry Falwell, "Verse by Verse Through Philippians—Chapter 2," *Messages at TRBC—Sunday Morning at TRBC*, Asset ID: 255378, FB-CMS-0747 (September 10, 2006), 43:05.

momentum; when they see an opportunity to use momentum, they will jump aboard. Often, an organization can gain quality people at times of real or perceived momentum.

One member lectured, “He was just trying to do what God was doing. Jerry lived out the prayer of Jabez, he found out what God was doing and got involved.”⁷⁵ This member correctly credits God with bringing about momentum at TRBC. Another quipped, “The Lord just magnified him. And those of us there just enjoyed the ride; just enjoyed being a part of what was taking place there. (And we didn’t really know what was taking place).”⁷⁶ Other members celebrated the rapid growth, “I don’t know of anywhere that experienced the rapid growth Thomas Road experienced at that time.”⁷⁷ Another noted the growth stating, “And he was growing; he was building a church and it was just growing and growing, and there were a lot of people and a lot of churches that, I think, were . . . a little bit jealous.”⁷⁸

Another member recalls, “when there was the revival. The church started at seven. You had to get there at six o’clock, because you couldn’t get a seat. And you’d race to get a seat on Sunday. Our church was always full.”⁷⁹ Another celebrated the number being saved and baptized, “Normally, we were all here when he came and talked for a week. I think the thing that impressed me in the early days were the Bible revival meetings we had that would go for a week, and all the baptisms would go two weeks, because so many people were getting saved and just

⁷⁵ Foundational Member Interview 08, 28:33.

⁷⁶ Foundational Member Interview 20, 16:40.

⁷⁷ Foundational Member Interview 09, 35:44.

⁷⁸ Foundational Member Interview 22, 24:16.

⁷⁹ Foundational Member Interview 07, 33:15.

the general growth and expansion of the church.”⁸⁰ One constant reminder of the growth and momentum is remembered by one member from the first day in the new one-thousand-seat auditorium, “I remember sitting up there thinking, ‘This is already full’ and it was.”⁸¹

Ultimately, the church planter who works the smartest builds the greatest church. One technique Falwell used to capture momentum was the use of mass media in the form of radio, television, direct mail, printing tracts, and book distribution. As Falwell was a newer variety of convert, saved as a result of hearing the Gospel from radio evangelist, Charles E. Fuller, who would broadcast his “Old Fashioned Revival Hour.” Falwell’s first-hand experience helped him to conclude the validity and power of media to reach new converts. Falwell started at WBRG in Madison Heights, broadcasting from a phone in his bedroom. This broadcast reached Lynchburg and some surrounding communities.⁸² By the next year, Jerry was doing a live thirty-minute television program, broadcast from Roanoke, Virginia.⁸³ Not until 1967, did TRBC purchase their own used video cameras and start producing the OTGH in the sanctuary of the church. Massive audience potential existed, and it was believed by many that in the 1960s and 1970s that as many as four in ten homes in America tuned in to the OTGH, which was broadcast on 392 television stations and 600 radio stations nation-wide.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Foundational Member Interview 04, 48:05.

⁸¹ Foundational Member Interview 20, 19:30.

⁸² Jerry Falwell, “America on the Brink,” *Old Time Gospel Hour Program*, Asset ID: 223941, F1-POT-0784 (October 25, 1987), 5:55.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 5:58.

⁸⁴ Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God: A History of Fundamentalism* (New York: Random House Digital, 2000), 275.

The key to momentum is goal orientation or focus. The three areas carry with each other a focus. When the momentum of the church meets simultaneously with desire for revival and others-focused ministry, the benefit is transformed lives. The multiplication of transformed lives through the Gospel results in people getting their lives back on track. Turning people to Christ is a clear purpose. The Old Testament concludes with a Messianic prophecy that He will turn the hearts of the fathers toward their children, and children toward their fathers.⁸⁵ Christ is the ultimate unifier, standing in stark comparison to Satan who is the ultimate divider. He succeeds when he separates mankind from God and mankind from each other.

Paul celebrated the momentum that arose in the city of Philippi after he was placed in chains, “As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear” (Phil 1:13-14).

The church is a body and church growth is the natural outgrowth of a healthy system. Our goal is to discover what some of the healthy characteristics of growth are and thereby share these healthy steps to offer the chance at improving another system. A church planter must understand that momentum is generated through clarity of purpose by answering the innate questions each member has like “Where are we going?” “What are we doing?” and “Why are we doing it?”

Team-Building

Getting a team is a non-negotiable trait of all leaders; you are not a leader without a team. Team-building is an additional step beyond the presence of a team; team-building implies a

⁸⁵ “He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction” (Mal 4:6).

strategic selection process and development of those required accomplishing a given task. “But there’s one thing I noticed about him was that when he couldn’t do it. He found someone right now, not next week, who could do what he wanted done. If there was anything to be done he couldn’t hire, he talked them into it. That’s it!”⁸⁶ “He wanted you to get on board with him but if you didn’t then you just needed to get out of the way. . . . If he felt the Lord led him into it, he was going to do it and you had a choice. You could either help him with it or move aside and let him get on with it.”⁸⁷ “He called me in his office one day and said, ‘I want you to buy fifty buses.’ I asked him where I’d find them and he said, ‘That’s your job.’”⁸⁸

“Every Monday morning, Jerry had staff meeting and he brought in all the people and discussed what each one was planning to do that week, what they’d done the previous week and whether they’d accomplished what they’d planned. Not only the staff, there were eight-to-ten people visiting outside the church every week, winning people to Christ.”⁸⁹ Another example of delegation was, “If he hired somebody to do a job . . . said, ‘Go do it. If I have to approve or go over everything you do then I might as well do it myself.’”⁹⁰ Another member noted, “I think he just came up with an idea and then he tried to find the right people to put into position to try to accomplish that goal.”⁹¹ One member recalls how Jerry built his team, “So Jerry built his team around personal recommendation. Most were good, though I’m sure he got bad advice every now

⁸⁶ Foundational Member Interview 15, 16:11.

⁸⁷ Foundational Member Interview 03, 30:24.

⁸⁸ Foundational Member Interview 09, 54:00.

⁸⁹ Foundational Member Interview 22, 20:09.

⁹⁰ Foundational Member Interview 08, 1:04:05.

⁹¹ Foundational Member Interview 03, 39:54.

and then.”⁹² One member joked about Falwell’s expeditious decision-making, “If we’d have needed everyone’s approval, we’d never gotten anything done.”⁹³

The goal of team-building is creating secondary and tertiary levels of leadership by developing leaders. The more leaders you have, the more opportunities for ministry avail. Trusting and loyalty feeds into this ability. A church planter must be willing to allow others to take the reins on important areas of ministry in the church. This will involve additional oversight, training, and development. The principle of team-building is foundational to the growth mechanism of the church body.

Paul does not directly address team-building, although he does explain his reliance on younger men, such as Timothy and Epaphroditus. He encourages the church, “. . . whatever things are true . . . noble . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you” (Phil 4:8). He is instructing those whom he has discipled to remember what he had taught them.

A church planter must learn the delicate art of team-building, using delegation, development and training, wise staffing, connecting with those who accomplish tasks, and finding those who are willing to be developed. Falwell had a tendency to volunteer people for their assignments.⁹⁴ This meant that he got the staffing exactly where he needed them; however, he was also quick to move a person not being successful at their given task. Falwell had honed his leadership skills early in life. One of Falwell’s early mentors reminisced about the day, in

⁹² Foundational Member Interview 16, 1:23:58.

⁹³ Foundational Member Interview 02, 29:54.

⁹⁴ Foundational Member Interview 04, 14:06.

1952, that the Wall Gang came into Park Avenue Baptist Church. Immediately, a deacon noted Jerry was the leader of the gang, “He was just the guy everybody followed.”⁹⁵

Falwell learned delegation early-on in ministry. He handpicked spiritually-sound older gentlemen of retirement age and paid them some gas money and a monthly stipend. Their duty was to lead prayer meetings and do visitation in homes throughout the day. The men he chose were prayer warriors who had already learned to seek the face of God. They met with Falwell first thing in the morning to plan their routes and pray over the areas they would be visiting. This multiplied the pastoral efforts of the church and gave even those homebound members a relational connection back to TRBC.

The interviewee’s perception of Falwell’s leadership style in the early days was fairly unchanged from their current perceptions. Falwell started the church as a very young man; however, many thought he handled himself as an incredibly mature individual. The researcher believes that the co-occurrence chart (Appendix D) shows the leadership characteristic, which correlates most closely with the coding for persuasion and motivation, team-building, dreams and vision, and a genuine love, and an others-focus. Through those filters, the strong authoritative leader will be effective.

Originally, one way of staff development was potential staff person would have to raise their own salaries by growing a big enough Sunday School class to sustain their pay.⁹⁶ This way Falwell gathered performance-oriented people, because they had already proven themselves at building a Sunday School class.

⁹⁵ Dinsbeer, Oral History, 14:03.

⁹⁶ Foundational Member Interview 09, 45:50.

Another aspect of team building is hiring and developing staff. This skill is learned. Falwell had to learn where he was best-suited to be involved and where he needed complementary staff. As with any driven, Type-A leader, Falwell's staff had to remain very flexible, as change was guaranteed. One member talked about changing the entire plan for the day.⁹⁷ Sometimes this would mean being ready to sing a solo without warning, or having an unexpected business trip.⁹⁸

Falwell did very little alone, he would always attempt to bring someone along. This had multiple benefits, including establishment of a rapport and maintaining integrity, but mostly it would develop leadership abilities in the individual accompanying him. A church will experience no great success if the pastor practices as a lone ranger. A core policy must be to develop a training and discipleship structure, where the church planters can depend on the congregation administering, developing, and implementing the ministry and system of the church. An effective church planter learns volunteers are truly priceless to their local body and the achievement of their goals. A church planter should slowly train and hand-off tasks to those he has trained.

The principles a church planter can learn from the foundational member closely associated with the early years at TRBC are zeal and passion, integrity, entrepreneurship and marketing, persuasion and motivation, mentoring, strategic planning, and team-building. Each of these traits carried with them the focus on bringing growth and momentum within the church. These leadership principles garnered with them exponential opportunities to see lives transformed.

⁹⁷ Foundational Member Interview 09, 1:10:22.

⁹⁸ Foundational Member Interview 12, 23:34.

Chapter 5

Falwell's Principles of Relational Ministry

Falwell's relational ministry principle is the final parent code covered in the research data. Although listed last, relational ministry is in no way the least important of the three parent codes. Foundational members celebrated the genuine love and concern Falwell had shown to them personally throughout the years. The church planter must learn, as Falwell did, to make ministry about people, or better yet, about the individual member and attendee.

When discussing the principles of ministry, it is important to note that these are not ministries of the church. The study is primarily focused on the principles, and not the methods of ministry. However, to be highly effective, only after determining the principles, can a leader pursue the appropriate methods. The noted principles of ministry were trust and loyalty, genuineness, joviality and mischievousness, kindness, care and love, forgiveness and unification, and others-focus, ultimately leading to high involvement and ownership in the ministry by members.

Foundational members highlighted the heavy emphasis on the relational work of their minister. Additionally, they shared how his relational side integrated them and their relational connections, and set the tone of closeness or warmth within the church as a whole. This aspect was emphasized so frequently that it became one of the three foundational principals defining Falwell and the church throughout the research.

Some traits about a leader fail to be measured on most tests. Personality inventories in psychological testing will frequently miss the style of human interaction, an element which is key to relational ministry. This section addresses some of these traits, which are often overlooked. Church planters will need to incorporate these principles into their daily ministries as much as the spiritual disciplines and tenacious leadership principles.

The researcher transitioned between using the terms “relational service” and “relational ministry,” while clustering the data. Throughout the study, the term “ministry” in its root, is doing the work of a minister. In *Koine* or biblical Greek, the term used is “διάκονος.”¹ In Hebrew, it is “שָׂרָת.”² This refers to one who serves, or does the work of service. This term can mean difficult or menial tasks of service in the employment of a king or ruler. Doing the work of the service is the work of each believer and, the church as a whole. The service is grounded and rooted in love for others. Minister means servant, and this portion of the study will focus on the basic principles of how this church was built on a firm footing of mutual service to each other and the community at-large. Following in the example of Christ, his instructions to his disciples, and later in the epistles, the church is instructed to serve others.³

¹ James Strong, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: Easy-to-Read Print, Words of Christ Emphasized, Fan-Tap Thumb-Index Reference System, Greek and Hebrew Dictionaries, Strong's Numbering System* (Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers, 1996) 22.

² Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, James Strong, and Wilhelm Gesenius, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic: Coded with the Numbering System from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 1059.

³“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45); “And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, ‘If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all’” (Mark 9:35); and “Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin” (1 Pet 4:1). Other instructions include: Phil 2:6-7.

One of Moody's quotes that members recall Falwell using with frequency was, "The world has yet to see what God will do with and for and through and in and by the man who is fully consecrated to Him."⁴ When Falwell was saved on January 2, 1952, he was saved with thirteen other boys. Many of them were members of the "Wall Gang," an informal group of youth from the Fairview Heights area of Lynchburg. They would play practical jokes; most were harmless, but often would draw the attention from members of the small-town police force. Many of these boys and girls grew up to be lifelong friends of Falwells. They were and still are an exceedingly loyal group of friends.

One child who was a foundational member recalled church volunteers in the early Sixties coming to pick them up. The volunteers would chase them around the house and help them get dressed for church.⁵ Falwells concern for souls was transferred onto the desire volunteers. They were willing to do almost anything for the church, developing a strong sense of ownership in their local church body.

Trust and Loyalty

Trust and loyalty could be seen as two sides of the same coin; in the data, they were closely aligned. Loyalty is the receiving and giving of trust. Falwell was dedicated to evangelize his community; he began his ministry with his friends and this continued throughout his entire ministry with his close friends beside him. One member said, "Jerry had a passion to reach the world, because he cared about individuals."⁶ Another noted, "He was a person that you could

⁴ Foundational Member Interview 05, 20:43.

⁵ Foundational Member Interview 21, 22:39.

⁶ Foundational Member Interview 08, 21:02.

believe in and trust. He trusted other people.”⁷ Another made note of who Falwell preferred to surround himself with, “I think one thing you probably saw was how he surrounded himself with people he could trust. He really liked to have that loyalty”⁸

In regard to investing in Falwell, “Regardless of what he came up with everybody knew Jerry; they trusted Jerry; they had faith in him no matter what he came up with, because they knew it was something of the Lord.”⁹ Falwell repeatedly demonstrated he was worthy of trust. One member shared, “My brother-in-law was dying—I told Jerry, ‘[he] wants to see you.’ He said, ‘Okay, you tell him I’ll see him tonight.’ And 9:30 came—he hadn’t shown up; a quarter to midnight came—and his wife said, ‘He’s not coming.’ I said, ‘He’ll be here, ‘cause I asked him to.’ And all of a sudden, a knock on the door—it was him!”¹⁰ The trust placed in Falwell was based strongly on his integrity. Another member said, “He always showed kindness, too. He’d make sure he tipped the waitress really well, even though he knew she was having a bad day. He always told us, ‘Treat her right. We don’t know why she’s like that.’”¹¹

TRBC was established out of a very painful church split. The differences were so great that it arose to a physical altercation.¹² This could be seen as a very risky move for a young planter to give up the safety of the national organization, the supporters who he was going to found a new church with, and many of the closest Christian friends in his life. Great leaders rise out of the crucible. God uses a leader according to their usability and pressure builds

⁷ Foundational Member Interview 01, 38:32.

⁸ Foundational Member Interview 02, 35:34.

⁹ Foundational Member Interview 22, 29:55.

¹⁰ Foundational Member Interview 15, 30:13.

¹¹ Foundational Member Interview 05, 38:56.

strength. This study will help to understand how he created a church, which thrived despite the obstacles that were present.

Falwell found himself outside of the anti-establishment fundamentalists who had been his spiritual mentors and earthly heroes since his spiritual conversion. This was a period of deep hurt, along with searching. This was not to the level of a crisis of belief, but a questioning of the relationships established prior. In the vacuum left by much of the BBF leadership and close personal friends, Falwell received mentoring from a family whom he later described as “Deeper Life” Christians. Falwell often spoke highly of this period of growth in this young church planter’s heart. His times of spiritual refreshing were necessary with his self-imposed activities and zeal to capture his town for Christ.

Paul references the loyalty of the church in Philippi to him, “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now” (Phil 1:3-5). Paul’s relationship with the believers in Philippi was that of long-term loyalty and trust.

From Falwell, a church planter would learn to err on the side of over-trusting someone, as opposed to under-trusting people. Some members noted, on occasion, this policy had its disadvantages. However, without a firm basis for trust and loyalty, no willingness would be present to delegate, lead, or make wise choices. To trust the members God has entrusted to the church, it is important at least initially to believe the best about them.

Authentic

This word had many terms used to describe it, including genuine, real, consistent, and authentic. This character trait is developed early, but becomes especially important as a church

¹² Foundational Member Interview 13, 17:57

grows. Members constantly celebrated that he never considered himself better than anyone else, always treated everyone as equals. Falwell did not live a life filled with any pretenses about himself.

One member said, “Seeing his consistency made you realize he was genuine. He really believed and stood by what he taught and preached.”¹³ Another tells, “Jerry had a quality that few others had. He could go to a state dinner in the White House and the next day he could come in the humblest home in Lynchburg and sit down to whatever they were having for lunch and be totally at ease. . . . He just had that quality.”¹⁴ Falwell never reached a point in his life where he thought he was better than anyone else. He never got caught up in his own self-importance. Another member repeats a similar story, “No one was ever beneath Jerry. . . . I remember a man with a \$500 suit on having to wait until he’d finished talking with a man who was a little disheveled. He was the same to everybody.”¹⁵ Falwell was consistent, “In the early days . . . I drove with him. . . . He was always the same. He was never different in the pulpit or . . . sitting in a restaurant having something to eat.”¹⁶ “He was a fun loving guy, but it was genuine. It wasn’t fake.”¹⁷ This member reaches the root of the matter, “I think Jerry was such a humble, ordinary man. . . . It didn’t matter if he was a street man with dirty shoes. He treated that man as though he was a special person. . . . I think he pretty much treated everybody the same.”¹⁸

¹³ Foundational Member Interview 04, 39:51.

¹⁴ Foundational Member Interview 09, 1:18:07.

¹⁵ Foundational Member Interview 22, 22:32.

¹⁶ Foundational Member Interview 04, 38:09.

¹⁷ Foundational Member Interview 03, 27:22.

¹⁸ Foundational Member Interview 11, 55:39.

Falwell earned a level of plaudits that few people and almost no ministers reach. He remained grounded and used to talk about himself as the little kid from Campbell County. He always valued people and other individuals. Few things will limit the ministry potential of a church planter more than a haughty spirit. One member was on visitation with Falwell and said, “He met people just like he had known them all their lives.”¹⁹ Although he considered this fun, he was serious about getting to know them and learning about them personally.

Paul wrote of the genuine care that Timothy showed to others, “I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel” (Phil, 2:20 NIV). Authentic care and genuine concern for individuals is a trait, which may connect with a church member more than any other trait. Any planter must genuinely care. This has always been important, but is a growing need in the lives of the post-modern generation. *Josh McDowell’s Youth Ministry Handbook* says, “We know that students sniff out a fake a mile away. If we aren’t genuine, forget it; the game’s over.”²⁰

The correct frame-of-mind, for a church planter, is to esteem the value of each individual inside and outside of his or her church. Since each person represents someone Christ died for, his or her value is unfathomable. Believer and non-believers can spot hypocrisy in people’s lives; no poorer witness for Christ exists than someone who lives differently in each situation. When disingenuous, it only takes a single impression to destroy one’s testimony. The way a minister

¹⁹ LBN Charter Member Interviews, FB-AIN-048,18:00.

²⁰ Sean McDowell, and Ray Willey, *Josh McDowell’s Youth Ministry Handbook: Making the Connection* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000), 16.

treats their families, friends, staff, and even the servers in a restaurant all bears out on the value he sees in the individual.

Jovial and Mischievous

This trait was the hardest to title in the project. In the English language, no word is present to sum up a fully lived and joyful life although members repeatedly celebrated their stories of the practical joking and fun-filled side of Falwell. Each one had a funny story to tell of a prank he played on them or others. This aspect of Falwell revealed his joy for life. This is another trait that would rarely show up on a personality test or quantitative research study. However, in this qualitative analysis, this trait reached the level of importance as an affinity creator between pastor and parishioner.

One member celebrated, “He enjoyed playing a practical joke on somebody,”²¹ while another related, “If something funny happened—he loved practical jokes; he loved laughing, as much as anybody else. Huge, hee-haw laugh.”²² Another recollected, “He came up and dropped a firecracker behind the bus. That thing went off. . . . He was famous for them firecrackers.”²³ One relayed a story about a prank played on his own mother-in-law, “She’d just come in from work that afternoon and run her bath water really hot. . . . Jerry came in (saw the hot bath) and asked, ‘Whose bath water is this?’ and she said, ‘I think it’s mine.’ And he said, ‘Well, why aren’t you in it?’ He picked her up, fully clothed, and sat her in the bath!”²⁴ As a young man, a number of the participants recalled, “Fifteen or twenty guys in his car; and he’d take the steering wheel off

²¹ Foundational Member Interview 11, 1:13:12.

²² Foundational Member Interview 20, 50:22.

²³ Foundational Member Interview 01, 42:57.

²⁴ Foundational Member Interview 18, 1:37:49.

(guffaws) and hand it to somebody else.”²⁵ Another member sums it up, “He was fun, full of mischief. . . . But he was a mischievous kid . . . and you couldn’t help but love him.”²⁶

As a recipient of multiple practical jokes, Macel Falwell later wrote, “Inevitably such pranks backfire on the pranksters themselves, and Jerry’s care was no exception.”²⁷ None of the members perceived the jokes as being mean, harmful, hurtful, or malicious in any way. His jokes targeted almost everyone in Falwell’s life, thereby not singling out any one person as a bully would, although later authors have tried to pick up on this side of Falwell as a sign of bullying.

Paul does not emphasize practical joking or having fun. However, in the very short book of Philippians, Paul does frequently speak of having joy in life, “. . . I am glad and rejoice with you all. For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me” (Phil 2:17). “Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord!” (Phil 3:1). “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!” (Phil 4:4). “. . . I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith” (Phil 4:25). Paul desired the church in Philippi to be filled with joy.

After college, Falwell returned after college to his home city, a city where he had many supporters, but many detractors as well. Establishing his credibility in ministry occurred very quick, due in part to his fun-loving nature and his true care for each individual. Church planters do not have to become pranksters to reach an area for the Gospel, but they do have to create an affinity between themselves and their community. Falwell’s pranking made participants desire to be around him; he was a lot of fun. The pranking created quick friendships, breaking down the

²⁵ Foundational Member Interview 12, 20:57.

²⁶ Foundational Member Interview 16, 1:02:48.

²⁷ Macel Falwell, *His Life His Legacy*, 16.

communication barriers with people he did not know. Being a joyful person, full of life, is a marked trait of satisfied living. Christians ought to be the most satisfied individuals in the world.

Care and Love

This section was extremely large in the study. The comments about love and care at TRBC reached a resounding cry with seventy-plus participants, second only to ownership. Comments covered the loving and caring nature of Falwell, as well as the influence that his nature had in creating a culture of caring within the church as a whole.

One member exclaimed, “He loved everybody. My daddy didn’t have any teeth; my daddy was a dishwasher . . . and Jerry Falwell loved my little daddy; he loved him!”²⁸ Another told of how “he was kind to everybody along the way. Sometimes he was joking with them. He’d brighten any hospital room!”²⁹ Another said, “He just loved you, and he let you know he didn’t mind spending time with you.”³⁰ Someone noted, “Jerry Falwell did more for me than anybody in my life. . . . But he was always . . . always there for people! If anybody in the world hurt, he hurt.”³¹ One member celebrated the love shown for his dad, and ultimately the impact that had on transforming a family, “So he’d come over to the house and he’d sit down and watch football and baseball games with Dad. Would never talk about church. He made a friend of him. . . . So they would go do things together. . . . So daddy got to liking Jerry quite a bit. So then he was a little softer about going to church.”³²

²⁸ Foundational Member Interview 20, 10:12.

²⁹ Foundational Member Interview 19, 1:17:42.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1:07:13.

³¹ Foundational Member Interview 15, 1:04:32.

³² Foundational Member Interview 03, 1:42.

Another tells of the distinction between what he thought about TRBC and what he discovered, “He said, ‘I think that’s an uppity-up church and I don’t want to go there.’ . . . we went that Sunday morning. . . . that Sunday night, he was ready before I was. Wednesday night? He was ready before I was.”³³ Another tells of the community’s reaction to a church that cared, “In those days, people found out that here’s a church that actually cares. They’d start calling and asking us to go by and visit their husband who had been in a bad accident . . . or their mother or somebody’s real sick. . . . This just opens doors.”³⁴ Another sums up the same comments, “I think one of the things that stuck out to me was, as big as Thomas Road was and is, it was a friendly church.”³⁵

Macel Falwell wrote of Falwell, “It was Jerry’s love for people that would drive him and motivate his entire Christian life. It was the reason why as a young pastor he knocked on one hundred doors a day, six days a week, and didn’t care how many times those doors were slammed in his face. It is the reason he accepted every invitation to go on television and present Jesus, even if it meant being ridiculed.”³⁶

Some leaders prioritize projects over persons, others persons over projects. A biblical example of this was John Mark’s treatment by Paul and Barnabas. Paul did not give him a second chance until he had proved himself again with Barnabas, who did offer a second chance. Falwell was extremely person-focused, but if someone failed a couple of times, they were generally placed out to pasture quickly.

³³ Foundational Member Interview 18, 15:34.

³⁴ Foundational Member Interview 09, 52:42.

³⁵ Foundational Member Interview 01, 31:30.

³⁶ Macel Falwell, *His Life His Legacy*, 19.

An interesting note about the Church in the book of Acts is that it had a favorable view of the people.³⁷ Similarly Scripture says, “and Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52). Having favor with man requires being likable. Little is achieved by the deliberate alienation of those a church planter is attempting to reach. No need exists to add hedges or barriers around a ministry that God has not imposed on nonbelievers. The Church of Christ needs to be a welcoming and friendly place. Jonathan Falwell said, “When the church is doing what the church is supposed to be doing they will have favor not just with those within the church, but among all the people.”³⁸

Paul’s prayer for the church in Philippi was “that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment” (Phil. 1:9). He encouraged, “Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand” (Phil 1:9 and 4:5). Then Paul also wrote, “it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart. . . . For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:7). The indirect emphasis on relational ministry throughout the Pauline epistles is great. He was relationally close with this church, and he showed them great love.

Falwell enjoyed being with and around others. He was kind to everyone, but he received energy from seeing others happy. Falwell frequently quoted his father saying, “If in your lifetime son, you gather ten friends (he would hold up both hands), consider yourself fortunate.”³⁹ Towns noted, “Human relationships are the most effective way of opening the door to reach people for

³⁷ Acts 2:47, Luke 2:52.

³⁸ Jonathan Falwell made this statement during his sermon at Thomas Road Baptist Church, believed to be October 20, 2013.

³⁹ Falwell, “How To Choose A Best Friend,” *Messages at TRBC - Sunday Morning at TRBC*, Asset ID: 223496, F1-CMS-0416, (September 12, 1993), 9:03.

Christ. . . . A relationship between Christians and unsaved people has proven to be the most effective means of influencing unsaved people to get saved.”⁴⁰ Very few people are won to Christ outside of a personal relationship with someone leading them to Christ, to church, or to another opportunity to experience a relationship with Him. The value of having a prior relationship with the seeker lends initial credibility and continued influence to the evangelizer. This aids in the discipleship process. Macel Falwell sums up best the advice to church planters, “Jerry had one of the greatest traits of a pastor: he loved people. He didn’t have to act like he was interested in them. It was no act.”⁴¹

Forgiving and Unifying

Falwell explained how the TRBC has never had a church split, how TRBC trains the associate pastor staff, deacons, leaders, and church member to “deal gently and wisely, yet firmly in the power of Christ, to in bring people together, not allowing brushfires to become bonfires.”⁴² Falwell credits the power of Christ with bringing harmony and unity to the family of Christ.

This trait was the least mentioned during the research; however, it was mentioned by at least one quarter of the participants and over fifteen times throughout the study. “Jerry’s motto was always, ‘If somebody’s criticized you, don’t waste your time trying to correct them.’”⁴³

About forgiveness a member said, “but he was very compassionate to those who had fallen and

⁴⁰ In Elmer Towns, *Winning the Winnable: A New Day in Evangelism* (Elkton, MA: Church Growth Institute, 1987), 9. The author emphasizes the value of working within the circles of friends, relatives, associates, neighbors, and then strangers.

⁴¹ Macel Falwell, *His Life His Legacy*, 46.

⁴² Falwell, “Verse By Verse through Philippians - Chapter 4,” *Messages at TRBC - Sunday Morning at TRBC*, Asset ID: 255382, FB-CMS-0751, (September 24, 2006), 46:51..

⁴³ Foundational Member Interview 05, 18:01.

were in sin. . . . there were some people with some serious flaws, and yet, he'd give them another second chance! He was awful good. . . . usually, they would stab him in the back.”⁴⁴ Another reminisced, “But that college [BBC] blackballed him for fifteen years. I had the letter from them about ‘Jerry being a snake in the grass’ and not letting me come in. Jerry let bygones be bygones—and God blessed him for it!”⁴⁵ Another recalls, “Jerry never held a grudge, you know; even if somebody did something bad to him he was always ready to forgive them.”⁴⁶

Falwell had a strong forgiving trait. The willingness not to hold a grudge positioned Falwell to make friends quickly, even with those who disagreed or hated his positions.⁴⁷ He turned the other cheek, and ignored criticism. Paul wrote to the church in Philippi, “Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ . . . that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Phil 1:27). Unity is a trademark of believers, living in right relationship with God. Since the beginning of time, Satan’s method of operating is to create disunity within the lives of individual believers and the church body.⁴⁸ The value of unity in the church is mentioned by Bill Donahue, “This ‘relational DNA’ or ‘community gene’ helps explain why churches need small groups. People don’t come to church simply to satisfy spiritual needs. They come to us internally wired with a desire for connection. . . . Their hunger for togetherness is an inescapable mark on humanity.”⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Foundational Member Interview 04, 37:42.

⁴⁵ Foundational Member Interview 06, 37:52.

⁴⁶ Foundational Member Interview 02, 36:06.

⁴⁷ Larry Flynt, “Larry Flynt: My Friend, Jerry Falwell,” *Los Angeles Times* (May 20, 2007); accessed November, 2013, <http://www.latimes.com/la-op-flynt20may20,0,1582723.story>.

⁴⁸ Matt 13:38-39 and 2 Cor 11:13-15.

⁴⁹ Bill Donahue, *Building a Church of Small Groups* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 24.

Falwell helped to oversee many positive transitions in disunity, moving toward unity. Some were local to Lynchburg, while some had huge national implications. First, only liberal believers were known in politics. Now, anytime you hear of religious politicians, it is assumed they are conservatives. Fundamentalists moved from being separated from Catholics, Protestants, and Mormons to being unified under the banner of the Moral Majority. Third, the author of *God's Right Hand* credits Falwell with almost single-handedly transitioning the political conservatives, along with the evangelical church from being moderately anti-Semitic after the war, to being one of the strongest philo-Semitic groups in the United States.⁵⁰ All churches will face dissention, disagreement, and strife. From Falwell, church planters should learn to settle differences that can be settled quickly, regularly addressing forgiveness as a requirement. The elevation of unity within the body to a place of grave importance is a necessity. The ultimate way of demonstrating that believers are distinct from the world is by the mutual love they have for each other.

Needs-Based Ministry

Need-based service was a natural outgrowth of a church dedicated to loving their community and one with a zealous visionary leader. The early needs-based ministries examples include Elim Home, the transportation and bus ministry, and Treasure Island home for underprivileged children. (Outside the realm of this study are many more including the Godparent Home for unwed mothers).

When asked what was special about TRBC, one participant quickly responded, “Service to the community. Service to the congregation. Service to the elderly. Service to the poor and the

⁵⁰ Winters, *God's Right Hand*, 9.

ones that are hurting physically. Elim Home for Alcoholics . . . not too many people want to touch that area, but he felt strong enough. I don't know if that went back to when he helped his dad."⁵¹ Another recalled the smell of alcohol emanating from their pew, "They would come and sit on the left-hand side of (the) church and we would sit right there with them! (They) always smelt of alcohol. And we sat right in front of it."⁵²

Members recalled Falwell's encouraged, "Do not just say, God Bless You! If you have the means . . . help!"⁵³ Falwell never shied away if someone was in need, and he could help. "One time he stopped over here to help a woman who'd been beaten up. He stepped in and—said, 'Why don't you beat up on me for a while?'"⁵⁴ Needs-based ministry ties with Falwell's generosity, "He was always giving stuff away. One time he came home barefoot . . . because he gave his shoes away."⁵⁵

Elim Home came out of the deep spiritual discussions Falwell was having with the Whittemore family and others. He began to concentrate on the temporal needs of his community at-large, with the hope of bringing about spiritual transformation in their lives. Falwell satiated the felt needs among one group of alcohol-addicted men. His alcoholic father is well-known as being an entrepreneur and bootleg distributor during prohibition. On the other hand, Falwell helped to deliver men from the addiction needs and made a concerted effort to fulfill and to satiate those needs with an eternal perspective. One of the early directors of the Elim Home was

⁵¹ Foundational Member Interview 03, 34:56.

⁵² Foundational Member Interview 07, 1:05:31.

⁵³ Foundational Member Interview 04, 15:18.

⁵⁴ Foundational Member Interview 13 36:48.

⁵⁵ Foundational Member Interview 02, 27:25.

a client of Carey Falwell and a drunk for thirty years. Many men thought, “Well, if he can straighten up and become the director of Elim Home, I may be able to straighten up as well.”⁵⁶

Members tell humorous stories of how men from alcoholic backgrounds would be brought to church from the home with the smell of alcohol still on them.⁵⁷ On one occasion, a bottle fell out of an alcoholic’s pocket as he was in attendance.⁵⁸ This openness was new for a fundamentalist church. Other fundamentalist churches may have sung one of Falwell’s favorite hymns, “Just as I Am, Without One Plea.” However, most in the fundamental tradition had many rules and expectations in order to be worthy of attending church. At TRBC, Falwell replaced that with an attitude of openness.

A biblical correlation can be drawn with needs-based ministry, when Paul writes to Philippi, “I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need” (Phil. 4:12). And then, “. . . my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19). Ultimately, “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others” (Phil. 2:4). The culture of generosity began to pervade the church, helping people realize that they had something to offer everyone, even those completely lost. One member stated, “He has always been the kindest, most compassionate person and still is today, that I have ever met in my life. . . . We just love him to death, all of us.”⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Foundational Member Interview 05, 1:02:30.

⁵⁷ Foundational Member Interview 07, 1:05:31.

⁵⁸ Foundational Member Interview 04, 29:04.

⁵⁹ LBN Charter Member Interviews, FB-AIN-048, 9:52.

Another need Falwell attempted to fill was that of a group of underprivileged boys. He expanded the ministry of summer camping to allow for a number of boys from underprivileged or abusive backgrounds to stay at the Treasure Island camp all year round. Although this ministry went defunct, it had a lasting effect in the lives of those who went through.⁶⁰ Treasure Island became a training ground for ministry, later Lynchburg Baptist College (subsequently, LU) would use the same property to develop young people.

TRBC developed a hearing-impaired ministry, and in 1968, witness was given of ninety-two being saved through a two-week intensive outreach ministry to the deaf. This was followed up with a visitation program designed for the deaf community.⁶¹ They had a phone ministry allowing “Dial-A-Prayer,” in which callers were encouraged any time of the day or night to call a phone number to get to “a Scripture reading, a word of instruction, and prayer.”⁶² The researcher learned in one letter that the ministry was capable of receiving 4,320 calls daily.

Bus ministry was another example of needs-based ministry. This was a huge opportunity for ministry involvement in the church. It started with the general needs of many of the women and children, who at some point were transported to church. The bus ministry at Thomas Road began in the early Sixties,⁶³ but a transportation ministry was in full swing from the first days of the church. Almost every woman interviewed had been picked up by people to be brought to church. A calling system was in place to make sure everyone made it to the services.

One member recalled faithful bus ministry volunteers “would (literally) chase us into the

⁶⁰ Foundational Member Interview 21, 8:38 and 28:17.

⁶¹ *Word of Life* article, May 14, 1968.

⁶² Falwell, *Ten Years of Miracles*, 12.

⁶³ Foundational Member Interview 16, 36:29.

woods (behind the house) to get us to ride the bus to church. . . . They'd walk in our house and find us hiding under the bed. They were just persistent people.”⁶⁴ One letter to the church stated that the Christmas offering, in 1965, would be given to buying a new Sunday School bus. Each member was encouraged to give a day's wages as a special gift to the Lord on His birthday. The reason was because the buses the church were using were “old and dilapidated.” A new bus would cost the church \$5,200.⁶⁵

Falwell led the church in bringing hope to alcoholics, drug addicts, the incarcerated and recently freed inmates, unwed-teenage mothers, children who could not afford school, and those who are often the outcast of society. This is the type of people on whom Christ focused his ministry. This is who Christians should be seeing transformed. Effective church planters continue to build and draw upon a strong relationship with Christ throughout the process of planting. Church planters need a core of members who believe the church plant can and will succeed.

Before Falwell died, he concluded a letter to a young church planter, “Almost everyone is hurting. Almost everyone is in trouble. The pastor who is there for them will win them and become their pastor. It is that simple.”⁶⁶ After a lifetime of service in the sleepy town, Falwell had not become jaded to the merits of simply meeting the needs of his community.

⁶⁴ Foundational Member Interview 20, 22:39.

⁶⁵ Jerry Falwell, Letter to Thomas Road Baptist Church, December 15, 1965, Russell Booth Collection.

⁶⁶ Jerry Falwell, personal e-mail to Darius Wentz (via wife's e-mail) on Thursday, June 02, 2005, 10:08 AM. (Used by written permission of Darius Wentz).

Others-Focused and Uplifting Others

The defining focus of the overarching relational ministry is a focus on others. This is an important trait that every church planter, staff member, volunteer, and member must integrate into their lives. One member commented of Falwell, “He was just that kind of person. He never thought of himself too often; he was always thinking of somebody else. . . .”⁶⁷ A member answered in regard to a major distinctive of TRBC, “I think serving the community. I think that’s a strong one, service to the community, service to the congregation, service to the elderly, service to the poor, and the ones that are hurting physically.”⁶⁸

Exocentricity is a state of being open to the world beyond you versus egocentricity where everything is focused around yourself. Exocentric behaviors are actions leading to raising the needs of others above those in your own life. Falwell was noted as being highly exocentric and actively involved in helping others to achieve. Mentioned fourteen times during the interviews, this is closely related to relational, but adds feet, not just feelings. Falwell helped to get many businesses going, establishing an entire group of business owners within the church.

Falwell was quoted as referring to the Christian as “a human container with divine content.”⁶⁹ He truly valued other believers as being Christ indwelt. Falwell always had a positive tone about others. Falwell had a true heart for people. Business management expert Peter Drucker claims, “The ultimate resource in economic development is people. It is people, not

⁶⁷ Foundational Member Interview 22, 27:31.

⁶⁸ Foundational Member Interview 03, 34:56.

⁶⁹ Foundational Member Interview 08, 56:21.

capital or raw materials, that develop an economy.”⁷⁰ Falwell understood the value of others, and clearly demonstrated his love of all those he met.

This Christian principle of love is rooted in the selfless love of the Lord.⁷¹ Falwell challenged the youth to baseball matches, taught many of the youth in the church how to drive,⁷² and went roller skating with them in his off-times. He was described as just one of them. When out on visitation, he would carry a pocket full of candy to distribute to the children; kids loved to see him coming.⁷³ Falwell won the hearts of the children, which opened the hearts of their parents.⁷⁴ The ultimate apologetic of the Christian life, and thus the church of Christ, is the genuine love that believers show for others.⁷⁵ Paul bemoans the perception that almost no one genuinely cares about him. He shares that one of the great qualities of Timothy was that he was more focused on helping others over himself. This quality is something that endears members to the leader; it also increases their willingness to invest. Timothy was others-motivated versus self-motivated.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ Peter F. Drucker, *Landmarks of Tomorrow: A Report on the New “Post-Modern” World* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1996), 180.

⁷¹ 1 John 4:19.

⁷² Foundational Member Interview 07, 48:23.

⁷³ Foundational Member Interview 12, 27:21.

⁷⁴ David Cook, pastor in Rustburg, had the chance to visit with Jerry Falwell and noticed that both the kids and parents seemed happy to have Falwell come by on visitation. He later noted that Falwell brought small candies to hand out to both the adults and the kids.

⁷⁵“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:26-35).

⁷⁶ Phil 2:20-21.

Ownership and Volunteering

This section will emphasize the collaborative efforts between the leader of the church and its members exploring the synergy between a strong leader and a loyal group of followers. A major goal of Falwell was having every member involved in ministry. One of the primary goals of any church planter is the need to delegate core responsibilities to church planters, and in doing so, connecting each church member to a ministry that brings value to their lives as well as fulfilling their purpose in God's plan.⁷⁷ When a member approached Jerry with a new idea for a ministry or program, Falwell would respond by signing that person up to work. A recent leadership study by a national hiring agency determined that one of the leading causes of frustration amongst staff is a boss who does not delegate core responsibilities. Volunteering is an outgrowth of buy-in; members in ministry is a catalyst for ownership. This moves the emotion from it being "their church," or "that church" to "my church." Members loved reminiscing of opportunities for service, which started immediately at TRBC, "I remember washing syrup off the seats. I was old enough to wash the seats of syrup!"⁷⁸ The results include they "just felt you were part of his life, his ministry and the church."⁷⁹

Most of the early church additions, steps, and other building projects were completed with volunteer labor. Some of the men were skilled, but many others showed up each Saturday and just did whatever they were told. The women of the church fed the men each weekend. One young girl remembers carrying the pails of water for the blocklayers.⁸⁰ Ownership was extremely

⁷⁷ 1 Cor 12:27-2; Rom 12:4-5; Eph 1:20-23, 4:16; and 1 Pet 4:9-10.

⁷⁸ Foundational Member Interview 14, 17:26.

⁷⁹ Foundational Member Interview 04, 39:38.

⁸⁰ Foundational Member Interview 12, 55:21.

evident, “We built it all with help from other members from the church who could lay block and pour concrete.”⁸¹ The spirit of volunteerism was described as energetic, “If Jerry would stand at the pulpit and say, ‘We need fifty people at the church to do this or that or the other’ and you’d have a hundred show up.”⁸²

The most prominent code tagged was that of volunteering. Everyone was involved. It started the very first week with early members fondly remembering being on their hands and knees scraping syrup off the floors of the old Lynchburg Donald Duck Bottling Company.⁸³ Ownership in the church had to be very high right from the start. One member said, “He had a very unique way of making everybody feel like they were important to the church . . . and, he would look for ways to get people involved in church.”⁸⁴

TRBC was one of the healthiest churches in the area, because the involvement of the membership was at 100 percent. One of the goals and marks of a healthy church plant is involvement in service. Falwell had creative ways of getting people involved. First, self-volunteering, if a member asked, “Why does this church not do ____?” Jerry would assign them the task of doing it. Second, he was not embarrassed to ask for volunteers; he would tell someone what they would be doing as a volunteer and some of those are still doing it fifty years later.⁸⁵ Third, Jerry rarely waited when he needed something done. He got the right person immediately

⁸¹ Foundational Member Interview 02, 17:02.

⁸² Foundational Member Interview 05, 50:40.

⁸³ Foundational Member Interview 12, 17:26.

⁸⁴ Foundational Member Interview 04, 12:40.

⁸⁵ Foundational Member Interview 17, 40:59.

to fit the job.⁸⁶ Fourth, Falwell was extremely persuasive, and as he was already relationally connected to most of the church in those days, most agreed quickly. Fifth, Falwell did not need a specific job to enlist a qualified candidate. Sometimes, he would hire a person and find them a specific job later.

The research revealed that a majority of the early members had been personally asked by Falwell to do their tasks. The participants responded in four ways, Jerry Falwell asked, I saw a need and volunteered, someone else asked, or all of the above. Only about one-fourth of participants volunteered or were asked to volunteer by another member (Figure 1).

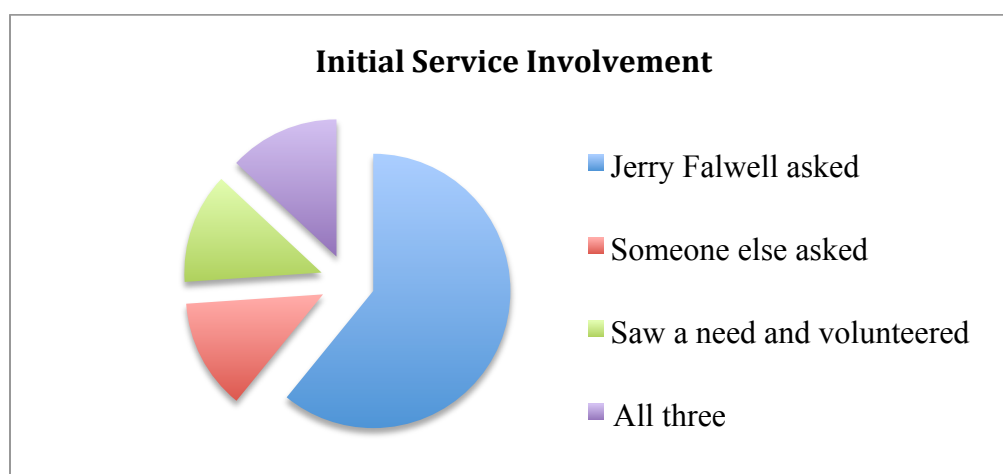


Figure 1. Initial service involvement.

One of the interviewees was a teenager when she got a strong desire to help those without food. She and a friend organized a canned food drive around the neighborhood in the early 1960s. Falwell had to ask her to stop, as they could no longer store all the cans that they were collecting.⁸⁷ Volitional involvement and ownership in the ministry by the youth was a great

⁸⁶ Foundational Member Interview 15, 16:11.

⁸⁷ Foundational Member Interview 12, 1:00:21.

achievement of Falwell. One man, a formerly-violent alcoholic, who Falwell assisted getting into an alcohol rehab program was given the job of usher at the church in order for him to be involved. This man never missed another service, and his son credits that additional trust to him staying sober for the rest of his dad's life.⁸⁸

The Philippian church was encouraged thusly by Paul: "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness" (Phil 2:5-11). Paul asked the church to take on the ultimate form of servanthood, putting the needs of others above their own.

An expectation was present that everyone attended Sunday morning service, Sunday night Bible study, and Wednesday-night prayer meeting. Additionally, most were strongly encouraged to participate in the Monday-evening visitation. Falwell later added the Thomas Road Bible Institute on Tuesdays or Thursday nights, so people poured their lives into the church.

Falwell was creative in producing ownership. One document lists many of the couples in the church. This roster assigned each family one of the eight-one pews at church. Each husband and wife were assigned a pew to fill for the upcoming missions conference.⁸⁹ The wife had the task to fill the pew on September 9, and the husband had the responsibility to fill it the next night. These methods garnered involvement and encouraged members to find people outside of their normal friendship circle.

⁸⁸ Foundational Member Interview 02, 4:45.

Ministry involvement was a key facet of all those interviewed. Every member was involved somewhere in ministry while at TRBC. Falwell pushed each to be at visitation, but ultimately encouraged a place of strategic service for each member. This meant the individual had to be seeking an opportunity that fit their giftings. When someone approached Falwell with an idea, they were often put in charge of following that idea through, because it was something near to that individual's heart.

Longevity in ministry was an indicator of ownership (Figure 2). Ownership and involvement was a marked trait of the early members. Many of the early members initially were involved with feeder ministries, such as the youth and music ministries within the church. As Falwell taught on developing and offered opportunities for more strategic service, many got involved elsewhere, as deacons, building supervisors, bus-ministry captains, and so forth.

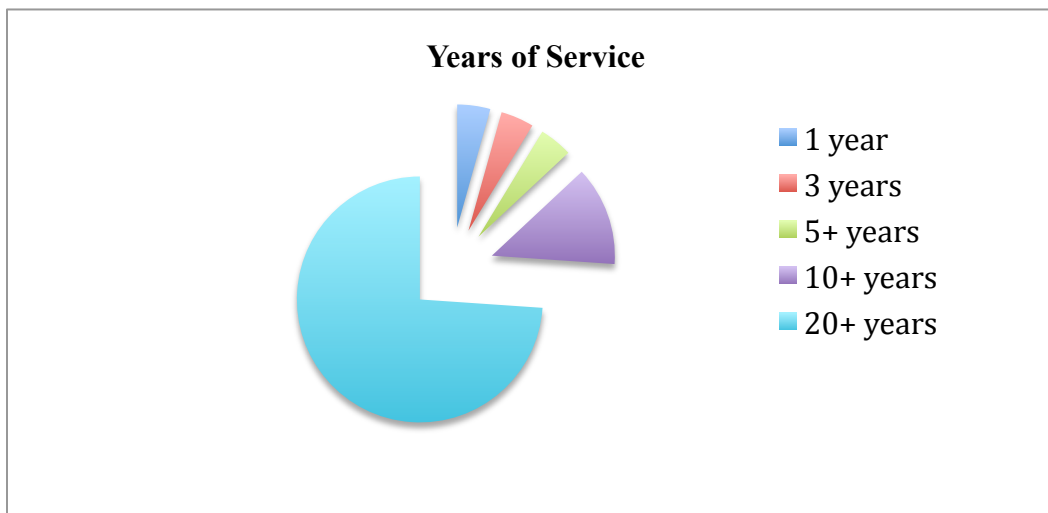


Figure 2. Years of service.

⁸⁹ Jerry Falwell, "Missionary Conference, September 8-12," letter to Thomas Road Baptist Church, believed to be from 1966.

Involvement is one of just a couple of components without which a church planter will never achieve his dreams. No great work, building, company or anything else was built single-handedly. Think of the Pyramids, the Great Wall of China, or the Empire State Building. Anything larger than yourself requires the involvement of others. Anything with massive outreach potential requires exponential multiplication.

Transformed Lives

The focus and outgrowth of the three overarching principles are transformed lives. TRBC saw the salvation and transformation of former alcoholics, drug addicts, mafia, bootleggers, and Ku Klux Klan members. Interviewees apprised of testimonies of people being saved out of abusive relationships or from the edge of committing suicide,⁹⁰ bringing hope to the hopeless and help to those in need. TRBC carried a banner of changed lives, recovery from sin, and restoration as a family. One member exclaimed, “It changed our lives, just seeing the love that he (Falwell) had for people.”⁹¹

This principle is significant, because it is the principle around which so much of the ministry at TRBC was built. Falwell believed that lives could be changed. He prayed over the City of Lynchburg and its inhabitants and asked for them to be transformed into new creations, where old things are passed away, and everything is made new.⁹²

Another member celebrated how Falwell saw a life transformed, “Jerry found a place . . . where he could take Dad and help him dry out. . . . He stayed there about two months. He got

⁹⁰ Jerry Falwell, *The Tom Massie Story or an Eleventh Hour Conversion* (Lynchburg, VA: Thomas Road Baptist Church, 1965).

⁹¹ Foundational Member Interview 04, 15:18.

⁹² 2 Cor. 5:17.

straightened out. When he came back, to keep him from falling back into that lifestyle, Jerry actually brought him to church and made him an usher.”⁹³

One member exclaimed, “If I could’ve seen the history of those people and where they’d been and how the Lord had worked in their lives, I’d probably have thought he’d done a miracle.”⁹⁴ Another summed it up best, “You felt you were achieving what was expected of you; what God was expecting of you. We weren’t doing it for ourselves; we were trying to help other people get better lives for themselves.”⁹⁵

The members knew why they were investing. Over and over in the interviews, it was clear Falwell wanted to transform the city he loved. Allowing the Gospel message to transform families with struggling marriages, those about to give up to suicide, or having been alcoholics for decades.⁹⁶ The nature and message of the cross of Christ and the gift of salvation is the ultimate transformation available.

Paul wrote, “Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain” (Phil 2:14). Then Paul celebrates the heavenly transformation which believers can look forward to,

whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it

⁹³ Foundational Member Interview 03, 4:34.

⁹⁴ Foundational Member Interview 19, 57:33.

⁹⁵ Foundational Member Interview 11, 1:33:58.

⁹⁶ Foundational Member Interview 04, 6:54.

may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself” (Phil 2:14).

The Gospel of Christ is ultimately a message of transformation. In the infamous “Ministers and Marches” sermon from the mid-sixties, Falwell wrote,

Our ministry is not reformation but transformation. The Gospel does not clean up the outside but rather regenerates the inside. I have no greater joy as a minister of the gospel than to witness the marvelous changes wrought in the lives of many people to whom I have preached the gospel. Right here in the TRBC, I look into faces of many people each Sunday who once were involved in the worst kinds of sin. Today they are God-fearing servants of Christ Jesus.⁹⁷

As seen, the foundational members celebrated the genuine love and service Falwell had shown to them personally throughout the years. The members reciprocated this charitable service with extraordinarily high involvement and ownership within TRBC. The church planter must learn, as Falwell did, to make ministry about people, or better yet, the individual member and attendee. The principles the members established were Falwell’s trusting and loyal, genuine, jovial and mischievous, kind, caring and loving, forgiving and unifying, and focusing on others, which ultimately led to high involvement and ownership in the ministry.

In the following chapter, the research will offer a summation of each of the principles and foundational members highlighted. Church planters will gain a quick overview of an integrated system of spiritual disciplines focused on salvation, tenacious leadership focused on momentum, and relational ministry focused on serving others. The interconnecting of these aspects results in transformed lives.

⁹⁷ Sutton, *Rise of the Religious Right*, 58.

Chapter 6

Summary of The Foundational Synergy Model

Many pastors believe they know what principles or characteristics are required to build a successful foundation for a church plant that will do greater things for God. In this analysis, the researcher has consolidated over one thousand years of combined observational history from the participants in this study. The researcher synthesized these results into implementable suggestions for each church planter, and traits required for improvement. Falwell believed that leaders are not born; rather, they are developed and made.¹ He poured the second part of his life into the development of LU, a world-class class teaching institution of higher learning.

The researcher will summarize the analysis of each of the principles and foundational members highlighted, offering church planters a simple Venn diagram of the important principles highlighting their interconnectedness (Figure 3). The researcher believes that relying too heavily on any one or the other aspect of the foundational ministry could result in anemic results in other areas. Church planters should attempt to bring balance to their systems of spiritual disciplines, tenacious leadership, and relational ministry. These interconnected practices will result in proliferation or amelioration of transformed lives.

This interworking of these three areas creates synergy, as each part unites to produce a greater result than that of the individual parts. The basis for the success of Falwell and early

¹David Wesley Hirschman, "The Leadership of Dr. Jerry Falwell," *Eruditio Ardescens* 1, no. 1, Article 3 (2013): 9-10; assessed January 4, 2014, <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/jlbts/vol1/iss1/3>.

members at TRBC is his leadership and their willingness to produce and reproduce this synergy. Three interconnected focuses of the model are outreach, growth, momentum, and others-focus. Initially, members became singularly focused on the mission of the church, to reach the “people who breathe.”² Each overarching principle carried with it the primary trait production, resulting in faith and vision, team-building, and ownership.

Leaders’ values inform their behaviors; in turn, their behaviors inform their organizational values, which should direct the organizational behaviors. One result of this study is that readers can find the results of the values of Jerry Falwell by watching the behaviors of Falwell. Further, readers can ascertain the values of TRBC by observing the behaviors modeled by the members. Members bought into the mission of the church. Whether stated or not, this mission was to win the lost by any means necessary. Falwell engaged this mission personally, and the members claimed ownership.

Synergy resulted from the collaborative efforts of pastor and parishioner, when members and ministers are marching in unity of thought and action. When this experience is achieved, the momentum snowballs, providing leverage to the organization in achieving a greater impact on the mission and growth in the Kingdom of God.

² Saturation Evangelism was a concept of Falwell. Later in Falwell’s ministry during a staff meeting, someone asked what socioeconomic people group the church would be focusing on reaching. He answered that the church’s focus group consisted of people who breathe.

Foundational Growth Model

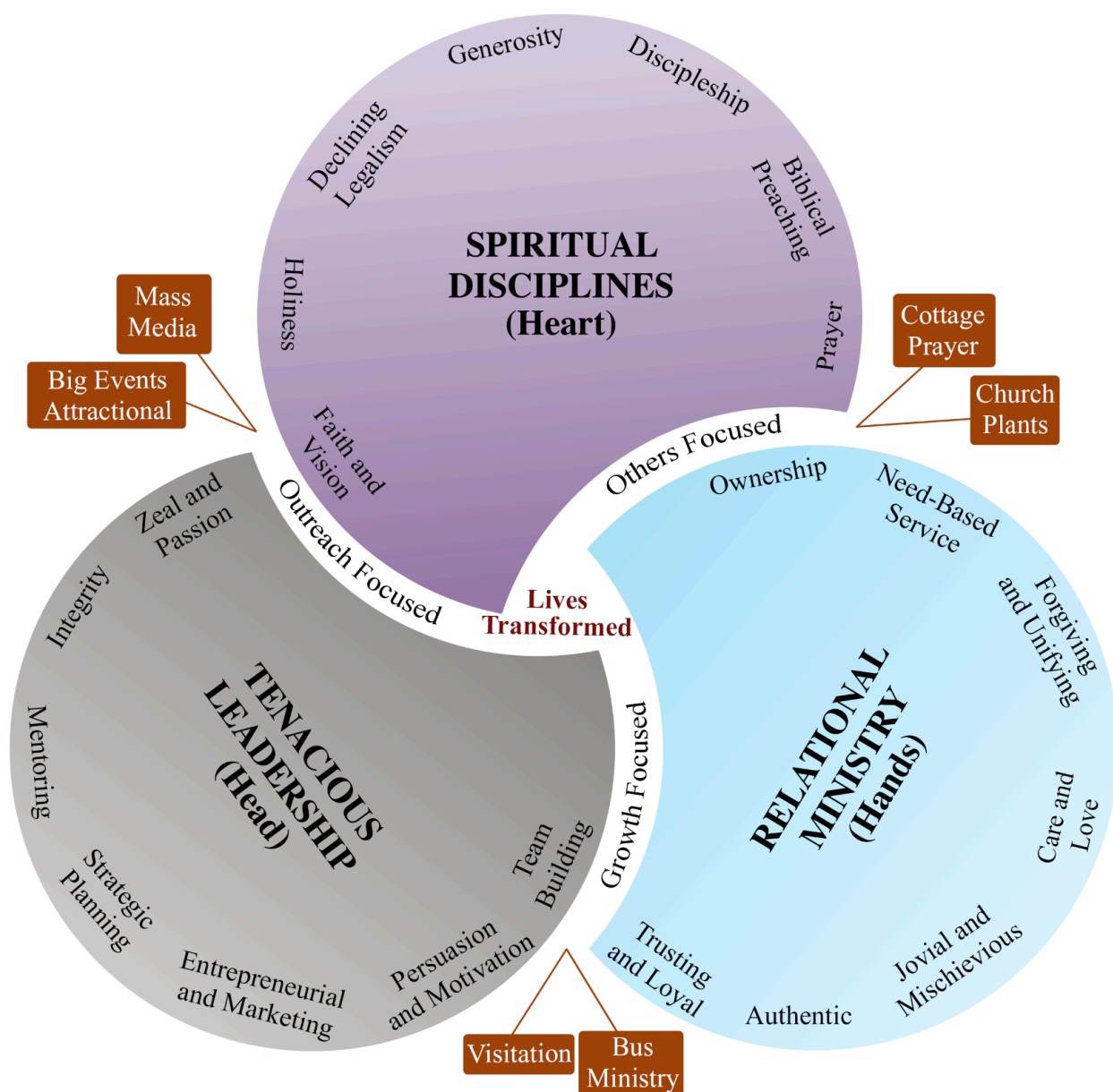


Figure 3. Foundational Growth Model.

This model combines the various principles important to the early members interviewed and creates an easy-to-understand model of major principles impacting the founding and growth in the first decade of TRBC from the perspective of those who participated. Some of Falwell's methods would be different if he were founding TRBC today. However, all of the principles by which Falwell and the foundational members grew God's church on Thomas Road are timeless. Each of them are also biblical principles of how to love God, and to stay focused on reaching and serving others; Each was encouraged in the Old and New Testaments, and continue today to be among the primary influences through which a church will grow.

The Apostle Paul's teachings did not emphasize the latest marketing techniques, technical wonders, or ministry plans, but rather concentrated on timeless principles. These principles include: growing constantly in spiritual discipline, while remaining relationally connected to others, and tenaciously leading individuals towards the kingdom of God. Through this, the Apostle Paul saw his world transformed by the gospel of Christ! Throughout this study the author paralleled Paul's teaching with those principles analyzed from the overview of the foundational years of Jerry Falwell. The most important principles a church planter or pastor should integrate are spiritual disciplines focused on salvation, tenacious leadership focused on momentum, and relational ministry focused on serving others. This interconnected synergy between pastor and parishioner in a church creates a foundation, for God to accomplish astonishing things through His people, resulting in greater impact for the His Kingdom.

Appendix A

Timeline of Significant Events for Jerry Falwell

- 1933** August 11th—Jerry Falwell (along with his twin brother) is born in Lynchburg, VA.¹
October 4th—Macel Pate (later Falwell is born in Lynchburg, VA).²
- 1952** January 20th – Jerry Falwell has a conversion experience at Park Avenue Baptist Church.³
- 1956** Jerry Falwell graduates from Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO.⁴
June 10th—Park Avenue Baptist Church has a vote of confidence for its pastor. Those who voted against the pastor were removed. They drive to Richmond to hear the twenty-two year-old Falwell speak at a revival service.
June 17th—35 adults and their kids start meeting in Mountain View Elementary School with Falwell speaking.
June 21st—On a Thursday, Thomas Road Baptist Church is founded, and begins meeting in the Former Donald Duck Bottling Company.
Around September—Starts daily thirty-minute radiobroadcast through WBRG Radio Station.⁵
September—work begins on educational space, representing the first building project of TRBC.⁶
- 1958** March—The second sanctuary is finished— (701 Thomas Road Bottling Company Extension).⁷
April 12th—Jerry Falwell and Macel Pate are married.⁸

¹ Macel Falwell, *His Life His Legacy*, V.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Margaret Dowdy, “Baptist Church Formed for Thomas Road Section.” *The News* June 22, 1956, B-9.

⁵ Jerry Falwell, *Anniversary Album* (Lynchburg, VA: Thomas Road Baptist Church, 1959), 1.

⁶ News Advance, “Thomas Road Baptist Church Will Be Dedicated,” *The News*, March 29, 1958, 4.

⁷ News Advance, “Thomas Road Baptist Church Will Be Dedicated.”

⁸ Macel Falwell, *His Life His Legacy*, V.

- Around June—Starts weekly television broadcast through WLVA-TV, now channel 13.⁹
- 1959** January—Elim Home for Alcoholics is begun in Stonewall, VA.¹⁰ Later Falwell hires William (Bill) Greene and his wife as the first directors.
- 1962** June 17th—Jerry Falwell Jr. is born (Current Chancellor of Liberty University).
December 10th—TRBC signs with J. E. Jamerson & Sons contract to build third sanctuary (701 Thomas Road—Later Old Pate Chapel).¹¹
- 1963** May-August—Treasure Island Youth Camp (former YMCA Island) attracts over 1600 children for inaugural year of summer camping.
Bus Ministry begun with old school buses.
Treasure Island is made home to teenage boys from underprivileged homes.
- 1964** March 29th—The third sanctuary is completed— (701 Thomas Road— Later Old Pate Chapel).¹²
November 7th—Jean Ann “Jeannie” Falwell is born (Currently Chief of Surgery at Hunter Holmes McGuire, VA).
December—After a brief stay on Treasure Island, Elim Home moves to its current location in Madison Heights.
- 1965** Hope Aglow—Prison Ministry started by Rev. Ed and Mrs. Alfreda Martin.¹³
- 1966** September 7th—Jonathan Falwell is born (Current Pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church).
- 1967** November 26th—Thomas Road Baptist Church buys Video Cameras and starts producing *The Old Time Gospel Hour* from within TRBC.

⁹ Falwell, *Anniversary Album*, 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹¹ Abigail Ruth Sattler, “Timeline and Important Dates of Liberty University” (2011), Faculty Publications and Presentations, Paper 52; accessed February 28, 2014. http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lib_fac_pubs/52 , 16.

¹² “Opening Day for New Sanctuary,” *The News*, March 29, 1964, advertisement, C-4.

¹³ Falwell Ministries Liberty University Archive, *Record Group 9: Hope Aglow Ministry*; accessed January 10, 2014; http://www.liberty.edu/media/1410/archive_finding_aids/FM%20RG-09.pdf.

- August 28—Lynchburg Christian Academy founded with 102 students.¹⁴
- 1968** Bus Ministry Expanded to cover most of the region with around fifty bus routes.
April 14th—Building began for fourth sanctuary (Old 701 Thomas Road Sanctuary).¹⁵
- 1970** August 30th—Dedication of the fourth sanctuary is finished— (701 Thomas Road—Main Sanctuary).

¹⁴ Sattler, “Timeline and Important Dates.”

¹⁵ Ibid., 16.

Appendix B

Code Presence Data

	23	22	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	03	02	01	TOTAL
Spiritual Disciplines																								
Prayer			1	1	1	1	1	1			1		1			1		1	1	1	1	1		14
Biblical Preaching		1		1	1	1	1	1	1		1		1		1	1			1	1	1	1	1	16
Discipleship		1	1	1		1		1	1				1		1	1	1		1	1	1			13
Generosity		1		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	19
Declining Legalism	1			1	1				1										1	1	1		1	8
Holiness				1	1			1	1		1					1	1		1	1	1	1		11
Faith and Vision		1		1	1	1		1		1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	18
Outreach Focus		1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	19
Tenacious Leadership																								
Zeal and Passion		1	1	1	1	1		1	1		1	1	1		1			1	1	1	1	1		16
Integrity				1		1		1			1			1	1				1	1	1		1	10
Mentors	1			1	1	1		1		1			1		1	1		1		1	1	1		13
Strategic Planning		1		1				1	1			1	1		1	1				1	1	1	1	12
Entrepreneurial and M	1			1	1	1			1	1	1	1			1		1	1		1	1		1	14
Persuasion and Motivati	1	1	1		1	1	1	1			1	1			1			1	1		1	1		14
Team Building			1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1		1		1	1	1	1		1	1	1		16
Momentum Focus		1		1	1	1		1		1			1		1	1	1	1				1		12
Relational Ministry																								
Trusting and Loyal		1	1	1				1	1		1	1		1	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	15
Authentic		1		1		1		1	1				1		1	1				1	1			10
Jovial and Mischievous		1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1						1		1	1	1	16
Forgiving and Unifying				1							1						1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
Needs Based Ministry				1				1		1	1	1				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	12
Ownership		1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	19
Focused and Uplifting Oth	1			1	1		1		1					1						1	1			8
Programs - Outgrowths of Methods																								
Visitation				1		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	18
Bus Ministry			1	1		1		1		1	1				1					1	1		1	10
Big Events	1		1	1				1	1						1		1	1		1	1			10
Music Ministry	1	1		1	1			1	1		1		1		1									9
Mass Media	1			1		1		1					1						1	1	1	1		9
Youth Focus				1	1			1		1	1				1	1					1			8
Buildings								1		1					1	1	1	1				1		7
TOTAL	6	15	11	29	16	16	8	26	19	14	19	11	18	7	20	17	14	16	18	24	27	20	13	384

Appendix C

Code Application Data

	23	22	20	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	09	08	07	06	05	04	03	02	01	Totals	
Spiritual Disciplines																									
Prayer			3	4	3	1	1	5			2	1				5		1	3	1	1	4		35	
Biblical Preaching		1		2	4	1	3	2	1		1	1			3	3			2	3	1	1	1	30	
Discipleship		2	1	4		1		1	1			2			1	2	2		2	5	3			27	
Generosity		4		#		5	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1		2	1	1	6	3	5	5	2	54	
Declining Legalism	1			7	8				1										1	1	2		1	22	
Holiness				5	3			2	1		1					3	1		1	2	2	1		22	
Faith and Vision		3		1	9	2		2		1	2	1	1		1	4	1	3	4	2	3	10	2	52	
Outreach Focus		1	4	10	1		1	10	1	1	1	4	2			2	3	2	2	7	5	1	1	59	
Tenacious Leadership																									
Zeal and Passion		1	4	2	5	1		8	3		2	4	1			3			2	5	2	6	4	53	
Integrity				3		2		3			1			1	1				1	3	1		3	19	
Mentors	1			5	1	1		2		1			1		8	1		3		2	2	1		29	
Strategic Planning		1		1				1	2			1	1			3	5			2	1	2	1	21	
Entrepreneurial and M	2			4	2	2			3	1	1	1				3		1	3		1	1	1	26	
Persuasion and Motivation	1	2	3			2	1	1	1			1	1		2			1	2		4	1		23	
Team Building			1	4	1		1	4	3	2	1		3		1	1	1	2		4	4	3		36	
Momentum Focus		3		4	1	1		3		1			1		1	1	1	2				2		21	
Relational Ministry																									
Trusting and Loyal		3	2	5				3	1		2	1		1	1	2			2	5	2	5	2	37	
Authentic		2		3		1		3	2				3		1	1				2	1			19	
Jovial and Mischievous	1	3	2	4	1		2	3	1	3	2	5	1						1		3	1	2	35	
Forgiving and Unifying				3							1						3	2	3	2	1	1		16	
Needs Based Ministry				4				3		1	1	1				1	1	3	2	4	4	2		27	
Ownership		2	4	5	1		3	7	3	5	6		3	2	1		2	2	4	7	5	8	3	73	
Focused and Uplifting Oth	1			5	1		2		1					2						1	2			15	
Programs - Outgrowths of Methods																									
Visitation				4		1		2	1	1	1	1	7	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	2	1	1	35
Bus Ministry			2	5		3		2		1	1				1					1	2		3	21	
Big Events	1		1	3				9	1						2		2	7		2	1			29	
Music Ministry	1	1		1	2			1	1		3		2		1									13	
Mass Media	1			1		1		2					1						1	3	2	2		14	
Youth Focus				1	3			1		2	1				1	1					1			11	
Buildings								2		3					2	1	1	1				3		13	
Totals	7	27	27	#	49	26	13	83	31	22	33	18	37	9	40	37	23	37	43	68	67	58	23		

Appendix D

Code Co-Occurrence Chart

	Spiritual Disciplines	Salvation Oriented	Prayer	Biblical Preaching	Discipleship	Generosity	Tithing	Declining Legalism	Holiness	Faith	Tenacious Leadership	Momentum - Growth	Tenacity and Passion	Integrity	Mentors	Strategic Planning	Entrepreneurial	Persuasion - Motivation	Team Building	Relational Ministry	Others Focus	Trusting and Loyal	Genuine	Jovial - Mischievous	Kindness	Forgiving and Unifying	Ownership	Totals	
Spiritual Disciplines																													
Salvation Oriented			3	3	3	1	1	1	3	1		3	2		2			1	2				7		1	1		6	70
Prayer		3		3					4	2		2	3	1			1					2						2	30
Biblical Preaching		3	3		4	1	1		3			1	3	3			1	2					1		2				32
Discipleship		3		4			1	1	2	2						3		1	5			1					5	31	
Generosity		1	1				1					1	1			1					2	2	2		3	1	1	22	
Tithing		1		1	1					7			1	1		1			2						1		4	22	
Declining Legalism		1			1													1			1					2		6	
Holiness		3	4	3	2								1		4		2		1						1		1	29	
Faith		1	2		2		7					1	#		2	6	2	4	4				3	2	1	1	1	54	
Tenacious Leadership																													
Momentum - Growth		3	2	1		1				1			2		2		2	3	3			1			1			33	
Tenacity and Passion		2	3	3			1	1	#			2		2	1	4	1	7	8			2	1	2	2			60	
Integrity			1	3		1	1					2						1				2	1				1	14	
Mentors		2						4	2		2	1				1	3	2	1								1	33	
Strategic Planning					3		1		6			4		1		1	2	4									2	28	
Entrepreneurial			1	1		1			2	2		2	1		3	1		2	4			2			1		1	37	
Persuasion and Motivation		1		2	1			1	4		3	7	1	2	2	2			#			3		1		1	2	47	
Team Building		2			5		2		1	4		3	8		1	4	4	#				5					9	68	
Relational Ministry																													
Others Focus						2		1															2		4			10	
Trusting and Loyal		7	2		1	2			3		1	2	2			2	3	5					1	1	1	3	2	54	
Genuine				1		2			2			1	1								2	1		1	2			15	
Jovial and Mischievous		1											2					1				1	1		5		1	16	
Kindness		1		2		3	1		1	1		1	2			1					4	1	2	5		1	1	35	
Forgiving and Unifying						1		2		1								1				3			1			9	
Ownership		6	2		5	1	4		1	1				1	1	2	1	2	9			2		1	1			64	
Totals		70	30	32	31	22	22	6	29	54		33	60	14	33	28	37	47	68		10	54	15	16	35	9	64		

Appendix E

Code-Weighting Statistics

	Count	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median
Spiritual Disciplines					
Prayer	35	3	5	4.2	5
Biblical Preaching	30	1	5	3.5	3
Discipleship	27	3	5	3.9	3
Generosity	54	1	5	3.5	3
Declining Legalism	22	1	5	3.1	3
Holiness	22	1	5	3.5	3
Faith and Vision	52	1	5	4	5
Outreach Focus	59	1	5	3.6	3
Tenacious Leadership					
Zeal and Passion	53	3	5	4	4
Integrity	19	3	5	4.1	5
Mentors	29	1	5	3.4	3
Strategic Planning	21	1	5	3.4	3
Entrepreneurial and Marketing	26	1	5	3.5	3
Persuasion and Motivation	23	3	5	3.7	3
Team Building	36	3	5	3.9	3.5
Momentum Focus	21	3	5	3.7	3
Relational Ministry					
Trusting and Loyal	37	1	5	3.4	3
Authentic	19	3	5	3.8	3
Jovial and Mischievous	35	3	5	3.4	3
Forgiving and Unifying	16	3	5	4.4	5
Needs Based Ministry	27	3	5	4.3	5
Ownership	73	1	5	4	5
Others Focus	15	3	5	3.3	3
Programs - Outgrowths of Methods					
Visitation	35	3	5	3.9	3
Bus Ministry	21	1	5	3.9	5
Big Events	29	1	5	3.7	3
Music Ministry	13	1	5	3.6	3
Mass Media	14	3	5	4	4
Youth Focus	11	3	5	3.4	3
Buildings	13	3	5	3.2	3

Appendix F

Research Questions

(Interviews were semi-structured, so questions were less important than keeping the conversation going with the interviewee):

1. How did you first hear about Thomas Road Baptist Church (TRBC)?
2. What year did you first attend TRBC?
3. What year did you join TRBC?
4. Before coming to TRBC, would you describe your spiritual state as being born-again?
 - o If no, do you ever remember a time when you would describe yourself as having a born-again experience?
5. What encouraged you to be a part of TRBC? (Please rank the below 1-7—Highest to Lowest)
6. What terms would best describe Jerry Falwell?
7. How did Jerry Falwell's vision affect your life?
8. How did he keep the vision "before your eyes" or "alive in your heart"?
9. Did you ever witness an idea or dream of Jerry Falwell's not come to fruition?
 - o Yes (please comment on how it was handled)
 - o No (please comment on why you believe that was)
 - o Unsure
10. What encouraged you to contribute financially to TRBC?
11. What else did you give to the church?
12. Would you describe your donations as sacrificial?
13. Was it in response to general or specific needs that you would give the most?
14. Where have you served at TRBC? Please include a brief description of each job or role?
15. How long did you serve?
16. With what jobs/roles have you been involved? Please describe.
17. How did you get involved?
 - o Jerry Falwell asked me to help
 - o Another member asked me to help
 - o I saw a need and volunteered to help
 - o Other (please describe)
18. Did you ever leave TRBC? Reason?
19. Had you ever been a part of another church?
 - o If yes, what was different about your experience at the church other than TRBC?
20. What were some of the phrases frequently repeated you heard Jerry Falwell say during your early years?
21. Why do you believe people followed Jerry Falwell?
22. Describe Jerry Falwell's attitude toward controversy in the early years of Thomas Road Baptist Church?
23. Did you get to meet Jerry Falwell outside of church functions?
 - o If so, how did these meetings affect your view of Dr. Falwell?
24. How would you describe the leadership style of Jerry Falwell between 1956-1966?

25. Early on, how would you say Jerry Falwell led? Authoritative, Team Approach, Advisory Group, Comment.
26. Would you like to share any specific memories from 1956-1966?
27. Tell me what it was like in the early years of TRBC?
28. Describe some of your early interactions with Jerry Falwell.
29. What are the major distinctives of TRBC?
30. What are some repeated comments or statements from the years between 1956-1966?
31. How would you describe the following at TRBC?
32. Are there any memories you would like to share?

Appendix G

Original Research Export

	Volunteering	Zeal / Tenacity / Passion	Bible Study - Training - Discipleship	Revival - Desire - Salvation Goal	Relational - Kind - Friendly	Trusting - Loyal	Prayer - Cottage / Plants	Team Building	Visitation	Dreams / Visions	Mentors	Big Events - Attractional	Needs Based Ministry	Entrepreneurial - Marketing	Faith	Genuine Care - Love	Generosity	Persuasion - Motivation	Transformed Lives	Tithing / Donations	Legalism	Momentum - Growing Church	Bus Ministry	Real - Genuine - Consistent	Strategic Planning	Integrity	Enjoyed Life - Mischievous - Jovial	Forgiving - Unifying	Mass Media
1	3				1	2			1	2				1					1	2	1		3		1	3	2		
2	8	4		1	5	5	4	3	1	6	1		2		5	1	1	1		4		2		2	2	1	1	2	
3	5	6	4	2	5	2	1	4	2	3	2	1	4	1		3	1	4	3	2	2		2	1	1	1	3	1	2
4	2		2	3		1		1	2	1		2	1	1			1		1			1						3	
5	7	2	7	4	5	5	1	4	3	2	2	2	4	1	1	3	1		3	2	1		1	2	2	3		2	4
6	2	1		1			1	2	2	3	3	7	3	3	1	1	1	1	1			2						2	
7	3	5	3	1	3	2	4		1	2			2		2	2	1	2	2	4	1					1		3	1
8			5	1		2	5	1	2	2	1		1		2	2	1		1	1		1				5			
9	1	2	3			1		1	2	1	8	2		3		3		2				1	1	1	3	1			
10	2					1			1							1								1		1			
11	3	1	3	2	3		1	3	7	1	1				1	1	1					1		3	1				1
12	5	2		1	2	2	2	1	1				1	1	2				1	1			1			1	3	1	
13		4		1	3	1			1				1	1	1		1	1	3						1		1		
14	5			1	2			2	1		1		1	1	1				1		1	1					1		
15	3	3	2		1	1		3	1				3		1	1	1	1		1				2	1				
16	6	8	2	9		3	5	4	2	2	2	9	3		1			1	2	1		3	2	3	1	3	2		2
17	3		2				1	1							1			1	1										
18	1	1	1				1		1					2	2		3	2		1		1	3	1		2			1
19	1	5	2	1	1		3	1		1	1		2	7	2						8	1							
20	4	4	1	3	1	2	4	1				1			1		2	2					2					2	
21	5	2	4	8	4	5	4	4	4	1	5	3	4	4		2	10	3	2	1	7	4	5	3	1	3	2	3	1
22	2		2	1		3				2					1	1	1	1		2		3		2	1				
23					2						1	1		2							1								1
Totals	70	50	43	40	38	38	37	36	35	29	29	29	27	26	25	25	24	23	23	23	22	21	21	20	20	19	17	16	15

Original Research Export (Continued)

	Friendly Church	Spiritual Depth	Others Focus - Uplifting Others	Disunity	Preaching - Teaching	Intelligent	Buildings	Music Ministry	Segregation	Holiness Growth, obedience, Purity	Exceptionalism	Youth Focus	Family Focus	Outspoken, Opinionated, W 2 Fight	Pain - Disappointment	Community Accusations	Promises - Broken	Personal Growth / Development	Accusations	Unfriendly	Tithing	Simple - Uncultured - Rough	Leadership	Generosity of the Church	Ownership - With or without Jerry	Phone Ministry	International Focus	Unclear	Sin	Totals	
1	1			1	1									1																28	
2	2			1	1		3			1	1																			72	
3		1	2						3	1	2	1	2	1										2						86	
4		1		3			1			1																1				33	
5	1		1	1	2	2				1	2	1		2					2								1			95	
6		1					1			1	1					2			1				1						1	52	
7	1	1			1				2		2				1	1				1				1						63	
8		3				2	1					1							1								1			51	
9					1	2	1				1	1	1		1			2					1			1				57	
10			1			1																								19	
11								2								1		1												49	
12				2	1			3		1		1		1	1	2						1			1					54	
13				1		2								1				1												38	
14							3					2					1													39	
15	2	1	1			2		1							1			1												50	
16	1	1			1	1	2	1	2	1		1		2	2	2						1	1		1					112	
17	1		2		1																									30	
18	3			1	1						1		1		2	1						1								52	
19	1	2	1	2	2			2	3	1		3	1					1		4		2								80	
20	1											1																		52	
21		3	5		1	1		1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1			1					1							148	
22	1		1		1	1		1											1			1		1						52	
23				2				1					1				5		1										1		42
Totals	15	14	14	14	13	13	13	13	12	11	11	11	10	9	9	9	7	6	6	5	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	1078

Appendix H

Anne Whittemore Malir Picture Collection



R.B. and Ann Whittemore, circa 1955



Anne Whittemore Malir – circa 1959



Jerry and Macel Falwell at The Whittemore's

Appendix I

Authors and Books that Influenced a Young Jerry Falwell

Books

Andrew Murray

—*Waiting on God*

—*The Full Blessing of Pentecost*

—*With Christ in the School of Prayer*

—*The Deeper Spiritual Life*

Basil Miller—*George Muller*

Norman Percy Grubb—*Rees Howells: Intercessor* (1952)

Oswald Chambers—*My Utmost for His Highest*—(His daily quiet time for many years)

R. A. Torrey—*The Power of Prayer and the Prayer of Power*

Watchman Nee—*The Normal Christian Life*

Biographies or Autobiographies

Charles Thomas (C. T.) Studd—Biographies

Edward McKendree (E. M.) Bounds

Evans Roberts—

George Muller—

Praying Hyde—

Martin Luther—

Rees Howells—

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IRB Exemption



The Graduate School at Liberty University

June 5, 2012

Iain Lyttle

IRB Exemption 1330.060512: In the Beginning: An Examination of the Techniques Employed by Rev. Jerry Falwell from 1956-1966

Dear Iain,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and that no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101 (b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
- (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
 - (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and that any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption, or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,



Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling

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