

Liberty University School of Divinity

Corporatization of the Church Compromises Christian's Priorities, Purpose, and Practices

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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In effort to mainstream its exposure, income, agenda, and influence among the people all over the world, some churches have embraced a corporate model in operating and ministering to the masses. Corporatization advocates business mindset, which leads to less sensitivity to building a relationship with God. This trend focuses on revenue and the bottom line. By seeking a self-gratifying importance in society, a growing number of churches are no longer the institution that houses individuals who serve as the salt of the earth and light of the world. This strategy minimizes spiritual formation and discipleship in order to promote a church's brand or an individual's name. This project intends to show how corporatization shifts ministries into business-making enterprises. It also proposes that corporatization affects the body of Christ by causing a lack of basic biblical knowledge. While attendance remains high in corporate worship services, there is a significantly lower level participation in activities that are not in a mass corporate assembly. Many corporate-minded individuals in churches believe they can run God's house better with practices learned from business principles instead of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Church is in the business of making disciples, not dollars. A ministry should use the Bible to strengthen faith and never to develop its own brand in order to produce fame. Operating a ministry like a corporation will build a brand and bank account, but it will blemish God's people and His desire for the furtherance of the gospel. There is evidence that the motive for ministry is to lift up the church and not Christ as Scripture demands. Susan K. Beaumont illustrates on how churches are looking to increase their notoriety in society at the expense of sound doctrine by conforming to the world.¹ Beaumont also states that in looking to be relevant and inclusive to the world, some churches look to developing strategies to inflate membership numbers and increase the monetary stream from more people in church. Beaumont mentions the effects of corporatization can affect a ministry. Church administrations are exhausting resources to stabilize operations by theory, using more corporate-themed tactics to simplify their practices.² Craig Ott and Gene Wilson write that ministries are seeking a chief executive officer who can also serve as the senior pastor as a secondary responsibility.³ Corporate-minded churches are formulating staff that caters more to financially based decisions, not faith-based decisions. Michael L. Budde distinguishes the motivation as a deciding factor for not implementing corporate practices to ministry.⁴ With a primary focus on developing programs to cater to

¹ Susan K. Beaumont, "Beyond 'Corporate': New Insights on Larger Churches," *Congregations* 34, no. 3 (June 1, 2008): 7.

² Beaumont 2008, 9-10.

³ Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 7.

⁴ Michael L. Budde, "The Rational Shepard: Corporate Practices and the Church," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 21, no. 1 (2008): 100-14.

growing membership numbers, neglect of actually doing ministry shows a greater problem and serves as a basis for this research. Beaumont insinuates that not ministering to the member but concern about attendance numbers is not the core principle that Christ embodies.⁵ The pulpit is being used as a proverbial soapbox to promote books, politicians running for election, and programs. It seems ministries are forged to produce efficiency as opposed to effectiveness. There is a sense that ministering to the congregants with a mindset as David Browning suggests, a corporatized church seeks to be efficient and church should desire to have effectiveness.⁶ Thus, church is to help lift Christ and to reinforce the principles that Christ placed for the church.

A key component to the issue of corporatization is the structuring the organization to be efficient in operation and engineered to produce results as supposed disciples. Thorleiff Pettersson speaks on some churches seeking structure, organization, and protocol, which cater to personal feelings and observations as opposed to biblically sound principles.⁷ Ministry designed to be a revenue producer and not for spiritual formation defines the very issue of corporatization that Suzanne Sataline articulates about church growth.⁸ Problems arise when churches concentrate on being so fluent and organized that the Holy Spirit cannot move in to minister to parishioners.⁹ For instance, Kerry Jacobs studied the accounting practices of the Church of England to report how budgeting on a parish level is feeble compared to the Diocesan level due

⁵ Beaumont, "Beyond 'Corporate,'" 7.

⁶ David Browning, *Deliberate Simplicity: How the Church Does More by Doing Less* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 45.

⁷ Thorleif Pettersson, "Religion in Contemporary Society: Eroded by Human Well-Being, Supported by Cultural Diversity," *Comparative Sociology* 5, no. 2/3 (May 2006): 232.

⁸ Suzanne Sataline, "A Popular Strategy For Church Growth Splits Congregants," *Wall Street Journal* (Eastern edition), September 5, 2006, A1-A10.

⁹ Ibid.

to the fact that the church possesses an income-producing element.¹⁰ Arnold R. Grant expounds how the Christian community adopts the principle of being incentive-based to motivate workers within the ministry.¹¹ Seeking to increase monetary gain and acceptance from the community, individuals within the church have a clouded reasoning for serving God. Motivation is always key for a person to have longevity and energy in any kind of function, including in ministry of a church. When people are rewarded through fame and fortune, it corrupts motivation with greed and misguided faith. God seeks to build His kingdom, not one particular church in one community to be a blessing to one group of individuals. He commissioned His followers to go all over the world baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹² Thus, many church organizations will say money is not the reason why they do work, but there is an obvious emphasis placed on making money. This emphasis is detrimental because there is an obvious greed factor, and the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.¹³ If a ministry is not motivated to help people and meet the community needs as an extension of God, the doors should be close. Churches being charitable and holding events expecting notoriety are the challenges the writer wants to remedy.

Corporate-themed practices contaminate the minds of believers, causing them to think Christ seeks those who are faithful to church as opposed to Him alone. The Apostle Paul informs believers that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.¹⁴ This liberty is supported

¹⁰ Kerry Jacobs, "The Sacred and the Secular: Examining the Role of Accounting in the Religious Context," *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* 18, no. 2 (April 2005): 190.

¹¹ Arnold R. Grant, "Teamwork in Secular and Faith-Based Organizations," *Performance Improvement* 46, no. 6 (July 1, 2007): 25.

¹² Matt 28:19-20.

¹³ 1 Tim 6:10.

¹⁴ 2 Cor 3:17.

in doing the will of the Father. By no means does this liberty or freedom allow nor afford people the privilege to serve a personal purpose or gain. True believers will know that being decent and in order is not a secular concept. Paul further expounds in Scripture that attempting to gain personally shows that the flesh is seeking satisfaction rather than servants pleasing the Lord.¹⁵ The very motif of the Holy Bible is to serve God and be the beacon to bring glory to Him and Him alone. Gilbert Bilezikian sees the corporatization aspect in ministries or churches as if one's livelihood and existence are based on what one does to show their worth in church through their personal efforts in service.¹⁶ Raymond Elson, Susanne O'Callaghan, and John P. Walker show this facet can be supported by a study conducted to look into the fiscal practices of churches and their lack of transparency due to funds suspiciously allocated to questionable practices.¹⁷ The fact that there was a senate inquiry of ministries' finances shows how there is a concern that money is more important than soul saving. Being under the prevue of the government is based off of the income relative to the use of that revenue for those outside the proverbial four walls of the church.¹⁸ The study further proves how churches involved in the study would overstaff and have separate boards whose sole responsibility was fiscal matters consisting of financial management, including the existence and use of a budget, controls over cash receipts and disbursements, financial reporting, and tax reporting and compliance.¹⁹ It also explains that

¹⁵ Rom 8:1-9.

¹⁶ Gilbert Bilezikian, "Church Leadership that Kills Community," *Priscilla Papers* 21, no. 4 (November 2007): 5-6.

¹⁷ Raymond J. Elson, Susanne O'Callaghan, and John P. Walker, "Corporate Governance in Religious Organizations: A Study of Current Practices in the Local Church," *Academy of Accounting and Financial Studies Journal* 11, no. 1 (2007): 122-24.

¹⁸ Michael Ortner, "In Last 30 Years, Black Churches Have Taken \$420 Billion from Members," *AllChristianNews.com*, February 17, 2015, 1, <http://allchristiannews.com/last-30-years-black-churches-taken-420-billion-members>

¹⁹ Elson, O'Callaghan, and Walker, "Corporate Governance in Religious Organizations," 124-27.

fiscal management was adequate but Elson, O’Callaghan, and Walker’s study is not very transparent.²⁰ God wants men to see one’s good works but glorify their Father, which is in heaven.²¹ It is biblical and necessary for anybody of believers to function in a healthy manner.²² Thus, placing emphasis on people and not materials is imperative to a church’s effectiveness. The church is referred to as a House of Prayer and it is made of people that succeeds by the healthy growth in biblical knowledge. Ministries also perform deeds out of kindness as supposed to being demanded to is what allows churches to strive in modern society.

Statement of Problem

The overall principle of this thesis is that the church is to make disciples and not make dollars. The thought of conducting business practices in the church was believed by some to be a right. Malcolm Brown describes this thought in his account and summation of William Temple’s *Christianity and Social Order*. He details Temple’s belief that Christians influence much of the world’s business; it is an obligation for the church to be involved in political, economic, and social affairs.²³ The writer deems this necessity as the foundation for corporatizing ministries, because business makes money and money runs the world. Christ felt compelled by business as well. He asks the question, “Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”²⁴ The church can benefit from following the Savior’s advice, but it would rather indulge in the affairs of the world. As the world’s agenda changes, so does its influences, perspectives, and

²⁰ Ibid., 129. The employees at these churches did not have a working knowledge of what the budget was but the mere fact that the church did have a budget in which it operated.

²¹ Matt 5:16.

²² 1 Cor 14:40.

²³ Malcolm Brown. “Politics as the Church’s Business: William Temple’s Christianity and Social Order Revisited.” *Journal of Anglican Studies* 5, no. 2 (December 2007): 166.

²⁴ Luke 2:49 NKJV.

interests change.²⁵ There is a relationship developed with the church and parishioner. Unlike Christ, the church itself is the brand and influence, which seeks to please its consumers. Susan Fournier and editors give further details about research, proving movements by businesses to be more attractive and relatable to its consumers to strengthen its relationship with these people.²⁶ One principle is to hold that patron by love. That love will ensure a company receives a long-term supporter. The patrons will be the best billboards for the business.²⁷ The church seeks to please its patrons so the institution bends to the will of congregants instead of Christ. Scripture is clear about not being men-pleasers.²⁸ That Scripture shows that Christians' service is to God and not to gratify human kind. That early thought of being involved with all caveats in civilization causes the church to conform and cease its true transformation of the Creator.²⁹ Neil Cole and Phil Helfer see that Christ operates His house as He sees fit because of His power and determination to be about His Father's business.³⁰ According to Cole, by accommodating every demand of people, the Lord's will becomes lost within the ministry.³¹ People have begun to shun the idea that a relationship with God is needed for a person living on earth. David Kim, David McCalman, and Dan Fisher discuss this mindset when they define the divide between sacred and secular. There is a focus on how much an offering he or she gives. Also, people's

²⁵ Malcolm Brown, "Politics as the Church's Business: William Temple's *Christianity and Social Order* Revisited." *Journal of Anglican Studies* 5, no. 2 (2007): 166.

²⁶ Susan Fournier, ed., *Consumer-Brand Relationships: Insights for Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2012), 1.

²⁷ Fournier, *Consumer-Brand Relationships*, 138-41.

²⁸ Col 3:22.

²⁹ Rom 12:2.

³⁰ Neil Cole and Phil Helfer, *Church Transfusion: Changing Your Church Organically—from the Inside Out* (Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 8.

³¹ Cole and Helfer, *Church Transfusion*, 45-56.

assets can encourage one to develop the mentality which drives ministries to indulge those people who meet these characteristics.³² If one is looking for churches to be efficient, using corporate models is troublesome and should not be embraced. Thom S. Rainer suggests first impressions go a long way for people who are not active in church. Pastors' preaching and the doctrine of the church are overwhelming factors in an unchurched one seeking to be part of a ministry.³³ Many churches believe a website, great choir, various programs, and a quick worship service are the tools needed for bringing in new members or keeping current ones. Kim, McCalman, and Fisher expose the fact that the practice of compromising one's sacredness for convenience has made church a farce to society.³⁴ Rainer illustrates the statistics on how individuals perceive churchgoers as isolationists and uptight legalists to the very doctrine the ministry seeks to spread.³⁵ Holding the church's doctrine close to heart and sacred does not deter people. King David stated that God's Word is what causes a believer to refrain from sin. He writes, "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You."³⁶ It is the hypocritical approach to individuals who hold these doctrines and morals dear to selectively apply the same dear doctrines when they choose.³⁷ Churches must take responsibility in adhering to the entire Bible in its proper context. One should take the task in assuring God's house is operated as God planned. By maintaining biblical discipline, Christ can draw more individuals to Him.

³² David Kim, David McCalman, and Dan Fisher, "The Sacred/Secular Divide and the Christian Worldview," *Journal of Business Ethics* 109, no. 2 (August 1, 2012): 204.

³³ Thom S. Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 21.

³⁴ Kim, McCalman, and Fisher, "The Sacred/Secular Divide," 204-5.

³⁵ Rainer, *Surprising Insights*, 70-74.

³⁶ Ps 119:11.

³⁷ Cole and Helfer, *Church Transfusion*, 45-56.

Beaumont insists churches are striving for comfort and convenience in order to up numbers of individuals in the pews.³⁸ Churches have a need for lay people to be in leadership roles for the church to continue to operate. Cole and Helfer say this need derives from corporatization, and it aims to be efficient as opposed to effective.³⁹ Scripture conveys the ones involved in decision-making and casting vision for ministry should possess attributes of the God who is the reason and persuasion for people to come to the church.⁴⁰ According to Bilezikian, it suggests that any individual who desires to be a participant in any ministry function or assume any leadership role be trained based in biblical principles.⁴¹ The body of Christ exists to worship God, edify the saints, spread the gospel of Jesus Christ, and help those who are in need. Decisions and influences become based on predictions, budgets, and projections instead of faith, causing people to seek spiritual fulfillment or place one's belief in something or someone else. God gives the increase; however, churches are left without because they look at factors more than the work.⁴² To draw people, Christ must be lifted up.⁴³ The foundation of church promotion is now the extravagant cathedrals and fancy decor around buildings, which lead to the corrosion of the integrity and sacredness of the church as the house of God.

Scripture is useful when determining roles for the operations of the house of God. Sam P. Mathew uses Mark 10:35-45 to relate how leadership and mindsets in churches are perverted

³⁸ Beaumont, "Beyond 'Corporate,'" 7.

³⁹ Cole and Helfer, *Church Transfusion*, 101-13.

⁴⁰ Ps 23:3.

⁴¹ Bilezikian, "Church Leadership," 6.

⁴² 1 Cor 3:6.

⁴³ John 8:32.

due to focus on oneself as opposed to building the kingdom.⁴⁴ Mathew details how leaders have a convoluted view of leadership by status and position as opposed to submission and obedience to Christ.⁴⁵ Similar to corporatization, the priority or direction is influenced by results, self-gratification, and notoriety. The brothers James and John, according to Mathew, sought to be accepted for their status and perceived strength through visibility.⁴⁶ When one utilizes a business mindset in a non-business environment, chaos ensues in structure, procedures, and communication. Cole speaks on leadership affecting the congregation when the issue of how the church is to be lead arises.⁴⁷ The process of performing ministry is to appease the Lord. However, when it is confused with being the centerpiece for success without proving worth or even allegiance to God, it undercuts the very foundation of church.⁴⁸ Beaumont insists churches are striving for comfort and convenience in order to up numbers of individuals in the pews.⁴⁹ Churches have a need for lay people to be in leadership roles for the church to continue to operate. Cole and Helfer say this need derives from corporatization, and it aims to be efficient as opposed to effective.⁵⁰ Scripture conveys that those involved in decision-making and casting vision for ministry should possess attributes of the God who is the reason and persuasion for

⁴⁴ Sam P. Mathew, "Be Servant Leaders: Re-Visioning Christian Leadership (Mark 10:35-45)," *Religion and Society* 56, no. 1 (March 2011): 17-27.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁶Ibid., 19-21.

⁴⁷ Cole 2011, 11.

⁴⁸ Sam Mathew's article details how James and John attempt to gain power and position without struggle and believing that without the proverbial earning one's stripes. This mindset is connected to the writer's thesis due to corporate-minded individuals believing their brain power will overcome God-sized problems. The conceitedness is the very thread that is undoing God's outreach and His church being pure, holy, and relevant.

⁴⁹ Beaumont, "Beyond 'Corporate,'" 7.

⁵⁰ Cole and Helfer, *Church Transfusion*, 101-13.

people to come to the church.⁵¹ Bilezikian suggests that any individual who desires to be a participant in any ministry function or assume any leadership role should be trained based on biblical principles.⁵² When a church needs help with finances, they seek individuals who are CPAs or who have experience in the financial business sector. Use of corporate managers who seek to reduce cost should not determine if a church could reach out to those who need assistance because such managers may believe this is more of a risk than a reward. According to Caroline Winter, Katherine Burton, Nick Tamasi, and Anita Kumar, a church sought members who used their financial profession to settle the church accounts so the ministry can do more projects.⁵³ It is not wise to choose leadership or even stewardship based on occupation and not faithfulness to Christ and the church.

A church will not maintain good health without the proper focus and motivation. Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey's definition of traditional and attractional churches are churches that may seek corporate themes and tactics to implement within their congregation as workflow and procedures.⁵⁴ Stephen A. Macchia maintains that a demeanor to stay people-oriented in respects to Disciples of Christ ensures a healthy church.⁵⁵ Failure to be original and authentic has transformed the body of Christ from a living sacrifice to a shell of its former self that operates as an entity without inner conscience.⁵⁶ Cole and Helfer give the following insight: for decades the church in America and many other parts of the world has been treated like a business. Principles

⁵¹ Ps 23:3.

⁵² Bilezikian, "Church Leadership," 6.

⁵³ Caroline Winter et al., "Kingdom on Earth." *Bloomberg Businessweek*, July 16, 2012, 44-45.

⁵⁴ Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is--: How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2013), 230-32.

⁵⁵ Stephen A. Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church: Ten Traits of a Vital Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003, 1999), 59-75.

⁵⁶ Rom 12:1-2.

of business management have been used to help the church grow and accomplish its mission. Pastors have been transformed into CEOs and church members into spiritual consumers. We sincerely believe that many churches are more concerned about market share than they are about bringing light and life to a dark and dying world. Think about the focus of the average church. For most, it's all about Sunday services. Regardless of which day or days you meet or how many times you meet per week, the same issue remains. The time and energies of church leaders are consumed by the need to produce some sort of event that will appeal to a certain constituency. In other words, they spend their time creating spiritual goods and services to be provided to and consumed by a spiritual marketplace.⁵⁷ Faithfulness and dependence on the Lord are what should feed a ministry for growth and prosperity. When blessed by God, be a good steward and utilize resources to maximize influence in a person's life in Christ as opposed to in their bank account.

Cole and Helfer also reiterate the fact that megachurches prosper through corporatization due to having a large amount of resources. They detail how the church suffers from an autoimmune disorder because it seeks to satisfy self-interests while neglecting the entire body of Christ.⁵⁸ Sataline contends that this practice and mindset are truly a detriment to the furtherance of the gospel.⁵⁹ Barbara Martinez interprets less focus on God and more on business practices as the reasons the body of Christ is dumbing itself down.⁶⁰ Priorities are on the show, and the

⁵⁷ Cole and Helfer, *Church Transfusion*, 16-17.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Sataline, "A Popular Strategy," A1-A10.

⁶⁰ Barbara Martinez, "Unholy Mess: A Church Grapples with a Schism Caused by a Secular Collapse --- Congregants Put Faith in a Stalwart's Firm; then, a Nasty Lawsuit --- It's God's Money Originally," *Wall Street Journal*, October 21, 1998, A1.

proper emphasis on knowing the Word of God has been neglected.⁶¹ Cole and Helfer deem overseeing of ministry with a business mindset is a sign of complete incompetence and negligence due to the amount of turmoil and scandals that derive from the failure of true, authentic biblical order in the operation of the church.⁶² Ultimately, corporatization allows isolation for church leaders and laity where the accountability is clandestine. According to Paul Heelas, corporatization gives spirituality a loose definition, and maintaining God's statutes is not given a thought because of the desire to achieve other objectives based on society's view and opinion.⁶³ Seeking to be part of a ministry can be deterred when importance is given to that which is more cosmetic than a tool for commitment. One cannot be surprised at this when the services provided by a ministry are more carnal than spiritual.

Statement of Limitations

This research project is limited to how corporatization affects the church's effectiveness. The pool of surveys and interviews will be based on professed Christians so it will not study the perspective of non-believers. The study will not address theological issues among different denominations. The problem is derived from the method, so it is not a condemnation on business practices. This research seeks to prove how ministries are compromising to abide by these percepts but ignoring the Word of God. The author is not a defender of traditionalism but rather of the practices, policies, procedures, and purposes of lifting up Jesus Christ. The student desires to measure biblical knowledge and reasoning of the person for attending church against the

⁶¹ Martinez's article is in depth about investments in particular. The business principles are where the detriment comes in. She even details how congregants were led to invest but lost thousands in money and property as result of placing business over Bible.

⁶² Cole and Helfer, *Church Transfusion*, 173-76.

⁶³ Paul Heelas, "Challenging Secularization Theory: The Growth of 'New Age' Spiritualities of Life," *Hedgehog Review* 8, no. 1/2 (Summer 2006): 47-49.

particular individual who valued the business practice or influence over the call of the Lord and will to be a disciple. Some responders to the survey may not complete the survey so there will be a different number with every survey question. The analysis will be limited to churches that institute more business practices as opposed to utilizing biblical foundations and principles.

Theoretical Basis

The body of Christ exists to worship God, edify the saints, spread the gospel of Jesus Christ, and help those who are in need. Decisions and influences begin to be based on predictions, budgets, and projections instead of faith and have caused people to seek spiritual fulfillment or place their belief in something or someone else. God gives the increase; however, churches are left without because they look at factors more than the work.⁶⁴ To draw people, Christ must be lifted up.⁶⁵ The foundation of church promotion is now the extravagant cathedrals and fancy decor around buildings. This research project wants to show that using secular credentials for a church's leaders causes a decrease in membership because the church is viewed as a business and not an organism. J. B. Watson Jr. and Walter H. Scalen propose churches have a fervent belief that using worldly tactics draws more worldly people.⁶⁶ This research project is not concentrating on theology issues among different denominations. The issue should be to show how the world could not make spiritual entities successful by any means.

The writer is well aware that a structure and organization is helpful and an attribute to any successful church, company, and individual. The research is not seeking fluency but relational influences that deter people from Yahweh. Processing paperwork, utilizing the proper

⁶⁴ 1 Cor 3:6.

⁶⁵ John 8:32.

⁶⁶ J. B. Watson Jr. and Walter H. Scalen Jr., "Dining with the Devil": The Unique Secularization of American Evangelical Churches," *International Social Science Review* 83, no. 3/4 (2008): 171.

logistics, and scheduling are all known improvements that corporate tactics can produce. The Holy Spirit and one who is developing knowledge in the Word of God to better one's circumstances can change the lives and spirits of individuals.

The study is concerned about the influence secularization has on the church itself. Not taken in consideration is the influence beyond the body of believers in politics, controversies, and any situation outside of worship and participation in that particular church or ministry.⁶⁷ The writer believes that churches do show great interest in laws and news reporting derived from secular interests, but those entities do not affect people's beliefs as much as it does their confidence in government and politicians. There are corporate interests that may sway individuals' thinking, but the student hopes any open-minded Christian would apply the Word of God and not what they see or hear from a network out to make a profit. These types of actions and mindsets cause people who may be babes in Christ or even mature Christians to defer to other options in beliefs.⁶⁸ Atheism and Islam benefit when Christians are more focused on building and branding. When a ministry focuses on discipleship and love, Christ is more able to make a difference in the church and community.

In order to address the fallacy of utilizing carnal mindsets, churches have to admit selfishness is more common than it should be. Bilezikian even speaks to the arrogance of individuals whose religious piety drives their character and actions.⁶⁹ One observation that is pertinent to church growth is the quality of individual that is drawn into the congregation. Though this issue is not directly associated with this research project, the type of individuals who

⁶⁷ Simon P. Newman, "One Nation Under God: Making Historical Sense of Evangelical Protestantism in Contemporary American Politics," *Journal of American Studies* 41, no. 3 (December 2007): 582.

⁶⁸ 1 Pet 2:2.

⁶⁹ Bilezikian, "Church Leadership," 6.

are drawn to these churches with secular influences are thought to be more seekers for emotion and entertainment rather than true disciples of Christ. Nevertheless, these types of individuals will be surveyed to show what type of person is drawn to secular leadership and what his or her priorities are. Also, if those priorities are in line with Christian beliefs, they must have a biblical origin. This study is concentrated on believers who profess their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Also in consideration for the parishioners who will be surveyed is whether he or she has shown evidence of faith in Christ and competency in the Holy Bible. People who may be described as secular church leaders will be surveyed and interviewed as well, and their responses will let the reader determine their alliances.

The references to corporate, business, secular, and carnal are words used to describe or identify the categorized into secularization. Churches at times will be replaced with ministry to refer to as a body of believers. It is to be inferred that when the writer refers to secular leaders, that those leaders are within a church or ministry.

This project is to reveal how Christians can be easily distracted by factors that help the church but not the body of Christ. The writer, the student, and the researcher all refer to the author of this thesis. It is not indigent for individuals to make their living by serving God or having a job at the church. The student is not downplaying the benefits of further education and training, but Christ in a person and the anointing placed by the Father Himself should not be ignored because brother or sister is certified or works at a Fortune 500 company. One should be cautious when a church leader can quote statistics and policies but not one Scripture.

This research project seeks to prove the church is digressing, if not dying, because individuals cannot distinguish a church from a non-profit company that serves as a motivational outfit. The student will investigate why members who do join a congregation eventually leave in

a short period of time. The theory is that reason will be the insincerity and lack of godliness in that particular church. The thinking is that the high demand on attendance and giving deters people from wanting to serve God. One's will to obey the Father should always be addressed and factored into those who are called into a Christian leadership position. The mature parishioners and ministers are factored out of church functions because they were not a supervisor at their job at a company or restaurant. The fact one that deacon has a tenth grade education but a heart for Christ is overlooked for the pseudo who gives a thousand dollars every week. Churches will grow if they reach more after Christian leaders. As a result, not only will the secular approach in choosing their leaders end, but the carnal mindset will also be deleted.⁷⁰ The church will prosper when there is a complete severance from the corporate perspective and the wanting of a secular idea to help raise funds or bring fame. Christ is the author and finisher of the faith;⁷¹ therefore, all workings or associations to His house have to be girded with the Holy Spirit and His scriptures. When Christ is lifted from the earth, He will draw more believers than any secular approaches and other beliefs.⁷²

The desire to become a mega-church has deflated the positive view the community has had for the church in the past. The view sought by the writer factors in both the efficiency and effectiveness of a ministry, but also seeks to determine if it is beneficial to overlook one for the other when both instances can be addressed. A church can run efficiently, but it must be effective in society in order to save greater numbers.⁷³ In this modern age, pastors want mega-churches; thus, they seek individuals who help promote the church while compromising Christ

⁷⁰ Phil 2:5.

⁷¹ Heb 12:2.

⁷² John 12:32.

⁷³ 1 Cor 9:19-23.

and His fingerprint on every aspect of the ministry. The common perspective most people see is that ministries are more of a business than a ministry. The Bible supports paying laborers of the gospel and meeting the needs of the church, community, and people.⁷⁴ A full-time staff is no longer a luxury but essential for all churches despite the size of that particular congregation. Problems arise when one's calling becomes one's job. When one uses terminology like it is your job to be treated as such is a travesty. It is disturbing when a willing heart is ignored while churches seek degrees from accredited institutions as prerequisites to working in their particular ministry. Placing emphasis on a CEO's or a councilperson's knowledge when searching for a prospective leader downgrades the anointing and love upon which a church should rest their existence in order to operate. The drive to grow is not unhealthy until morals, decency, and doctrine are compromised. If it is biblical there should be no divisions among us.⁷⁵ However, some people love and are comfortable maintaining the status quo as opposed to change by the addition of other individuals. Suzanne Sataline writes about a church in Iuka, Mississippi, where the church split because congregants differed on seeking new members.⁷⁶ Fear and the act of being territorial are basic reasons why people are unable to grow; the student sees those instances as a symptom to a larger problem. The writer wants to offer that the lack of following Christ is the key fear factor to this premise. The student believes the methods and change of the guard in church leadership leads parishioners to rebel to the movement of growing because Christ is less involved. Hesitation should be expected for any endeavor. People of the Christian faith are put at ease knowing that God supports and sanctions the movement of the church is. The children of Israel were hesitant to leave Egypt. Since Moses had been listening and obeying the directions

⁷⁴ 1 Tim 5:18.

⁷⁵ 1 Cor 1:10.

⁷⁶ Sataline, "A Popular Strategy," A1.

spoken by the Father Himself, the people went on their exodus.⁷⁷ Considering that the number of mega-churches is growing, one must ask why these churches possess such a large membership. The number of these large congregations has more than doubled from the year 2000, from 600 to 1,250 in 2005. As of 2008, the smallest mega-church congregation was numbered at approximately 7,000 members.⁷⁸ However, the most recent trend is showing a downturn in the amount of mega-church growth as of 2008; but what are the circumstances leading to the decline? The common factor is that the number of smaller congregations outnumbers mega-churches whose membership size is over 2,000.⁷⁹ Thus, the influx of “mini” mega-churches has added to the deterioration of the body of believers.

Individuals are surrounded by distractions, which are depicting the troubles of mega-churches or any ministry of the size. Issues arise with what Bilezikian describes as “leaderaltry.”⁸⁰ Leaderaltry, in summary, is used to describe a congregation that trusts in their pastor or church leaders above God or, in some instances, replaces God with their pastor or church leaders. The experience of worship style and music serve as reasons for people feeling attracted to a particular body of believers. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,” will always serve as criteria or a standard of what should be the priority of a Christian’s life and his or her existence.⁸¹ Listening to music or being able to be as charismatic as one likes are warranted and welcomed in the majority of congregations around the world.⁸² These are

⁷⁷ Exodus 1-15.

⁷⁸ Cathy Lynn Grossman, “Megachurches Seek the ‘Seekers,’” *USA Today*, September 9, 2008.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Bilezikian, “Church Leadership,” 6.

⁸¹ Romans 10:17 (NKJV).

⁸² 2 Cor 3:17.

projections of faith; they do not lead individuals to faith. The preaching and proclaiming of the gospel leads people to salvation;⁸³ the body of believers should always strive for that goal and prize.⁸⁴ The lack of sound preaching and failing to teach the Holy Scriptures in the proper context have led to churches looking elsewhere to maintain the membership numbers. Giving more attention to the detail of job descriptions for the ministry, while not one individual can rightly divide the Word of truth, is the foundation for the student. The student is investigating to see if secular church leaders focus on the number of members and amount of dollars that are being raised. When actual issues arise that require a course of action, secular leaders deal with the cosmetics of the issue, allowing negativity to fester. When people who may have issue with the policies or procedures of a ministry voice their concerns, they should be heard if their issue is legitimate and non-trivial. Secular leaders will seek diversion or attempt to discredit any critics of the leadership style or decisions. They see complaining as rebellion to God, but they are actually trying to protect their interests.⁸⁵ Lay people and unbelievers see these atrocities and would rather leave the church entirely, becoming bitter due to the lack of Godly actions by individuals who claim to be of God. Focusing on the Word of God and rightly using the Scriptures are imperative in redeeming the church.⁸⁶ Looking for spiritual gifts and traits as opposed to secular education and experience will alleviate many issues in a local body of believers. The writer theorizes that when former parishioners leave the church, they become atheist or dormant Christians.

When Moses was to select help, he was instructed to inform the people to seek men who

⁸³ Rom 10:13.

⁸⁴ Phil 3:14.

⁸⁵ 1 Sam 15:23.

⁸⁶ 2 Tim 2:15.

met certain criteria.⁸⁷ The Apostle Paul teaches Timothy who should serve as leaders, and there was no information stating that these aspirants should possess a degree, a six-figure salary, and be connected to the influential people of the community.⁸⁸ The Scriptures state that whosoever desires the office of overseer, desires a great work.⁸⁹ There is a need for laborers and not landlords to harvest the Lord's fields.⁹⁰ The only agenda for the body of Christ should be where the Holy Spirit leads the church. There can only be one master and there will be no other besides Him.⁹¹ The practice to corporatize the church by seeking secular business practices for the sake of the ministry is rippling the furtherance of the gospel.⁹² This problem can be addressed if it is approached from a sound biblical defense. It is necessary for the house of God to return to its first love in order for the body of Christ to go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” Amen.⁹³

Statement of Methodology

The premise of this research is to analyze using church leaders based on their secular experience and the infiltration of secular concepts these leaders bring in order to find out how that leadership model improves or hinders membership intake and member retention. The writer

⁸⁷ Exodus 18; Num 11:16-30.

⁸⁸ 1 Tim 3:1-13.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Luke 10:2.

⁹¹ Exod 20:3.

⁹² Phil 1:12.

⁹³ Matt 28:19-20.

believes the secular approach affects the functioning of the spiritual body of a church. This research will seek to show that secular themes, thoughts, and approaches make the church more corporate, resulting in a decrease in membership; many members leave due to ministries not centered on meeting spiritual needs.

The secular approach looks to utilize various activities and policies to ensure an efficient organization without proper regard for a healthy, growing body of believers. The student will use resources like church growth literature and leadership books, but the most effective source will be submitting surveys to church leaders looking to pinpoint their motivation and goals. The student will seek to study statistics where new members have joined, surveys by members who participate in activities, and interviews with parishioners and leaders at various churches and ministries. The writer will specifically seek ministries where the senior pastor is known as a CEO and investigate how lack of biblical knowledge and implementation corresponds to accepting a secular/corporate administration model. The student will study the content of lessons and sermons where it is more pointed towards benefiting the church or the ministry seeking to please Christ. The writer will also use Scripture to review and see if there are accurate interpretations or a corporate approach. The writer intends to contact churches that are not conforming to secularization for input into their accounts or notoriety and who seek to share Christ and their leadership team is biblically based. This study will compare goals deemed successful by secular church leaders and non-secular church leaders and what criteria they use to determine what they call success. The data is hoped to be found on church websites and surveys or polling provided by institutions such as Gallup, Pew Research, and common sources to coincide with the surveys and interviews by the student. The desire is to obtain detailed and vigilant information and thoughts of individuals to find out why they stay or leave churches. The intended results should

show churches that have high intake numbers and low retention rates are under secular-modeled leadership. Churches that seek efficiency, fluency, and numbers such as membership intake and funds raised show their success by their own means. Churches that retain members at high rates and maintain high retention of these members are biblically based ministries concentrated on lifting up Jesus and educating parishioners in the Word of God. History shows groups similar to Roman Catholicism who limited parishioners by concealing the Word of God by using a different language in services are similar today. Secular-led administrations and ministries are causing more people to become atheists and unbelievers by messaging in a manner that does not alarm many people. The Bible insists believers go out and make more believers.⁹⁴ Cole claims the church is a living organism; thus, the church must be in tune and connected to Christ.⁹⁵ The premise of this research is the possible negative effects corporatization has on the body of Christ. Gluck writes on how Wal-Mart as a corporation can be an example to churches on how to select leaders and set up operations for efficiency.⁹⁶ There are corporate practices that can be helpful and can be found in the Word of God. Jethro suggests delegating leadership to better handle the needs of the people.⁹⁷ In order to develop this theory, the author did not want to be forthright in questioning about direct corporate practices and speculate on their individual thoughts on corporatization.

The research will also seek to discover why people change beliefs or religion by reading journal articles and polling, which will fortify this assumption. And to answer the “So what?” Churches are becoming so zealous in making money and reaching people that our

⁹⁴ Matt 28:19-20.

⁹⁵ Cole and Helfer, *Church Transfusion*, 169-75.

⁹⁶ Frederick W. Gluck, “Can the Church Learn From Wal-Mart?” *America* 190, no. 17 (May 17, 2004): 14.

⁹⁷ Exod. 18:13-27.

leadership tactics influence activities, which decreases godliness. The focus and aim of secular-led ministries are centered on pews being filled by people and the money raised by these people. These congregations consist of individuals who are lacking basic knowledge of who God is. The points the student wants to quantify and discuss are as follows:

1. Their relationship with God beyond Sunday is remedial.
2. People who seek a relationship with God would rather not attend church than to be associated with these corporate minded ministries
3. Atheists and agnostics continue to prosper from those individuals that leave the church.

The church preaches that they are purity; holiness and obedience are expected of the leadership, but Jesus is never taught. The numbers of unbelievers can be confirmed in surveys over the course of years to prove that the agenda and logistics of the church have disparaged them for the body of Christ. This revelation is needed because those who proclaimed the gospel are vastly responsible and at fault for the people that are fleeing any notion of Christianity. Christ must be lifted up and the ministry is to undergird God's Son, not to establish a church's fame and fortune.

This research will consist of five chapters. The first chapter is the "People's Experience and Expectations of the Church." This chapter is to discuss and show there is a need for restructuring and reorganizing in modern churches. It is a clearly essential that people will lead this movement, but this research is deemed necessary because of the rationale and process used in selecting those leaders. The needs and issues from the disarray of ministry outweigh the means to achieve this goal. This chapter will reveal why leadership is needed and how beneficial it would be for the entire body of Christ. When the issues are acknowledged, the writer predicts the urgency to solve the issues is consequential. The church's failure to maintain a biblical foundation leads to selecting individuals who may have some expertise in the field to expedite the process.

The second chapter will be “Purpose to Educate and Edify the Church.” Not only does the prospect of remedying issues drive churches to secularization, but the other stresses factor in also. The financial strains, lack of membership, the drive for fame, and many other reasons lead to churches compromising morals for notoriety. The stereotypical view from unbelievers or the unchurched deems attending services as squandering their time. Ask why people go to church and spend hours to be around what one can deem as hypocritical. To appeal to a larger audience, one uses certain tactics to draw these unbelievers and unchurched to their congregations. The music is more contemporary and sermons are free from holding the listeners accountable or responsible for their own actions and decisions.

The third chapter is “Practices to Enhance or Exhaust the Church.” The proverbial statement, “be careful for what you ask for,” holds true in this chapter. The writer details the drawbacks and how a biblical entity has no possibility to either satisfy God or to function in the manner it is meant. The promotion of people deters people seeking a relationship with God. Individuals have no avenue for help for their hopelessness. In essence, there is more dependence and direction on secular entities and mindsets. There is a need to return to a biblical foundation so the church has validity and a fortified reputation. No one wants to be associated with an entity that is viewed as having a double standard, as the Bible refers to a double-minded man as being unstable in all their ways.⁹⁸ The author will seek sources and Scripture to change the thinking that a church must use secular tactics and people for church growth and functionality. The student believes that the mind must first be convinced before the body will move. There must be a call to reform thoughts, plans, and operations according to a biblical model. Through correcting strategies and tactics to fit the biblical model, one will add a rejuvenated and excited congregation to move further than the plan that had secular leadership. The student seeks to

⁹⁸ Jas 1:8.

prove when the church removes secular tactics and leaders will grow beyond expectations. By utilizing the renewed vigor of the congregants and having competent leadership, the body of Christ can grow greater than expected. More outreach can take place and more souls can be saved. The reputation of ministries will receive a lift in popularity based on their faith and not their promotions. Churches will grow stronger Christians and the future is better until Christ comes back to bring His church to His Father's kingdom.

Review of Literature

Michael L. Budde addresses the call for the Catholic Church to embrace corporate business practices in order to be more efficient and relevant. He gives the following statement:

To state my conclusions in advance, I am persuaded that, while the church has a great many problems, more managerial expertise and rationality as exemplified by for-profit corporations are not the solution for most of them. rather, given its considerable formative powers—its capacity to shape attitudes, dispositions, and ways of inhabiting the world—managerialism threatens to transform the church more than serve it, accelerating the already deep accommodation of the church to the non-Christian world in ways detrimental to the gospel and way of life it establishes in the world. By looking at some examples of how corporate tools and complexes may work to refashion the church into something more akin to for-profit corporate structures, we might be better equipped to contemplate the sort of forward-looking recommendations made by Mr. Gluck and his friends—and he and his friends are very powerful players in the world of Catholic politics in the United States.⁹⁹

Budde uses Frederick W. Gluck's *Can the Church Learn from Wal-Mart* as an opposite frame of thought of the corporation of church.¹⁰⁰ Neil Cole gives the following statement that the author believes supports his or her thinking:

⁹⁹ Budde, "The Rational Shepard," 99-100.

¹⁰⁰ Budde, "The Rational Shepard," 96-99.

The goal of this book is simple: to look at several ways in which the church can accomplish its mission better in the future than it has in the past. The change to Church 3.0 is a shift from a program-driven and clergy-led institutionalized approach of church to one that is relational, simple, and viral in its spread. Instead of seeing church as something that serves its people, church becomes people who serve—God, one another, and a hurting world. The change is from an organization to an organism that is healthy and reproductive. Church is no longer a place to go to, but people to belong to. Church is not a program to reach out to the world, but a people that bring the kingdom of God with them into a lost world, with a contagious spirit.¹⁰¹

Cole, in a sense, shows what a church will turn into if not treated properly.¹⁰² Most journal entries on secular leadership in the church share a common thread that it is not healthy for the church as a whole. The lack of spirituality and Christ-driven objectives leads to ministries losing their effectiveness. The benefits are helpful and satisfy schematic issues. One would have to take in account the souls of the congregation that is suffering due to lack of Bible teaching and the church meeting people at the point of their needs. The usage of secularization tactics and strategies does little for the spirituality of the body of believers. Prabhudas Koshy suggests that this phenomenon is from pastors losing their convictions and churches feeling that it is necessary for them to be specialists.¹⁰³ The writer believes pastors are earthen vessels filled by God to serve His people. Thus, their thinking, motivations, implementations, policies, and procedures all should be fortified and birthed by God’s Word and the Holy Spirit.

¹⁰¹ Neil Cole, *Church 3.0: Upgrades for the Future of the Church*, Leadership Network (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 11.

¹⁰² The end result is what the author sees as the result of corporatization of church. Cole was not addressing corporatization but his synopsis or conclusions are from the framework that has been laid as operating procedures of ministries that use business practices that bring this end.

¹⁰³ Prabhudas Koshy, “A Critique of Modern Church Growth Strategies,” *Burning Bush* 9, no. 2 (July 2003): 24-25.

Business-Minded Leaders

Ministries seem to place more emphasis on credentials in leaders such as education and experience as supposed to individuals who are able and fear God. Leaders should be persons of truth and hating covetousness.¹⁰⁴ To keep up with appearances, churches seek to maintain suggestive biblical integrity to justify their actions. Volker Kessler declares that this attempt to look holy in spite of not utilizing holiness is a pitfall for ministries.¹⁰⁵ Also, churches want to reach the demographic that has displayed an annoyance towards church traditions due to that age group becoming irrelevant due to death. Alleviation for secular leadership is to train new or unproven leaders properly. The church needs leaders, but it should not be at the expense of the biblical model. John C. Maxwell and Tim Elmore believe the attributes of leaders should reflect biblical principles and characters. A leader should have influence, courage, and initiative, among numerous other character traits.¹⁰⁶ Whether it is seminary, conferences, or in-house training, these individuals are to see ministry through God and not through their expertise.¹⁰⁷ Ministries that seek secular education in the congregation in order to place him or her over a group leads to confusion¹⁰⁸ and the loss of God's blessing.¹⁰⁹ This secular approach benefits in

¹⁰⁴ Exod. 18:21.

¹⁰⁵ Volker Kessler, "Pitfalls in 'Biblical' Leadership," *Verbum Et Ecclesia* 34, no. 1 (April 2013): 4.

¹⁰⁶ John C. Maxwell and Tim Elmore. Thomas Nelson Publishers, *Maxwell Leadership Bible: New King James Version*. 2007, 1609-1613.

¹⁰⁷ Kirkpatrick G. Cohall and Bruce S. Cooper, "Educating American Baptist Pastors: A National Survey of Church Leaders." *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 19, no. 1 (January 2010): 40-45.

¹⁰⁸ 1 Cor 14:33.

¹⁰⁹ Beaumont, "Beyond "Corporate," 7.

making one's church inclusive and allows acceptance for every individual in the congregation.¹¹⁰ People are more receptive and participatory when unbelievers are familiar with the environment of a worship service.¹¹¹ A ministry should have the desire to select Christ-minded people with serving the congregants as their top priority. Maxwell states that leaders should be aware that "Priorities Never Stay Put."¹¹² Processing the ability to adjust for the benefit of the church is an asset to the ministry. It is advantageous for ministries to seek Christ-minded individuals as opposed to corporate-minded individuals.

Interaction with Congregation

This research is not driven to avoid any new or creative methods to grow or minister to the congregants within a church. Sataline suggests that success should be based on holy inspiration and not on book sales or advertising.¹¹³ It is debilitating when it takes entertainment and a public relation firm to draw men, women, and children to join a church. The drive should be Christ, and the fact that lifting up Christ is not the factor that brings people in is disturbing.¹¹⁴ Rick Phillips sees "neo-secularization" as a catalyst to desensitize religious beliefs. He writes that the following to this phenomenon promotes secular entities thus there is less spirituality within churches.¹¹⁵ David Isiorho discusses how churches of different races that began a

¹¹⁰ Bilezikian, "Church Leadership," 5.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² John C. Maxwell, *Leadership 101: What Every Leader Needs to Know* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 37.

¹¹³ Sataline, "A Popular Strategy," .

¹¹⁴ Richard Sykes, "Popular Religion in Decline: A Study from the Black Country," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 56, no. 2 (April 2005): 287-302.

¹¹⁵ Rick Phillips, "Can Rising Rates of Church Participation be a Consequence of Secularization?" *Sociology of Religion* 65, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 140-41.

fellowship by using Christian thinking and the churches involved grew.¹¹⁶ Isiorho documents data that more churches should use to gain members and increase participation. His findings show that larger white churches showed interest in fellowshiping with black churches because it would result in an increase in their children and younger adult demographic.¹¹⁷ As the study proceeded, the culture difference resulted in the relationship between the black and white becoming strained.¹¹⁸ This shows when the initial idea is not from the Lord, it does not last as a benefit to the ministry. Those particular programs are more harmful to repentance and people being forthcoming with each other.

The writer does not want the focus placed on the result, but on the concept of reaching out to fellow believers seeking fellowship or possible worship together. Thus, there will be growth in effectiveness and an increase in the ministry operation in the community. Heelas puts the student's thesis into a sharper light, which is the wrong way to pursue membership and retention, and to have influence in the immediate community. He writes that spirituality in the context of "mind-body-soul" is growing, but that a person is more likely to see spirituality in every human being.¹¹⁹ Heelas suggests that secularization does not have an effect on religion or spirituality. From a Christian viewpoint, this is the very evidence of secularization especially when the core beliefs are compromised. He shows that all religion and belief systems are as equals due to the wide acceptance of all religion and belief systems.¹²⁰ From a Christian perspective, this wide acceptance of religion is a result of loosening core beliefs to attract more

¹¹⁶ David Isiorho, "A Tale of Two Cities: Implicit Assumptions and Mission Strategies in Black and White Majority Churches." *Black Theology* 10, no. 2 (August 1, 2012): 199-202.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 201-3.

¹¹⁹ Heelas, "Challenging Secularization Theory," 47-49.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 51.

individuals to a particular ministry. As Heelas indicates, Christianity has competition for believers though he contributes this to fleeing secularization affecting people.¹²¹ Secularization is the driving force to corporatization due to the misperception of the outcome secularization offers. When God is not being please and worshiped, trouble is not a possibility; rather, it is eminent.

Is the Physical or Spiritual Body Affected?

The research seeks to show that secularization is socially helpful but does interfere with Christian principles in what to accept from one's environment. Christianity is not inclusive in the sense of accepting any doctrine or thought that suits his or her preferences. The practice of being inclusive places a question mark on the seriousness and authenticity of Christianity. Heelas discuss the factors that lead to the wide acceptance of "mind-body-spirit."¹²² The following from Bruce shows contributing factors that are causing ministries to stray from biblical principles:

By modernization I mean among other things the increasing complexity of social organization, increased functional differentiation, increased social differentiation, the rise of individualism and egalitarianism, the growth of religious diversity, the separation of human rights from religious rectitude, the displacement of supernatural remedies by scientific-based technological solutions, and the growth of a positive view of human power and potential.¹²³

These descriptions show secularization and its understanding of the changing world. Churches are handicapped due to failing to see how they have a divine intervention in remaining exclusive and true to the Scriptures. The church's true existence is in danger of changing for the worse due to being inclusive to outside thoughts and processes. The writer argues that it is the lack of godliness and little emphasis on Jesus Christ. A church should always grow in

¹²¹ Ibid., 46.

¹²² Ibid., 47.

¹²³ Steve Bruce, "Patronage and Secularization: Social Obligation and Church Support," *British Journal of Sociology* 63, no. 3 (September 2012): 533.

membership, regardless of size, because lifting up Christ draws a crowd.¹²⁴ The desire to be a mega-church is driving the trend to attract members so the church can be successful. Jack Priestley surmises the effect the world has on a particular church. He states, “Our ministry more than ever today has to be communicated in what we are and what we do as much as in anything we say. We need to recognize the aggressiveness of our current societies as they are seen by others in the world and not be too surprised if the reaction too is aggressive and violent. It is only in being and doing, rather than merely telling, that our stories can be kept alive in a world context which has not only become dominated by other stories but which has long since begun to distort religious stories so that they might be seen to conform to what constitute success and failure.

¹²⁴ John 12:32.

Chapter 2

PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCE AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE CHURCH

Introduction

The reason a person comes to church will be the reason they continue to stay. There is a saying used in society that says one can attract more bees with honey than vinegar. It is believable that one cannot keep a bee with vinegar. Churches use propaganda and business plans as the honey to gain parishioners more than God and His Word. The foundation for this research is to first help ministries and churches to utilize new methods for operation but under the guidance of God's Word. Secondly, the implementation is to adhere to God being worshiped and His people being served. Many individuals have agendas or expectations when interacting or being involved intimately with a body of believers. This research is thirdly tailored to study how a person's experience as a member with full rights and privileges is catered to preconceived expectations. A community thrives when a church meets the needs of the people.¹²⁵ People are drawn to sincere and thoughtful acts. Churches that are sincere and thoughtful tend to continue that type of treatment through all ministries and leaders within the local body.

The research used a questionnaire and had 147 participants who are currently members of a church or were a part of the body of Christ. This project focuses on males and females who are eighteen years of age and older. The only other criteria are if he or she is currently or has ever been a member of a Christian church.

When determining the participants, the author needed individuals who could attest to why they attend church and maintain an active status in that particular ministry. In deciphering the data from the surveys, the writer concentrated strictly on what an individual will presuppose

¹²⁵ Bilezikian, "Church Leadership," 5-7.

to what a ministry offered. One thought the writer suggests is how ministries shift focus to getting people in but not serving and meeting their needs. Sarah Gardner Cunningham tells of focusing on retention in attendance and obedience as opposed to discipleship and service in her dissertation on Augusta Emma Simmons Stetson and how she replicated Mary Baker Eddy's efforts to change the mindset of congregants.¹²⁶ Cunningham discusses how Stetson failed in her efforts to promote unity in the Christian Science movement due to her unwillingness "to abandon the intimate, interpersonal, nineteenth-century vocabulary and feminine frame of reference that characterized her original understanding of Science."¹²⁷ This is a real-life example of corporatization's inability to remain decent and in order in contrast to a populous and convenient method of ministry. Cunningham studied how Stetson failed in her part of the Christian Science movement due to not being popular or relevant. Stetson could not depart the very essence of the reason Christ came and why churches do ministry in the world.¹²⁸ The need to supply a service and not be of service in ministry is the very conundrum this research is attempting to spotlight.

The writer will investigate the theatrics, promotion, and production of churches all together. There will be insight on a person's attendance in relation to why he or she attends and continues to come to church. Christians are not to forsake assembling together.¹²⁹ God also says He does not hear sinners but worshipers and those who do His will.¹³⁰ People come to learn and see what the messenger of God has seen and heard due to his or her fellowship with the Lord.¹³¹

¹²⁶ Sarah Gardner Cunningham, "A New Order: Augusta Emma Simmons Stetson and the Origins of Christian Science in New York City, 1886-1910" (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1994), 8.

¹²⁷Ibid., 9.

¹²⁹ Heb. 10:25.

¹³⁰ John 9:31.

¹³¹ 1 John 1:3.

The Lord ordains the Sabbath in order for there to be holy convocation.¹³² The writer studies why people become involved in ministry and stay involved. The Bible teaches to go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.¹³³ Scripture teaches one should reap if they do not faint while doing good.¹³⁴ Being persistent in devout service has a more lasting effect on people than knowing he or she is a part of a multi-thousand member church with no connection or convictions.

Due to each believer receiving a spiritual gift, one must serve and exercise his or her gift for the glorification of Jesus Christ.¹³⁵ Christians are to be involved according to the following: “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”¹³⁶ That Scripture implies each member possesses the ability to contribute to the kingdom of God and one should utilize that capability. One is to be faithful to Christ and is expected to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.¹³⁷ There must be a comprehensive look at the corporate services provided by churches and ministries.¹³⁸ When one works in ministry and is faithful to the body of Christ, he or she does it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,

¹³² Lev 23:3.

¹³³ Matt 28:19-20.

¹³⁴ Gal 6:9.

¹³⁵ 1 Pet 4:10-11.

¹³⁶ Acts 20:28.

¹³⁷ Eph 4:12.

¹³⁸ This is a preview of the chapter, but there was not an assumption that all participants attended a corporate-themed church and/or ministry. The responses to surveys will show whether or not these individuals are affected by corporatization. In the actual content, the writer will utilize their responses by the focus and emphasis they place on a ministry in correspondence to biblical Scriptures provided within the actual text of the paper.

knowing that from the Lord they will receive the reward of the inheritance; for they serve the Lord Christ.¹³⁹ Any service unto the Lord should not be with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.¹⁴⁰ Not desiring to please people, the Lord reverberates the thought that “all service is to be done unto Him wholeheartedly and not people.”¹⁴¹ Service to God needs to be such that “in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did *it* with all his heart, and prospered.”¹⁴² One should be able to elucidate why he or she goes to church, why he or she is there, and why he or she stays involved and motivated within a particular ministry.

Reason for Attendance

To identify the expectations and experiences one may seek to have in church, the survey sought to discover why an individual attended church and to what frequency. Close to 44 percent of the 146 respondents stated that they consistently attended church. This means that the participants attended on a weekly basis and valued the importance of being present in all phases of a church ministry. Macchia articulates that health is contingent on steady attendance and consistent presence of the parishioners.¹⁴³ One criteria necessary for this survey to be utilized for this project is that the participant must have been or currently be a member of a Christian church. Budde proclaims the pitfalls of corporatization are due to the church’s misguided priority and

¹³⁹ Col 3:23-24.

¹⁴⁰ Col 3:22.

¹⁴¹ Eph 6:7.

¹⁴² 2 Chron 31:21.

¹⁴³ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church*, 126.

purpose.¹⁴⁴ Their attendance varied, but all participants have been exposed to Christ, church ordinances, and a multitude of worship styles and ministry practices. Despite the determination, the participants shared common reasons for their attendance and maintaining that attendance. In contrast, 26 percent were casually attendees and 24 percent rarely attended church. With regard to the percentage that casually attended church, these participants' reasoning stemmed from not having time to be consistent. The most common issue that caused people to casually attend was their work schedules. The irony of these individuals is that they professed to be Christian from eight years to being a lifetime professed Christian. Those people who "rarely" attended church claim transportation, family issues, and laziness as excuses to not being more consistent in attendance and participation. These individuals have never been committed Christians or, as the writer expected, grew tired of church politics and became ultimately bored.

The respondents who answered that they attended church "casually" and "rarely" had a number of reasons, and the number of years was from zero to the most of fifty-two years. The lack of time and being uninterested were common reasons. The fact that some of these individuals were professed Christian believers for over fifty years but were not seeing the benefit and requirement to be active church members is intriguing. There is no mistake that many respondents answered the questions without regard to their relationship with Jesus Christ due to their own self-interests. There is certainly a feel of some respondents being lovers of themselves by their answers.¹⁴⁵ The 44 percent who are consistent stated that it was an obligation and the drive to be closer to Christ as the reason for their consistency. They referred to biblical reasoning to be consistent. These individuals display a stronger sense of relationship with God

¹⁴⁴ Budde, "The Rational Shepherd," 106-9.

¹⁴⁵ 2 Tim 3:1-5.

with the propensity of being obedient to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. One respondent quoted that believers should not forsake assembling themselves together.¹⁴⁶ These individuals responded by stating their being and subjection comes from submission and honoring Jesus Christ. This group that was consistent in their attendance in church shared a common theme away from the other categories. The majority of the respondents range from a year to over sixty years as a professed Christian.

Frequency of Attendance

When looking at the results of why a person did or did not fit what they characterized as their reason or motivation for staying involved in ministry, it mostly was undergirded with being faithful to God or obedient to the Bible. The “rarely” and “casually” respondents were more focused on convenience and how much a church can hold their attention, as well as what is offered for their children. The question was asked, “What motivates you to be active or less active at your church?”¹⁴⁷ The consistent attendees’ answers range from being a servant to the Lord to following the pastor or staying firm to the biblical practice that teaches being active. The respondents who answered “casually” voiced the motives to stay active dealt more with how the church catered to their wants and meet the desires they have. They are more or less motivated by what the church can do and how it conducts itself as opposed to the individuals who answered “consistently,” showing a firmer and Bible-led person. The respondents who answered “rarely” shared a few common reasons with the people who answered “casually,” but these people were influenced more by other people instead of the time constraints or convictions of the other two

¹⁴⁶ This participant did not quote the location but paraphrase Hebrews 10:25.

¹⁴⁷ Edwin Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the www.surveymonkey.com, 2016, https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/1WJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D.

groups of participants. The “rarely” participants show concern that their family or not knowing other people as the reason for their poor church attendance.

Choosing to Work or Walk

One factor that is addressed minimally in the responses but that is obviously a significant factor is the civic influence and political landscape of the current time. The individuals who “consistently” and “casually” attend services brought up reasons like work, living conditions, and family values as persuasive factors in their attending and whether or not they remain faithful to a particular ministry. Brian D. McKenzie has written a journal article determining how going to church affects civic mindset and demonstration in an individual. In his article, he finds that church affiliations determine what social issues are important to an individual.¹⁴⁸ Where one goes to church not only brings a civic responsibility but also has an effect on how laws are formed in accordance to religious affiliation.¹⁴⁹ When a respondent is deterred or motivated by what is offered for their children or having to work so often affects their participation in church. The author also intends to show how corporatization not only affects those within the body of Christ in the confines of the four walls of the church but also in the world. McKenzie’s article shows political affiliations affect how one’s convictions are formed and developed.¹⁵⁰ The author included this viewpoint in order to fortify how outside influences negate the purity and authenticity of a Christian through misguided morals. Many people in this research either stop attending or seldom attend church due to politics being discussed that turn out to be against their conscience. Take the response of one participant who casually attends church. He or she states

¹⁴⁸ Brian D. McKenzie, “Self-Selection, Church Attendance, and Local Civic Participation,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40, no. 3 (September 2001): 480.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 481.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 483.

how their parent made them attend church but the belief system and treatment of those who do not attend church have caused him or her to attend church rarely even though he or she has been a believer for twenty-six years.¹⁵¹ A. Leslie Milton gives a synopsis of the necessity of the church being viewed and examined as an institution that is a place of hope.¹⁵² The following is a portion from Milton's article that details how hope is beneficial to the body of Christ:

These are imperatives not only for Christians. The Church, however, is a community with a self-awareness that it has to become a place of hope. Perhaps we recognize ways in which Christian ministry has been focused on the offer of cheap hope, and acknowledge that this has been detrimental both to the Christian community and to those who seek support through its ministry. The Church expresses its distinctiveness through the capacity of Christians to express this hope in ways which are costly, and therefore in conformity to the pattern of hope which is revealed through the witness to Christ's death and resurrection.¹⁵³

People view church as not only a physical edifice on the parcel of land.

Another aspect greatly affecting attendance and the church in general is the racial divide. The racial component is based on how consumers spend and are attracted to a particular business. To attract and mobilize the congregants, Ryon Cobb, Kevin Dougherty, Jerry Park, and Samuel Perry write the bigger the church, the more diverse or will to be more inclusive a ministry may appear. The writer also notices that their article exposes how demographics are broken down and the size of the church eventually becomes irrelevant due to whom the church wishes to attract.¹⁵⁴ Churches that are practicing corporatization focus their teachings, programs,

¹⁵¹ This respondent does not quote a political party affiliation or exact social beliefs. The data show that the belief system and never conforming to that belief system formed their personal ideology and how the church has been viewed from his or her mindset. In latter part of this project, the biblical competency and view of the church in the community sheds more understanding of this participant's personal feeling and ideology.

¹⁵² A. Leslie Milton, "Hope in the Promises of God: Some New Testament Reflections on Christian Ministry," *Expository Times* 124, no. 7 (April 2013): 321-26.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 326.

¹⁵⁴ Ryon Cobb et al., "Congregational Size and Attitudes towards Racial Inequality among Church Attendees in America," *Religions* 6, no. 3 (September 2015):782-84.

and services to be racially specific. Bigger congregations “attempt to be diverse,” but they ultimately settle for the demographic that is the majority and contributes the most to the ministry according to their mission and objectives.¹⁵⁵ It is also a practice to minimize or delegitimize demographic that is deem by popularity or type of importance to the majority of the congregants.¹⁵⁶ One tragedy that is overwhelming to individuals no longer being a member of the church is the propensity of ministries attempting to cater to materials and those who can provide them.

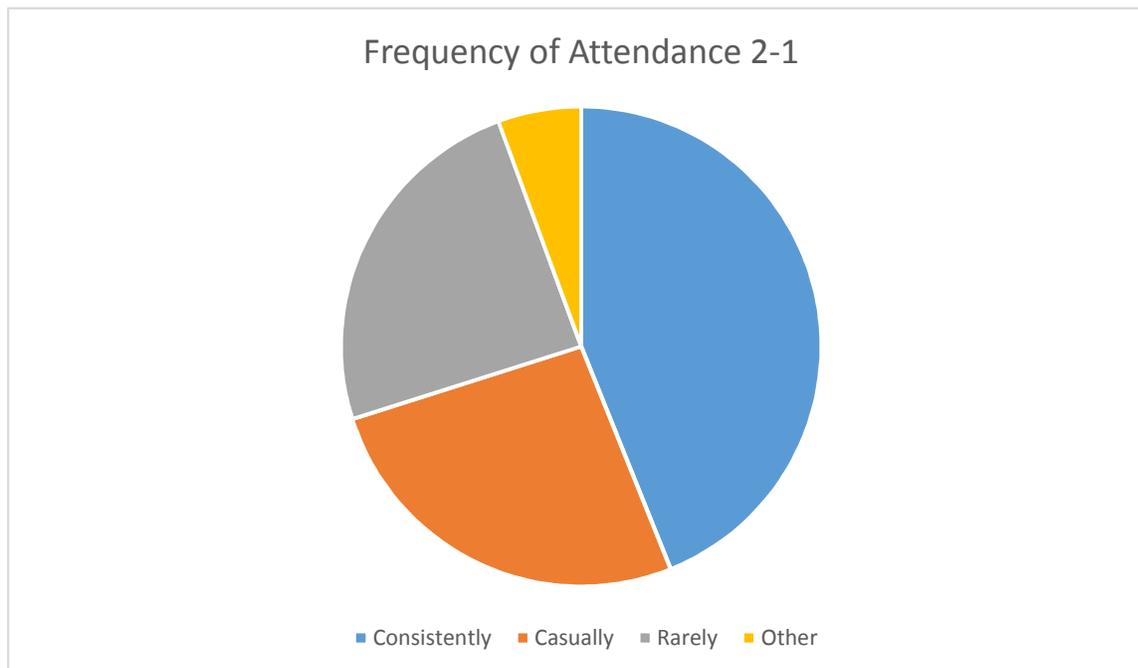
Reason for Staying

When evaluating the reasons why individuals stay or go, a great number states that their reason is the politics or the constant begging for funds. The participants who consistently attended church did not see that as motivation to stay active in church. These individuals maintained their faith and following God’s Word as criteria necessary to their faithfulness to their local body of Christ. Those who are not faithful to their church showed a focus on many things; however, the priority was not a relationship with God. These individuals also did not focus on the customs and traditions. There was even one respondent who is no longer a part of a church due to his or her dissatisfaction towards the quality or lack of availability of snacks. Another individual who answered “rarely” states that money and the possession of it is the reason they are no longer active in a ministry. The writer indicates that this specific attitude is evidence of people not being satisfied with the services and amenities of a ministry as a reason to not be a participant. Looking at the graph, out of the 101 responses of “consistently,” “casually,”

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 785-87.

¹⁵⁶ Cobb et al. researched the racial divide on a discriminatory and how that divide affects the thinking of individuals. Through this practice, the author is showing how any church claims to be inclusive but ultimately wants what feeds its growth and vision. Cobb et al. touch on similar mindsets, but corporatization leads congregations to cater to who keeps the church funded and relevant.

or “rarely” attending church, 53 percent characterized themselves as “casually” or “rarely”.



Service Expectations

The overall sentiment of the individuals was predicated on the services and experience at a particular church. When asked to describe how their service is organized and implemented, the author allowed for three answers. The three answers are “Structured and Scripted,” “Impromptu and Free Spirited,” and “Confusing and No Sense of Order.”¹⁵⁷ Church services should never be confusing with no sense of order due to Scripture opposing those traits for God and His people. Especially in service, God is not the author of confusion.¹⁵⁸ God requires all done for Him, be

¹⁵⁷ The writer is not inferring one is right over the other with the exception of “confusing and no sense of order” due to Scripture. Scriptural, the other two are biblical depending on one’s interpretation. The writer is not making that inference.

¹⁵⁸ 1 Cor 14:33.

done decent and in order.¹⁵⁹ It is every Christian responsibility to ensure Christ-like actions and demeanor.

Spiritual Not Personal Motivation

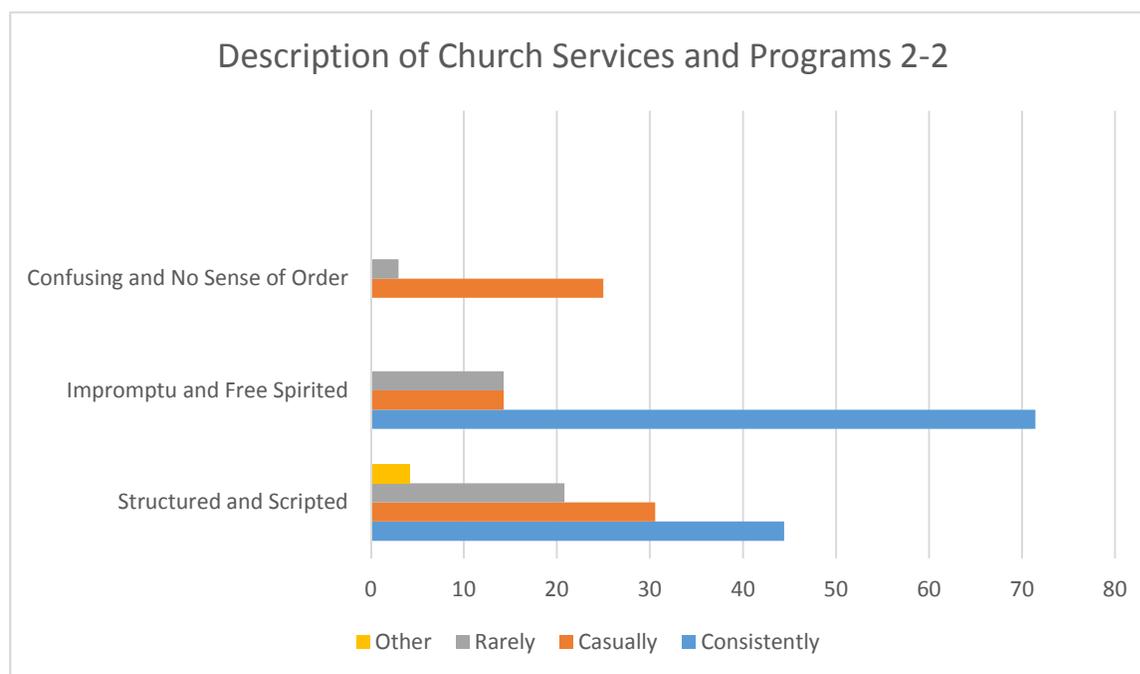
The clear majority of responders states that services at his or her church are “structured and scripted.” This is certainly a description that can be categorized as corporatization. Monica Eva Pini explains corporatization is the primacy of corporate interests over public needs and values. Pini also suggests taking a look at the corporate management of public education in a double sense: as a phenomenon in itself and as a vehicle to understand the larger ideological context in which corporate practices develop. Corporate discourses are persuasive because they influence people’s perceptions of reality, what one author called their common sense.¹⁶⁰ Ministries have been attempting to structure and script churches, but not their congregations. The individuals who “consistently” attend church contributed their stick-to-itiveness to dedication to God and His Word. Close to 39 percent categorized their services and programs as “impromptu and free spirited.” Cole addresses one downfall of church leadership, which is the fear of losing their authority. They want to be able to satisfy their greed and utilize forcibly instituted indulgences in modern terms to maintain their influence. Seeking to make decisions solely as well as placing individuals under the pastor’s discretion are a couple of ways churches can be manipulated. Many church leaders deem the House of God as their personal property and estate.¹⁶¹ Being structured and scripted ensures power is kept in the hands of those

¹⁵⁹ 1 Cor 14:40.

¹⁶⁰ Monica Eva Pini, “The Corporatization of Education: Education Management Organizations (EMOs) and Public Schools,” Order No. 3033965, The University of New Mexico, 2001, 2-3.

¹⁶¹ Neil Cole, *Organic Leadership: Leading Naturally Right Where You Are* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 68-76.

implementing the operating procedures, and making decisions based on their likes is what ensures profit and power. For leaders, the issue that arises is how individuals who value God's Word and maintain their faithfulness out of servitude are not being conformed to church leadership. Sixty-eight percent of all respondents attend a church where they describe their services and programs as "structured and scripted." The graph will show no matter how individuals feel about their church, structured and scripted is a common thread to many churches. The individuals who do consider their motives based on faith and convictions see church as impromptu and free spirited.



Cole's major concern is the church becoming an organization and not an organism.¹⁶² This information leads one to think everything is not under control. When asked what factors contribute to attending and remaining faithful, the responses lead one to think people are not as free as they suggest. There are exceptions with this premise. Those exceptions are physical

¹⁶² Cole and Helfer, *Church Transfusion*, 89-102.

ailments, working, uncontrollable life events, and time constraints dominate the reasons for not attending. Many factors for attending are connected to what is being offered as enjoyment and social interaction.

Personal Not Spiritual Motivation

The failure of the church is addressing how individuals, like these “casually” and “rarely” respondents, are not striving for discipleship, but for their personal appeasement instead. An example of ministry failing to be a church and not a corporation is from a study by Wesley Black on the lack of church participation of high school students after graduation. Black shows that many youth do not stop attending a particular ministry because of efforts “to explore a different lifestyle.”¹⁶³ It is the lack of emphasis and reluctance “to invest time and resources” on a fluid audience.¹⁶⁴ Actions such as not allocating funds to minister to a group that may not benefit the bottom-line is business minded. Jesus states He is about His Father business, so putting ministries through cost analysis in determining who and who not to cater to in ministry is despicable according to the writer.¹⁶⁵ A study written by Geert Demuijnck shows the transition over time where Catholic business owners strayed from their ethics as a Catholic in order to have a more sustainable business.¹⁶⁶ The central theme of Demuijnck’s study was the response to ethical issues in business practices. The study shows that the church’s bottom-line in its budget

¹⁶³ Wesley Black “The Search for Lasting Faith: Development of a Scale to Predict Continued Faithfulness in Church Attendance Following High School Graduation,” *The Journal of Youth Ministry* 6, no. 2 (2008): 54.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 53-55.

¹⁶⁵ Luke 2:49; Josh Packard and George Sanders, “The Emerging Church as Corporatization’s Line of Flight,” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 28, no. 3 (October 2013): 437-55.

¹⁶⁶ Geert Demuijnck, “From an Implicit Christian Corporate Culture to a Structured Conception of Corporate Ethical Responsibility in a Retail Company: A Case-Study in Hermeneutic Ethics,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 84, no. 3 (January 1, 2009): 387-404.

and how there is always a cost analysis to determine each decision effects without conveying much regard to ethics.¹⁶⁷ One should be cautious when corporatization enters the walls of the church due to another phenomenon that is having an effect on churches: secularization. The following excerpt from Demuijnck's study displays the true problem of corporatization by detailing a particular issue causing conformity, the cost is too high for the company, but there is something that needs to be done, and more can be done indirectly, through lobbying. The following two examples illustrate this case. The first example concerns a situation in which a company lacks the power to initiate change in an insufficiently regulated context. For example, in relation to letters protesting the opening of shops on May 8, or on Easter Monday, the position of the ethics committee was simply that the situation would be much easier if the State prohibited the opening of the store on some particular days, and if the rules were the same for everybody. The problem is that if competitors open their shops and if the State lets them do so, then the whole sector gets stuck in a kind of spiral, and all shops are obliged to follow.¹⁶⁸ This shows how quickly business causes compromises despite convictions telling the company otherwise. When the world can make an individual of faith forgo his or her beliefs in order for company success, this becomes the problem of the church.¹⁶⁹ Participants voiced the concern of pastor speaking on everything but God as an element in their decision not to return to church. Rick Phillips describes how attendance becomes more important due to secularization being a factor in bringing in members. Phillips discusses how allowing more conversations outside of a religious

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 398.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 398.

¹⁶⁹ Demuijnck studied Christian businesses and not churches. The principle still applies to this thesis in relation to the church being held to the same decisions to remain relevant and at times solvent. The church is willing to apply secular tactics to increase traffic on Sunday or more hits on the website. This frame of thinking fortifies the argument that churches should base ethics and practices on the Bible and not budgets.

context but in the framework of the beliefs of the church grew attendance.¹⁷⁰ James Mumford gives an account of his experiences in numerous churches; and one theme through his commentary is experiencing church as an event and not as a worshiper.¹⁷¹ He describes how the colors of the walls, diversity of people, and the energetic speaking of a pastor made him excited to be at church. Excitement, atmosphere, and dynamics are admirable but not essential to discipleship. The author deems the cosmetic and atmospheric aspects as secondary to one being shown Christ and becoming a Bible- practicing disciple. Many refuse to go to church due to being bored. This is why secularization is more prevalent within keeping individuals within the fold. The respondents tend to think what the church is doing for them is more important and treat worship as a show. Lack of science discussion, policies against certain behaviors, and boredom carry more weight with the respondents than knowing Christ and believing He died for his or her sins. The data shows that people who value the cosmetic and atmospheric experience were consistent churchgoers. There may be a flux of secularization entering the sanctuaries across the land for the purpose of keeping numbers up. There is even research where one's physical wellness is correlated with his or her participation in church. Emily A. Greenfield and Nadine F. Marks say that many factors and processes have been posited as potential mechanisms through which religion can promote individuals' well-being.¹⁷² The Bible even suggests that bodily exercise profits little and the Lord wants us to prosper as one's soul prospers.¹⁷³ One could see a ministry utilizing a gymnasium and family center to promote health. Greenfield and

¹⁷⁰ Phillips, "Can Rising Rates of Church Participation Be a Consequence of Secularization?," 142.

¹⁷¹ James Mumford, "Going to Church in America," *First Things* 244 (June-July 2014):17-19.

¹⁷² Emily A. Greenfield and Nadine F. Marks, "Religious Social Identity as an Explanatory Factor for Associations Between More Frequent Formal Religious Participation and Psychological Well-Being." *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 17, no. 3 (2007): 246.

¹⁷³ 1 Tim 4:8; 3 John 1:2.

Marks connected a fit mind, body, and soul with longevity, not only in life but also in ministry. Calculating the stress and at times depressing outcomes can be a detriment to some individuals. However, being in tune with God physically and mentally affords a person an advantage. That person becomes less susceptible to the trials, tribulations, and vulnerability from ministry.

What Draws an Individual?

The one question of this chapter is to find out why people attend their church, and the reasons have been on polar opposites of the morality pole. First is to say one attends church because he or she feels the Holy Spirit moving in their life. The second is serving God which makes it imperative to be one of the many parts of the body of Christ.¹⁷⁴ What attracts an individual would be instrumental to keeping that individual at his or her church. One would believe that Christ is the main attraction that a ministry puts up front and intends to be the top priority of all facets in the ministry.¹⁷⁵ Church growth is dependent on preaching Christ and teaching biblical principles. These are the determinants that fortify faith, not the production on Sunday or television broadcasts. Mumford describes the excitement and beauty of church in America and how it portrays a sense of longing and acceptance.¹⁷⁶ One would believe a person goes to church to worship God and learn how to live a life pleasing to Him.¹⁷⁷ Church exists for believers to be learners of Christ and develop humility to be servants of the Lord.¹⁷⁸ The respondents convey numerous responses, but the responses can be categorized under particular

¹⁷⁴ 1 Cor 12:12-27.

¹⁷⁵ John 12:32.

¹⁷⁶ Mumford 2014, 17-19.

¹⁷⁷ Acts 2:42; Prov 16:7.

¹⁷⁸ Jas 4:10.

groups. Why does one attend church? It is because of family, to remain true to one's faith, or because it was just a familiar routine. When one does not attend church, it was a result of paying too much money, too much politics, and not enough pity. What the author did find interesting was the lack of response of individuals who only attend church because of holidays or a major event taking place. There is not a need for a main event or holiday for an individual to attend church, which goes to testify how the institution's strength and prospective benefits are factors to persuade people to attend.

Despite whether an individual is consistent, casual, or a rare church attendee, many individuals profess to be a member for an extended period of time. Both active and non-active people have answered that they have been a member for at least forty years or more. This point indicates that length of association with a church or ministry is not paralleled by activity within the ministry. One has to think that one can be in a church for decades but not do any work for the church. It is almost a direct indication of why individuals are members to see what or how a church provides service as opposed to people being of service to God's kingdom. This may well explain the lost interest of individuals. When one does not desire to remain a member or even be faithful, it shows he or she may not have been true and faithful in the first place. If an individual is involved, one must ask why. The question is if a person is truly willing and honestly involved in a ministry or if other motives are involved. Similar to Paul addressing contributions, should a person grudgingly, cheerfully, or out of necessity giving to God and His church.¹⁷⁹ When churches and ministries value corporatization practices, there is a tendency to emphasize work and overvalue the church's needs out of necessity and coerce people into serving their mission statement. If the Bible is the source of all things godly, the Word of God should be the influence

¹⁷⁹ 2 Cor 9:6-7.

and guide for service to and appreciation of the Lord.¹⁸⁰ McGrath reveals in a study on church, motivation for attendance is less extrinsic and more individuals valued getting closer to God.¹⁸¹ One must ask why individuals are no longer involved and attending church. John McGarth shows this is contingent on reflection and valuing the pastor as opposed to the programs offered.¹⁸² The data from this project shows more extrinsic reasoning for individuals not remaining involved in a ministry. Time constraints, family issues, and employment were the common replies from the respondents.

The hope that comes from Christ and the comfort from the stress of everyday life did not motivate individuals with years of professing Christianity. Cole speaks on how many individuals desire the spoils of Christ and expect other individuals to do the work.¹⁸³ Though he or she is in attendance, members who desire spoils, their involvement is dependent on how important the church views them. This need allows their happiness to hold the church's well-being hostage.¹⁸⁴ The data shows other reasons, but corporatization does not account for personal issues; but improving equity in the company and ensuring production continues.¹⁸⁵ The involvement of consistent believers who had longer years of conviction reflects a more free and spontaneous

¹⁸⁰ 2 Pet 1:20-21.

¹⁸¹ John McGrath, "Congregations as Consumers: Using Marketing Research to Study Church Attendance Motivations," *Marketing Management Journal* 19, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 135.

¹⁸² Ibid., 134-36. McGrath does contend the numbers may be skewed due the affluence of the participants and their age being older than most other test subjects. The numbers were more extrinsic for younger individuals. He also accounts for the gender bias in the data because females answer differently due to the fact that the religion in question used for survey, Catholicism, is male dominated.

¹⁸³ Cole, *Organic Leadership*, 117-20.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 150-53.

¹⁸⁵ Mark Armour, "Talking About a (Business Continuity) Revolution: Why Best Practices Are Wrong and Possible Solutions for Getting Them Right." *Journal of Business Continuity & Emergency Planning* 9, no. 2 (2015-16): 103-4. Armour is not referring to churches but basic business practices. The author uses Armour's journal entry in order to have a business mindset and to accurately support the demeanor of business practices which are engrained into corporatization.

service. Christians having the liberty to please God wherever and whenever they can supports this belief and outlook.¹⁸⁶ The lack of having that freedom is evident according to the data for this project. Chart -12 shows the “casually” and “rarely” attendee’s view their church service as scripted and structured. Chapter 2 reveals that people come to church for various reasons but their intention seems to always please family and to provide a positive feeling within his or her soul. People will be committed due to the years of rapport within a ministry. The author sees how corporatization interferes with the immaculateness of ministry. When the focus changes and the purpose is turned to the organization as opposed to Christ, it creates disappointment among communities, distractions to leadership, and disorientation between the church and its purpose.

¹⁸⁶ 2 Cor 3:17; Phillip McFarland, “Mentor Suggestion” (lecture, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, June 25, 2016).

Chapter 3

PURPOSE TO EDUCATE AND EDIFY THE CHURCH

Introduction

Some individuals know God's Word and earnestly possess faith in Him. To believe in Christ means one must do and implement what Christ instructs. Chapter 3 will investigate first how believers carry a high biblical IQ but lack in applying that biblical knowledge in everyday life. Secondly, this chapter will also delve into why one seeks a relationship within church and how he or she sustains that relationship through authenticity of friends and Christian siblings. The last aspect this chapter will investigate will be how an individual prioritized ministry into his or her everyday life as well as being a believer of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, one may forge relationships within a ministry that will be beneficial for personal reasons. There will be a study on why individuals come and stay at a church or ministry. Lastly, the writer is seeking to show how individuals who are affected by corporatization forms his or her relationships within church and society. The writer is also analyzing whether or not the reason one comes to a ministry is correlated with why an individual remains committed to that particular ministry.

Self-Evaluation of Why One Attends

One concern that was in the origin of this research is the effect of corporatization on Christians and their growth. One area that needs to be scrutinized is how biblical knowledge is affected by corporatization. Corporatization concerns itself with mostly cosmetic ideals and perception. The Bible states, "But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man

looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”¹⁸⁷ Verlyn Verbrugge states, “The link between the word ‘discipline’ and the word ‘disciple’ ought to remind us of the basically positive focus of discipline.”¹⁸⁸ The Lord says if people hold to His Word, they will be His disciples.¹⁸⁹ One factor demonstrating if corporatization is effective is how believers develop and retain biblical knowledge. One must possess detailed knowledge to be approved not only by God but by fellow believers as well.¹⁹⁰ The author applauds Edwin Walhout in his account that a believer should not be an individual who should be needlessly preoccupied in the science of knowing God without establishing a personal understanding as to whom God truly is to His people.¹⁹¹ Jesus Christ proclaims that His followers will know His voice and abide in His will.¹⁹² If Jesus Christ submits to the will of His Father, why would Christians be any different, the lack of knowing who God the Father actually is to him or her.¹⁹³ Walhout states,

Paul is not talking philosophy, or theology, or esthetics, or art, or music, or architecture, or literature, or poetry. He is talking God; he is talking Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He has just urged his brethren to rejoice in God, and to have the peace of God that will sustain them in Christ Jesus. And he follows this exhortation with the assurance that the God of peace will be with them.¹⁹⁴

When discussing how corporatization is corrupting the modern church and Christians, one must account for the knowledge and intelligence of the child of God who is subject to corporate-

¹⁸⁷ 1 Samuel 16:7, NKJV.

¹⁸⁸ Verlyn D. Verbrugge, “The Decline of Church Discipline,” *Reformed Journal* 30, no. 4 (April 1980): 12-15.

¹⁸⁹ John 8:31.

¹⁹⁰ 2 Tim 2:15.

¹⁹¹ Edwin Walhout, “Finally, Brethren,” *Reformed Journal* 21, no. 9 (November 1971): 13-17.

¹⁹² John 10:27; 15:8-15.

¹⁹³ Matt 26:39.

¹⁹⁴ Walhout, “Finally, Brethren,” 14.

themed churches and ministries. To depart from evil is understanding the word of God.¹⁹⁵ Walhout is intentional in describing individuals who practice the Christian faith to be focus and in tune to a relationship with Christ.¹⁹⁶ He is discussing an element that is corroding the functionality of church in the modern age. Corporatization leads individuals to view how it looks to be Christian as opposed to being a Christian. Modern doctrine and church leaders are fortifying the fact by attempting to create their own personal brands. Harold Willmington talks about how the Word of Faith Movement proposes prosperity and all it takes is following Godly principles.¹⁹⁷ Willmington also speaks on how the Word of Faith disbelieved that when an individual was sick or experienced trouble, it was on him or her, not God.¹⁹⁸ It is teaching that Willmington refers to as unsound doctrine. The Bible says, “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”¹⁹⁹ He believes a Christian should truly be consumed by the love of God before even entertaining the prospect of studying the Bible as a text in literature as opposed to a life-changing and guiding text for its readers to govern every aspect of their lives.²⁰⁰ Verbrugge contributes four tenets in the justification of discipleship declining. The first is flexible in its implementation: “‘Do your own thing’ morality has made an indelible impact on our ability to make moral judgments.”²⁰¹ Second tenet is that

¹⁹⁵ Prov 9:10.

¹⁹⁶ Walhout, “Finally, Brethren,” 16.

¹⁹⁷ Harold Willmington, “Doctrine of Salvation” (lecture, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, May 25-29, 2015).

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Eph 4:14, NKJV.

²⁰⁰ Walhout, “Finally, Brethren,” 13-17.

²⁰¹ Verbrugge, “The Decline of Church Discipline,” 13.

“those who were guilty of sins censurable in the church showed disdain for whatever decisions the church might wish to make.”²⁰² Verbrugge explains the third reason in the following quote:

A third reason arises from differences in church discipline among the many denominations. Some churches have in essence no discipline, and accept virtually anyone who indicates a desire to join; others are very lax in the application of whatever rules they may still have. Thus anyone who is censured in one church can immediately withdraw from it and without any difficulty affiliate with another. This substantially reduces the effectiveness of censure.²⁰³

Verbrugge ultimately concludes disciplines in churches are practically non-existent due to lack of accountability and carnality infiltrating the attitudes and mindsets of believers. If one comes to church consistently, there is now no way to terminate membership due to the plethora of options offered from other churches and most definitely other denominations.²⁰⁴ By accommodating many individuals by compromising practices, principles, and priorities, a church is now a social club instead of God’s house.

Choices Churches Make

With the lack of biblical knowledge due to the inadequacy of discipline, the decision-making skills of churches and ministries are effected immensely. Merrie Schoenman Carson states that churches do not make godly decisions due to secularism and naturalism having a heavy influence on the frame of thought of the Christian leaders.²⁰⁵ When churches debate on whether to have a state of the art sound system or to buy a less expensive sound system in order to have a security alarm, this is an example of making decisions with a lack of relationship with

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 14.

²⁰⁵ Merrie Schoenman Carson, “Stewardship, Discernment, and Congregational Decision Making,” *The Covenant Quarterly* 71, no. 3-4 (August-November 2013): 73-95.

God and knowledge of His Word.²⁰⁶ Neil Cole describes the same phenomenon when he relates how a person's mindset confirms the inability of allowing Christ to be Christ.²⁰⁷ A believer must be like Ezra, who prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.²⁰⁸ James Arne-Nestingen discusses the conflict between Martin Luther and Erasmus over the authority of Scripture where the church is influenced not in knowledge but in sincerity in taking Scripture literally.²⁰⁹ "Given such correlations, making ambiguity a legislatively enforced hermeneutical principle sets the church adrift. To distinguish the affirmative to the writer', the article of the standing and falling church, goes down with the clarity of the word. If freedom is an innate human characteristic, Christ's death counts for nothing. Institutions that surrender such certainties are no longer the people of God gathered together to hear the Word and receive the sacraments, but 'the ecclesiola' as an old friend called it—empty pretense."²¹⁰ The mention that the gospel is seen as an alternative to know God and His way is troubling even though it is embraced as the Word of God.²¹¹ One example of individuals not holding the Word of God true is the efforts allowing more free thinking, which leads to knowledge but not conviction. Moberly responds with this excerpt from his response to David Congdon's thesis on theological interpretation:

My thesis was that the church (understood widely and flexibly) plays a key role in this preunderstanding, as what sociologists call a 'plausibility structure.' In other words, what

²⁰⁶ This account is a personal one from the author who witnessed the situation while a member at a church. This actually happened, and this ministry can be deemed as one that embraced corporatization.

²⁰⁷ Cole and Helfer, *Church Transfusion*, 77-80.

²⁰⁸ Ezra 7:10.

²⁰⁹ James Arne Nestingen, "Biblical Clarity and Ambiguity in *The Bondage of the Will*," *Logia* 22, no. 1 (2013): 29-33.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

we hold to be true relates to what significant others also hold and in the past have held to be true. I suggested that, although Bultmann holds this classic preunderstanding about the Bible, he offers no sufficient account of why he does so. By contrast, I argued that Augustine offers a classic articulation of the point at issue in his famous and often-misunderstood saying, ‘I would not believe the gospel if the authority of the Catholic Church did not move me.’ In the secular and post-Christendom context of contemporary life (at any rate in Britain and Europe) it is important to be able to articulate afresh why the Bible should be privileged with the preunderstanding that it contains, or at least may contain, ultimate truth.²¹²

The author contends that what R. W. L. Moberly relays in this response, what reasoning or motivation does a person have to believe in the Word of God in the eyes of ancestral predecessors. There must be a new or a fresh manner of discussing why one believes and obeys.²¹³ To be faithful based on history and not authentic experience with God is tragic and corrupting the pureness of Christianity. The Bible exhorts believers to be doers of the word and not hearers only.²¹⁴ This research seeks to prove that conforming to worldly principles and seeking popular approaches need to be extinguished in sanctuaries around the world.²¹⁵ The effects of secularization are spiritually counterproductive despite the benefits from the protocol, organization, and structure it brings. That very productivity is detrimental to the movement of the Holy Spirit and challenges the thought of being free in God.²¹⁶ Where can God get the glory or mend broken hearts when the pastor is led to pray for someone and there are only five minutes to fit in at the altar call? Futile are the efforts in attempting to operate ministries through what

²¹² R. W. L. Moberly, “Bible and Church, Bultmann and Augustine: A Response to David Congdon.” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 9, no. 1 (2015): 40.

²¹³ *Ibid*, 40.

²¹⁴ Jas 1:22.

²¹⁵ Rom 12:1-2.

²¹⁶ John 8:36.

Watson and Scales define as “McDonaldization.”²¹⁷ In theory, retraining people using the Word of God and reestablishing a directive to seek Godly individuals will reverse this phenomenon.

Biblical Competency

The author is not conceding that corporatization corrupts the book knowledge from the Word of God. As a matter of fact, the data will show high numbers in knowing accurate biblical information. However, implementation of doing what God commands and the basic motivation to please God as supposed to look impressive is the question at hand. The instrument to test biblical competency questions is a series of twenty basic questions by Slick.²¹⁸ The questions asked to participants of the survey consist of multiple-choice questions and can be categorized as basic.

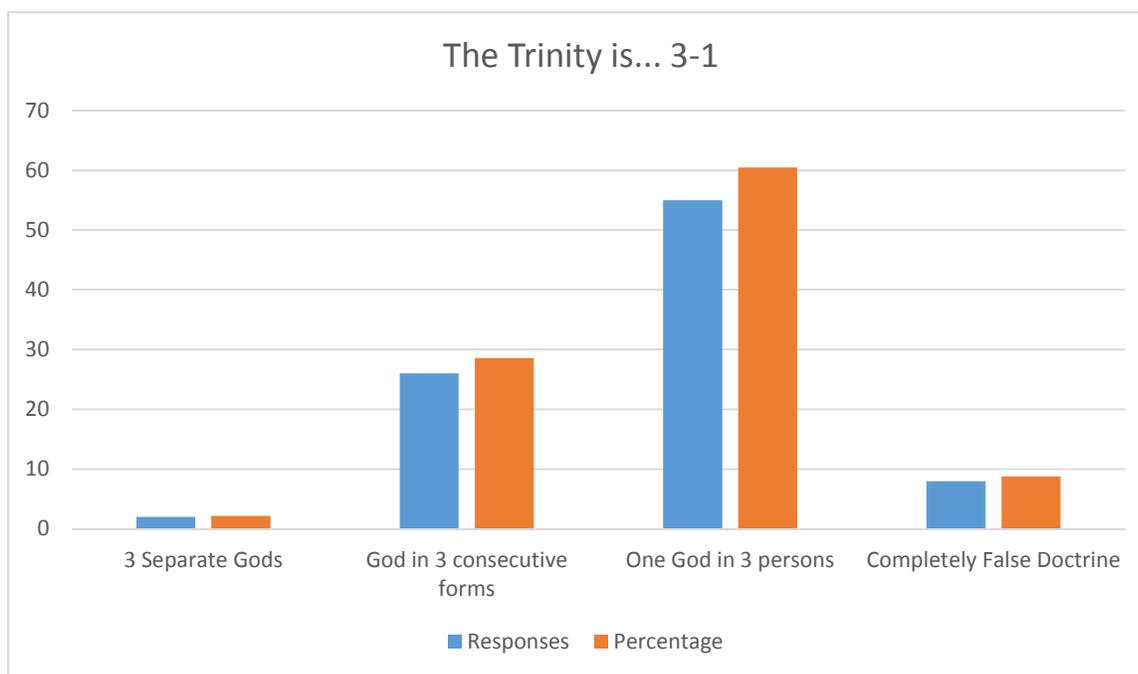
There are forty-six total individuals who state they “consistently” attend a church or ministry. Twenty-eight people say they “casually” attend a church or ministry. Twenty-six men and women declare they attend church and ministry “rarely.” The author wants to affirm that biblical competency is important and the majority of individuals who attend a church or a ministry on a regular basis possess a high ability to perceive biblical facts. Eight individuals who “rarely” attend church believe there are two or more gods. Whereas, fifteen of fifty-four people who claim to attend church “consistently” believe there are two or more gods in existence. Not one category answered one question 100 percent correct, but the percentage of accurateness was a high quantity.

²¹⁷ Watson and Scalen, “Dining with the Devil,” 171.

²¹⁸ Matt Slick, “A Theological Test,” Christian Apologetics & Research Ministry, <https://carm.org/theological-test>.

Analysis of Basic Bible Comprehension

The following shows how many individuals who attend or attended a church or ministry possess a basic biblical knowledge. This graph shows the following responses on God and His person. A total of seventy-seven of eighty-three responders answered there is one God in the universe. Fifty-one of eighty-six responders answered that there is one God in three persons. Sixty-one of eighty-five respondents answered Jesus is God in flesh.



Fifty-nine of eighty-four responders feel Jesus has one nature. Fifty-four of eighty-seven survey participants answered the Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity. Twenty individuals think the Holy Spirit is “a divine spark in all of people.”²¹⁹ Seventy-eight of eighty-nine responders view sin as “breaking God’s law.”²²⁰ Forty-seven of eighty-eight takers of this survey believe human nature is sinful. Thirty individuals of that eighty-eight see human nature

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

as good. Fifty-three of eighty-nine responders consider Jesus arose in the same body He died in, while thirty-one of those same number of responders answer He arose as a spirit. Seventy-seven percent of ninety-one responders says hell is a place of eternal fire and torment.²²¹ Eighty of the same number of ninety-one responders categorize heaven as “a place of eternal joy and place with peace.”²²² Sixty-seven survey participants define salvation as deliverance from the eternal consequence of sin: damnation. Out of eighty-nine answers on the question “Salvation is attained by...,”²²³ fifty-five percent sees it as grace through faith. Eighteen individuals think obeying all of God’s laws is a way to attain salvation. Seventy-two respondents of eighty-nine see the devil as an angel who rebelled against God. Eighty-eight percent of the same eighty-nine survey takers look at the Bible as the inspired Word of God. The rapture is deemed as the catching up of God’s people into the sky at Jesus’ return by seventy-one individuals out of the eighty-eight who answered that question. Adam and Eve were “the first man and woman created by God”²²⁴ by seventy-six of ninety-one responders. Seventy percent of eighty-nine respondents believe Jesus is the only way to God. Out of eighty-eight responders, sixty individuals believe you go to “either heaven or hell when die,” while fourteen percent believe you do not exist anymore and eleven percent says you go to purgatory.²²⁵ The subject of evolution has more variety than other questions. A total of eighty-eight survey participants answered that question. Forty-one percent answered it “is not a viable option for Christians.”²²⁶ Thirty-nine percent

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

believes “God used evolution to bring man into existence.”²²⁷ Eighteen percent believe it is how humans got here. Two individuals say evolution proves there is no God. Ninety percent of ninety individuals answer God created mankind “to save us, love us, and have us love Him.”²²⁸

The numbers do not convey a complete confidence in Christians’ biblical competency, but the data does show a solid majority possesses basic biblical competency. Utilizing this knowledge is the issue the writer wants to raise. This excerpt from Dr. Charles Stanley details how biblical knowledge is high but application is abysmal:

Nothing is more frustrating than knowing people are listening week after week-often times writing it all down-but doing nothing with tat they have just heard. They are not enjoying the freedom the Lord created them to experience. Evangelical America tends to be note rich and application poor. As a result, there is little difference between many of us and our lost neighbors. The real tragedy is that we have lost our ability to function in our society the way God originally intended. We were left here to be a light to our world. As my friend Tony Evans is fond of saying, our lives are to be a commercial announcement of a coming kingdom.²²⁹

Stanley continues by saying,

There should be something different in the way we do business. There should be a clear distinction in the way we raise our children. Christian marriages should be testimonies of the love of Jesus. Those who are outside the church should be enamored by unity and love they see among believers. Unfortunately, that is rarely the case. Consequently, our society has warped perspective on the person and work of Christ.²³⁰

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid. The writer cited the answers to credit Matt Slick for the wording of the answers given. Many participants in the writer’s survey were not consistent in answering the entire survey. A total of 147 individuals participated. Only a total of 120 individuals attempted to answer every question. SurveyMonkey.com is the tool used to manufacture and distribute the surveys. The website does not convey why it says 120 completed the survey but some questions do not have a complete 120 answers. Some skipped some questions and answered others. The writer is sticking strictly to data given and this is why the total number of participants varies for each question.

²²⁹ Charles F. Stanley, *The Spirit-Filled Life: Discover the Joy of Surrendering to the Holy Spirit* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2014), 5.

²³⁰ Stanley, *The Spirit-Filled Life*, 5.

Sipho Mhlanga states in a recent sermon that the young millennial believers are spiritually stupid and biblically illiterate.²³¹ He continues to use the example of the congregation being asleep and uninterested during praise and worship. He goes on to say that this generation looks to be entertained.²³² As Mhlanga proclaims, corporatization leads individuals to seek entertainment to replace a believer's yearning for intimacy with Yahweh.²³³ The trouble is transcended by failing to implement that knowledge to the reality of everyday life.

Come for Man or God?

Understanding that there is evidence for modern church goers showing an indication of basic biblical knowledge, there is an interest in understanding what type of relationship a person seeks at the house of God. Dallas Willard believes forging a respected and pure relationship can be defined as individuals looking for a "higher life or deeper life."²³⁴ It is important that the relationship between God and His people is a testament of how many individuals' view of how believers coincide and interact with unbelievers.²³⁵ Ten respondents of seventy-six answer the question, "What kind of relationships do you seek at your church?" with the sole emphasis on being closer to God or being godly.²³⁶ The author is not counting the response "to fellowship with other Christian individuals" due to the vagueness and intent to form a relationship. It is

²³¹ Sipho Mhlanga, "Is Jesus Your Center?" (sermon, Berean Christian Church, Stone Mountain, GA, July 15, 2016), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvJDkUhfWoc>.

²³² Ibid.

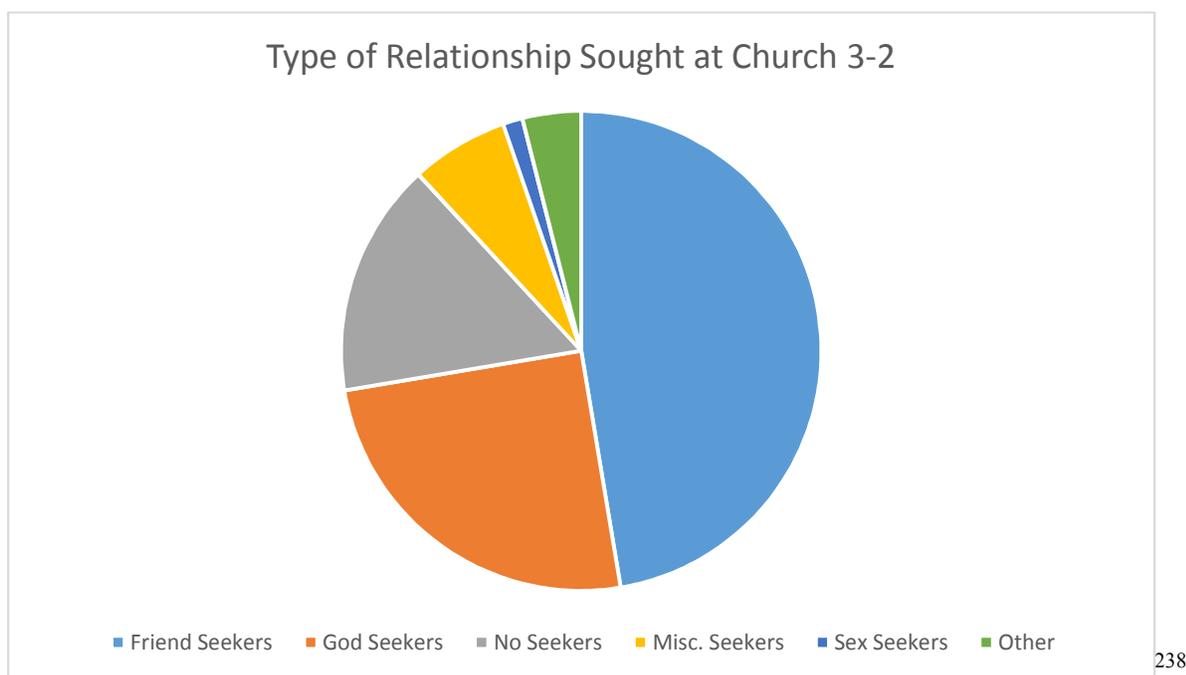
²³³ Mhlang, "Is Jesus Your Center?"

²³⁴ Gerald McDermott, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), handout.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Edwin Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the www.surveymonkey.com, https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/1WJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D.

unclear if the response is referring to people or God. The theme of the responses was to seek a friend or fellowship for their reasoning for forming relationships.²³⁷ The author formulates three types of rationale for one seeking to have a relationship with a person at the house of God. Sixty-six people in this research sought relationships with no direct intention in forming a relationship with Christ Himself. The answers were “other believers,” “friendships,” and, from one individual, “sexual.” Ironically, twelve respondents said they are seeking no type of relationship of any kind. The following graph shows the focus of many individuals in church is not to get closer to God. It shows that people will utilize church for a social change or even for dating service.



²³⁷ The thought of the writer was to use answers literally and not try to determine intent by speculation, unless a person says spiritual, God, Christ, or incorporated those types of responses, which the writer deems indicate a personal relationship with God.

²³⁸ The miscellaneous section were individuals who were vague and only used a description of the relationship as opposed to the type of relationship.

Fellowship is godly and a necessity in any church or ministry in the world. For it to be the principle incentive for entering and staying at a church is problematic. It is easy to connect the factors leading to the reason an individual stays active in a ministry to what they seek from that ministry. Saran Donahoo is able to correlate this in her research of getting college students back to church. Donahoo questions two rural universities and finds that even though churches were attempting to renew or fortify faith with and in God, many students were more drawn to the activities exponentially more than to the church itself.²³⁹ This indicates that when individuals like Fredrick Gluck suggest using Wal-Mart principles, it is not as big of a stretch as many church leaders will suggest.²⁴⁰ The author was in an instructional session at a local church and the comment was given that the principles given by the instructor of helping others succeed would never work in a corporate world. The instructor, Christopher Davis, answered by stating the corporate model would never work in a black church. The unprofessionalism and the demeanor of individuals would not allow corporatization to infiltrate the church.²⁴¹ In the same presentation, Davis suggested that the pastor as the central figure in the church must be helped and respected as the boss, and all decisions make him or her a CEO type of individual.²⁴² The author does not count that statement as incorrect even though it is based on ignorance of God's structure for His church. It shows a complete disregard for corporatization's influence in

²³⁹ Saran Donahoo, "Fostering Fellowship: Church Participation of Students Living On Campus," *Journal of College & University Student Housing* 40, no. 2 (January 2014): 184.

²⁴⁰ Gluck, Frederick W. "Can the Church Learn From Wal-Mart?" *America* 190, no. 17 (May 17, 2004): 12-15.

²⁴¹ Christopher Davis, "The Timothy in You" (lecture, Oak Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Memphis, TN, August 14, 2016).

²⁴² Ibid.

churches by ignoring Christ is the head of the church.²⁴³ There is a need for ministries to recognize that people come to church seeking love, honesty, and genuine relationships.²⁴⁴ That is a demand for churches to supply to parishioners. Churches should demand obedience to the Word of God and display the same love that God has for all His children.

Why One Comes?

There could be an argument that small groups are a supply for the masses' new malcontent for mega-churches. There is an alternative for those individuals who are not favorable of larger churches and crowds. Remember, churches exist to serve the Father, not the people.²⁴⁵ When the focus is on people, the institution is no longer a house of God. To maintain any success, what draws a person is what must be used to keep that person. The Bible is clear that the best evangelistic tool is Christ Himself: "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."²⁴⁶ Donahoo suggests that what a person desires personally is what draws a person.²⁴⁷ The research shows through text analysis that the respondents maintained commitment to a ministry or church based on the pastor, teaching, Word of God, and Jesus Christ being the less mentioned, Jesus Christ. It is a basic Christian understanding that whatever you do, you should do it heartily for God, not man.²⁴⁸ To place an importance on the pastor or the people of the body of Christ but not Christ breaks the first commandment, which states that

²⁴³ Eph 5:23.

²⁴⁴ These adjectives were the exact responses from the survey for this research.

²⁴⁵ 1 Cor 1:1-17.

²⁴⁶ John 12:32, NKJV.

²⁴⁷ Donahoo, "Fostering Fellowship," 178-91.

²⁴⁸ Col 3:23.

“you shall have no other gods before Me.”²⁴⁹ The following is the categorized answers for the survey question, “What factors go into sustaining your attendance at your church?”²⁵⁰ Answers were to learn God’s Word, friends that were made, style of church, and peace of mind. Some quit due to a misconstrued notion of why individuals come to church.²⁵¹ The individuals who “rarely” attend church consisted mostly of the people who have no reason to attend church but this factor cannot go unnoticed, time and difference of opinion. Out of fifteen individuals who rarely attend and answered the question, “What factors go into sustaining your attendance at your church?” four people were disgruntled and the others were desensitized to Christianity.²⁵² The various other answers are companionship, the pastor, to be closer to similarly minded individuals, and pure enjoyment of the worship service. The idea of finding another individual to interact or even commune with socially, if not intimately, is a common theme for individuals entering the house of God, seeking acceptance and accompaniment. The result of the survey shows God is of interest to most individuals, but He is a secondary thought in the forging of the desired relationships. Pursuing a connection and how to meet and maintain that connection with others take precedent over a personal relationship with Christ.

²⁴⁹ Exod 20:3.

²⁵⁰ Edwin Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the [www.surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/IWJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D), https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/IWJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D.

²⁵¹ The author states this factor due to answers from these individuals on other questions.

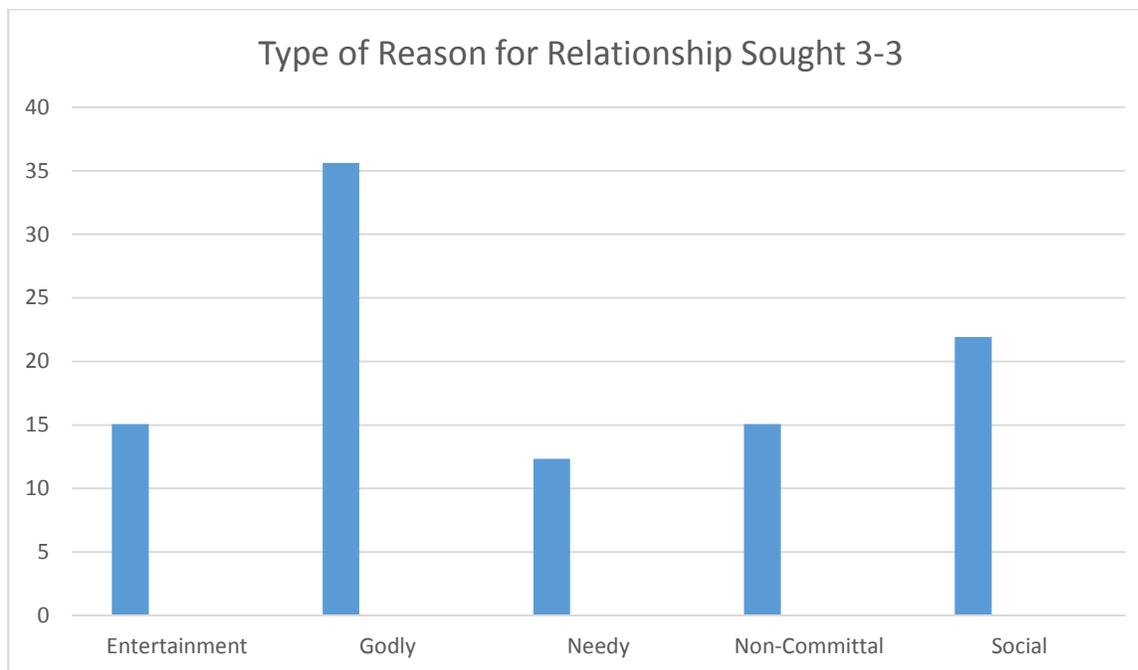
²⁵² Edwin Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the [www.surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/IWJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D), https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/IWJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D.

Why One Stays

Being drawn to church shows how ministries have to cater to individuals to get them in the church. The motives that compel one to become a part of the church have to be investigated as well. Amy Frykholm suggests individuals develop loose connections with ministries due to people being more migrant as opposed to in one area over a period of time.²⁵³ Frykholm also suggests that informal social networks actually hinder church growth.²⁵⁴ The writer outlines three reasons why people join a church. The following chart will consist of these five categories. The first category consists of individuals who want to join a church to please God. These individuals say they are seeking God and to be further in depth in His Word and the Holy Spirit. The second category is people seeking to be entertained. These individuals place emphasis on service and the how the pastor speaks as supposed to what he is speaking about to the congregation. The third reason is the category of one who seeks interaction with others or to be a socialite. The writer groups these people by how they wanted to meet new individuals or were seeking be with the church because of the people and not because they desired a relationship with God. The fourth reason for the surveys is the constant handouts that are given. These people joined for what was given or handed out. The last category will consist of individuals who failed to answer the question with clarity or submitted a negative to ever becoming a part of a church. The following chart details the reasoning why individuals become a part of a ministry using the prior criteria.

²⁵³ Amy Frykholm, "Loose Connections," *Christian Century* 128, no. 11 (May 31, 2011): 20-23.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.



There are various reasons for one to become a member of the church. However, entering a relationship with a local body of Christ should be dependent on godly wisdom and guidance from the Holy Spirit.²⁵⁵ Christ must be in the forefront of every ministry. The church leader should see the importance a vision has on a ministry. In the categories where respondents are labeled godly, entertained, and social, the common trait mentioned about joining is the church's direction and purpose. The vision or mission of a ministry is vital to its survival and success.²⁵⁶ There is an undeniable factor that the experience is what makes a person join a church. When looking at what Stephen Macchia suggests when an individual is considering joining a church, these are the top ten characteristics sought by potential church parishioners:

1. God's Empowering Presence
2. God-Exalting Worship
3. Spiritual Disciples
4. Learning and Growing in Community
5. A Commitment to Loving and Caring Relationships

²⁵⁵ 1 Pet 2:5.

²⁵⁶ Prove 29:18.

6. Servant-Leadership Development
7. An Outward Focus
8. Wise Administration and Accountability
9. Networking with the Body of Christ
10. Stewardship and Generosity²⁵⁷

Knowing that the service will be entertaining as well as enlightening, most individuals in some form value how much the service and the church in its entirety cater to the interest and concerns of the individual. Putting confidence in the man or woman who serves as pastor will ensure there will be electric worship while his or her messages or sermons will still equip the saints for the work of the ministry.²⁵⁸ The writer believed that time and location is a factor in deciding if a person would join and that variable of time is mentioned as major aspect in most individuals' decisions. The pastor and type of service are the most frequent responses to the author's survey. This research also must take into account how other church members influence decisions as well. Over 20 percent of respondents took into account other people at his or her ministry of choice. That influence is second behind parishioners who value getting close to God or the means to serve God more, which is a little over 35 percent of respondents. Seeing that church is the house of God, this is a place where believers can worship Jehovah.²⁵⁹ Church is where one honors God's son, Jesus Christ, for His sacrifice to save those who believe in Him from the penalty of their sins.²⁶⁰ When one lives and operates under the auspices of the Holy Spirit in order to persevere the trials and tribulations of this world, life is precious and valued.²⁶¹ The fact that the size of a building, how much a person smiles, the amount of handouts, and numerous other

²⁵⁷ Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church*, 23.

²⁵⁸ Eph 4:12-16.

²⁵⁹ Deut 12:5-7.

²⁶⁰ 1 John 3:16; 1 Pet 3:18.

²⁶¹ John 14:26.

ludicrous reasons show a disconnect when those actions should not play a major part where it can be the only factor. These were responses from the survey used to gather this information. The author wants to place an emphasis on how meaningless and selfish comforts have caused Christians to be less like Christ and more like consumers.

Selfish Person or Spiritual Person

This research shows evidence that institutions have to cater to individuals' desires and enjoyment for a person to decide to become a parishioner at a particular local body of believers. The next deductive step would be what contributes to people staying involved with a ministry and what rationale is involved in a person allowing a ministry to have more prominence in his or her everyday life. Scripture states His children are one body in Christ, and the Lord should be the sole connector between a church and individual. What has changed over the course of time is the reason a man or woman stays at a particular ministry. Leo P. Ribuffo accounts the life of a preacher named Bruce Barton. Ribuffo states,

Barton explained, corporate leaders must place service above profits, all persons must work and consume vigorously, and advertisements must promote these general values as well as specific goods and services. Since prosperity also depended upon peace abroad, Barton advocated American nonintervention in foreign wars.²⁶²

The thinking of individuals like Barton helps one understand that when corporatization seizes churches and ministries, their thinking changes from making disciples to making dollars.²⁶³

Look at Ribuffo's description of how Barton welcomed business into his congregation:

Still, Barton's version of social Christianity was wider than it was deep. Like his father, he welcomed benevolent capitalists into the ranks of the awakened. He offered no alternative beyond voluntary charity to house the unemployed and, along with many

²⁶² Leo P. Ribuffo, "Jesus Christ as Business Statesman: Bruce Barton and the Selling of Corporate Capitalism," *American Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (1981): 207.

²⁶³ *Ibid.* See also Matt 28:19-20.

writers associated with the amorphous progressive awakening, slighted structural reform to concentrate on building Christian character. Jesus with \$50 million and a large organization, he surmised, “couldn’t have done as much as Jesus who was never too busy to love.”²⁶⁴

There is research that suggests individuals are solely focused on self-interests in society, which correlates to pursuing self-interests in being committed to a church or ministry. The following excerpt is from a study documented by Joseph H. Hellerman, which investigated the outlining issues church effect on communities in a number of ways:

Social scientists have intensively studied the particularly pervasive loss of social capital and lack of genuine community that characterize life in America and its churches. They have concluded that we are a radically individualistic society, oriented toward personal fulfillment in ways profoundly more “me-centered” than any other culture or people-group in world history. It is our individualism—our insistence that the rights and satisfaction of the individual must take priority over any group to which one belongs—that has seriously compromised our ability to stay in relationship and grow with one another as God intends.²⁶⁵

Hellerman also depicts how the early church prioritized their focus on the group and not one individual person.²⁶⁶

The Bible shows that believers should not forsake thyself to assemble.²⁶⁷ There is a clear promotion for each Christian to help others in spite of his or her own self-interests. The parable of the Good Samaritan exemplifies that thought. Furthermore, that Scripture shows how Christians exhibit compassion for every kind of person.²⁶⁸ When Saul’s conversion took place,

²⁶⁴ Ribuffo, “Jesus Christ as Business Statesman,” 211.

²⁶⁵ Joseph H. Hellerman, “A Family Affair: What Would the Church Look Like If It Put We Before Me?” *Christianity Today*, May 2010, 43.

²⁶⁶ Ibid, 44.

²⁶⁷ Heb 11:25.

²⁶⁸ Luke 10:25-37.

God instructs Ananias to baptize Saul, which eventually led to the change in his name to Paul.²⁶⁹

Hellerman speaks on this mindset with the following:

The early Christians had a markedly different perspective. Jesus' early followers were convinced that the group comes first—that I as an individual will become all God wants me to be only when I begin to view my goals, desires, and relational needs as secondary to what God is doing through His people, the local church. The group, not the individual, took priority in a believer's life in the early church. And this perspective (social scientists refer to it as "strong group") was hardly unique to Christianity. Strong-group values defined the broader social landscape of the ancient world and characterized the lives of Jews, Christians, and pagans alike.²⁷⁰

Dale A. Meyer suggests that the church reach back to the early church and use their motivation for salvation as means to stay committed and convicted in Christ Jesus.²⁷¹ This is a piece of Meyer's reasoning of utilizing the mindset of biblical characters to assist the homogeneousness of the modern church:

Today our desire to motivate parishioners to more lively participation in the congregation should continue to be about the ultimate salvation of their souls. Because the social cohesion of congregations around Jesus Christ had eternal consequences for church members, Peter presented God's saving action not only as a past event but also as a claim upon their present with a dominant view toward their eternal future. We can do the same.²⁷²

Christ can influence the masses by simply being the centerpiece of the church's operations. He is able to bring in money and masses if one only lifts Him up as the focus of a ministry.

Why One Remains Involved

Seeing how it is biblical to be one collective body as opposed to living as a single entity will define the answers to how committed people are to a church. More importantly, why they

²⁶⁹ Acts 9:10-19.

²⁷⁰ Hellerman, "A Family Affair," 44-45.

²⁷¹ Dale A. Meyer, "More Lively Participation." *Concordia Journal* 41, no. 2 (2015): 94-98.

²⁷² Meyer 2015, 95.

are connected to a particular ministry. The author developed six categories to determine what influences a person to stay committed to a church. The actual question is, “What forces you to be committed to your church?”²⁷³ The category of “works” has answers like “I am supposed to do as told,” or one answer even involved fear of being disgraced by his or her congregation. Some people come to church due to other people forcing or directly influencing them to do so. This category is “other people.” The responses were “grandfather, mother, to be close to family, and other members of family or even just the pastor. One other category is “emotional.” Individuals submitted answers like “to feel wanted,” “desire to do right,”²⁷⁴ and even “need of belonging.” “Godly” is another category, and it is simply describing individuals who answered the survey as “God,” “to be faithful to Him.” Any variation stating God or pleasing God solely was placed into this category. The fifth category is labeled as “nothing.”²⁷⁵ These individuals stated they had no reason for being committed. The last category was individuals who answered incoherently or submitted “N/A” as an answer.

Commitment to church can have a number of motivational reasons but faithfulness to God should be the reason. This survey shows many individuals are literally forced to come and stay within a ministry. Christ rewards faithfulness but ignores individuals who operate in

²⁷³ Edwin Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the [www.surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/1WJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D), https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/1WJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D. Some individuals were uncomfortable with the wording of the question. They feel that the word “force” is not an appropriate description and their response left room for interpretation. Some people answer force is not a good word so the author categorized these individuals in an emotional category. There are also some individuals who failed to answer at all so they are considered uncategorized.

²⁷⁴ This answer is categorized as emotional due to the lack of explanation, but it has a sensibility element based on an individual’s emotions or how he or she feels rather than what he or she thinks.

²⁷⁵ Some individuals who answered “nothing” or “none” are individuals who may have an issue with the use of the word “force.” Some people stated their discontent with the use of the word but answered the questions regardless. The ones labeled as “nothing” literally responded with nothing or none.

ministry with ulterior motives.²⁷⁶ Richard Rymarz sees that there must be a plausible structure in order for commitment to improve or at least still exist.²⁷⁷ Rymarz's suggestion of plausibility is evidence of why some individuals have justifications other than those that are godly. Rymarz explains that with this excerpt:

Key plausibility structures are family, schools, workplaces and community groups. It is within these structures that religion becomes plausible. If a religious community is to survive, then it must be able to provide an ongoing explanation of the world, not just on a cognitive level, to those who are within the faith community. In other words, the plausibility structures need to be maintained.²⁷⁸

Rymarz gives three elements as to why these structures are important. "Firstly, plausibility structures must be able to provide mechanisms for socializing the next generation. This includes a wide range of social practices, both within the family and the wider social network."²⁷⁹ Rymarz continues by saying,

Secondly, there must be many opportunities for conversation within the community. Conversation here means occasions when the members of the community can rehearse over and over again what it means to be a member of that community. This involves a range of actions over a prolonged period of time. For an evangelical community, for example, this could involve attending Bible study, giving witnesses, taking part in regular prayer evenings and going away together to summer camp.²⁸⁰

Rymarz's third point is as follows:

Finally, the plausibility structure must be able to provide a clear and cogent explanation of the faith to those within the community, especially at times when individuals are challenged. One factor which assists in building up cognitive plausibility is a sense that

²⁷⁶ Heb 11:6; Matt 7:21-23.

²⁷⁷ Richard Rymarz, "Nurturing Well-Being Through Religious Commitment: Challenges for Mainstream Christian Churches," *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* 14, no. 3 (August 2009): 249-60.

²⁷⁸ Ibid, 250-51.

²⁷⁹ Ibid, 251.

²⁸⁰ Ibid, 251.

the tradition not only has plausible reasons for existence but also that these reasons have some historical *gravitas*.²⁸¹

The author suggests that establishing this structure intertwines with why one becomes involved with ministry and stays in ministry. As misconstrued as that reasoning may be, church has established itself as an institution in society; thus, churches and ministries must cater to those appetites of the individuals in the world. The issue comes when carnal elements keep individuals interested and engaged, and spirituality is compromised.²⁸² The perception seems plausible, but not being built on the truth of Christ can lead a church to seek means to gain committed members leading individuals to Christ and making disciples. The corruption is activated when the foundation of the church is based on having a standing in society as opposed to existing to please God who will make the church relevant in society.

²⁸¹ Ibid, 251-52.

²⁸² Gal 5:17.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS OF CORPORATIZATION IN CHURCH

Introduction

The writer believes God's intention is for parishioners to come to church to worship and leave to serve the Lord. Their motives in participating in corporate worship and why they serve give a true image of how important Christ is to a particular individual. The writer will look at three aspects in this chapter pertaining to findings and the applications of the findings. First, this chapter will look at the motivation for why seek or utilize corporate tactics. The reason one does what he or she does for a living or even a lifestyle is viable in determining whether or not a church's integrity and authenticity can be questioned. Secondly, this chapter intends to investigate the motivation for why an individual stays and operates within a church or ministry. A parishioner should have the mindset and customs to be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer.²⁸³ Third, the author is emphasizing that the biblical church is diverse in definition and why they assemble. This chapter is to demonstrate how ministries misconstrued their public opinion for public acceptance. Rather seek God's approval, this chapter will delve into the paradox of ministries forsaking God's approval for man's. It is imperative that we do assemble for worship corporately but as believers not to form a corporation.²⁸⁴ A church should exist to serve and worship Christ; but there are churches, which seek to make money or network to build a brand in the area.

The church exists for Christ because it is a manifestation of a group of people who

²⁸³ Rom 12:12.

²⁸⁴ Heb 10:25.

comprise the church. The Bible gives examples of a mob being a church.²⁸⁵ When there is an assembly or company, the word *ecclesia* is used. One can say the children of Israel are a church from the reference in Acts 7.²⁸⁶ The body of Christ derived from *ecclesia* in referring to the definition of church.²⁸⁷ This chapter shows how corporatization transforms Boggs and Fields's definition of a non-profit institution into one that seeks to turn a changed person into profit. If one had a technical definition of church, it would be the following; "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."²⁸⁸

Biblical Factors

The writer considers two widely used Scriptures for who the church is following. The first Scripture describes the church as follows:

And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.²⁸⁹

The second Scripture widely used to define church is part of Jesus and Peter's interaction in Matthew 16:

²⁸⁵ Acts 19:30-41.

²⁸⁶ Acts 7:38.

²⁸⁷ Eph 1:22; 5:25, 32.

²⁸⁸ 1 Cor 1:2.

²⁸⁹ Ephesians 4:11-16, NKJV.

He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”²⁹⁰

The true travesty is God calls on His servants to help the unfortunate and not to capitalize on their trust and persuade their congregation to assist with their ascension to stardom.

The Apostle Paul reflects on how church should think without corporatization. In 1 Thessalonians he says,

And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else. Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil. May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.²⁹¹

There has to be accountability and responsibility within churches and ministries in obeying God’s laws and statutes. The same churches and ministries operating under the Godhead must possess attributes and carry themselves with the respectability and discipline that God expects from His children.

The author shows the rationale of church leaders with respect to their decisions and how individuals respond to the Lord’s statutes. The author studies if a church is existing to seek a connection for people or to become a proprietor in the local area. Christ values relationship because this is what pleases His Father. He did everything to please His Father. Jesus goes as

²⁹⁰ Matt 16:15-19.

²⁹¹ 1 Thess 4:14-24, NKJV.

far as to confirm the fact: “I and My Father are one.”²⁹² The question that is asked is whether a church or ministry seeks to help communities or to receive from communities. The perspective of the church is a deciding factor on how much or less corporatization has infiltrated the church. How the church views congregants shows how corporatization possesses an influence on a ministry. There is a commonality in this perspective because congregants may view the church in a different light depending on their predisposition to attending a particular church or ministry before his or her recent one. One main factor the author believes to be beneficial to many churches is addressing how the community views the churches in their area. The writer believes this promotional effort is how a church should brand itself and promote its godliness when it broadcasts the church on television and radio networks.

Joining Factors

When looking at the data for the writer’s survey, questions were pinpointed to determine why a church works toward its individual vision and goals. The writer intends the congregation embrace the mindset of the ministry they are a part of as a member. Seeking disciples or seeking dollars is an imperative factor not only to a church’s existence, but to its effectiveness. It was determined earlier that many individuals possess a basic biblical knowledge but utilizing that knowledge accurately is the issue. A church is the light of a neighborhood, and it should never be hidden.²⁹³ Seeking participation, treating parishioners as donors and not Christian siblings, and desiring to expand the campus and not the conscientious mindset of the local body of believers exhausts the positive equity the church has built in order to enhance the bottom line and brand.

²⁹² John 10:30 NKJV. The fact that Jesus refers to God as my Father is why relationships play an important factor in the interaction among people.

²⁹³ Matt 5:14.

The writer seeks to show how corporatization has corrupted the mindset of church leaders to enhance carnal rewards at the expense of dispensing spiritual rewards to parishioners. The basis for this thesis comes from the notion that the writer insists a church should be evaluated by how the church or ministry does things as opposed to what a church or ministry is doing. One notion the writer is interested in studying is the rationale of individuals who work or volunteer at a church or ministry. The measure of the work one puts into a ministry can be determined by his or her giving financially or the amount of time he or she volunteers.

Financial Factors

In the writer's survey, sixty-seven individuals responded to this question: "What expectations come with your contributions at your church?"²⁹⁴ Four respondents gave no answers or their answer was considered incomprehensible.²⁹⁵ With non-applicable being a category, the writer surmises five additional categories. The first category is one has no expectation of their money once they give it to the ministry. The writer determines this from individuals answering the question with "none." One individual stated the following: "None, as my God requested that I bring them to His storehouse. This is balance while observing whether most of the income goes to ministry that achieves God's command."²⁹⁶ Out of sixty-seven answers, twenty-one individuals sought no explanation or intention as to how the church utilizes

²⁹⁴ Edwin B. Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the www.surveymonkey.com, 2016, https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/1WJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D.

²⁹⁵ The writer made this conclusion due to the responses being a question mark or the respondent stating they "do not know." One response was just a bunch of letters randomly typed.

²⁹⁶ Edwin B. Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the www.surveymonkey.com, 2016, https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/1WJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D.

money. The few responses detail a focus of routine or simply going through the motions by placing money in a basket. These individuals also feel a person should have no expectation on his or her offering.

The next category is people who perceive their contributions as a “donation.” The responses range from to keep the staff paid as well as noting that one is helping the church. The writer realizes that these individuals simply sought to finance the ministry. Other responses range from no expectation to making friends. The responses deemed as donation give a sense of furthering the operation. There is no mention of experiences, expectations, or exposure. Responses like “minimal financial commitment,” “percent of income donated,” or “use money to help others and not themselves” indicate to the author that these individuals give because it is simply the right thing to do.²⁹⁷

Another description of one’s mindset is for him or her to “receive benefits.” These answers are catered to how God or the church can help them personally. These respondents have distinct motives or expectations of their offerings to reflect a reward for their well-being whether it is personally or spiritually. These responses reflect a perspective that a person is a part of the ministry for what it can do for him or her. When one speaks of looking for his or her own grace and growth, there is an obvious neglect for the entire body of Christ.

Twelve respondents sought to be solely focused on God and His will for his or her gifts. The distinction is that a Christian seeks to please the Lord and receive personal benefits as a by-product of one’s efforts, not the reward.²⁹⁸ Twelve respondents also believe their giving is his or

²⁹⁷ This answer can be considered as no expectation, but the writer deemed it donation because the respondent had an expectation but not a personal one. He or she sought their money to be used as part of the operation solely as other responses entail.

²⁹⁸ Phil 2:3-4.

her responsibility to be obedient. Their responses are “God said so” or just merely maintaining an element of honesty to his or her morals. Obedience is not the category the writer formulates as “God focus.” These two categories may be considered the same, but the writer uses the motivation as the deciding factor in distinguishing the difference. “Obedience” is doing as instructed by Bible, church, or leadership people. “God-focus,” the last category, is solely to benefit the kingdom of God and is also the driving factor in his or her actions.

Motivation to Give

Many individuals held no expectations for the contributions they gave to the church. The overall mindset is once one gives to the ministry, that money is no longer a concern. Most respondents stated “none” as their answer to the question concerning contributions. Four individuals considered themselves as “consistently” being a church member. Seventeen total people who are grouped as “casually” and “rarely” church attendees have no expectations for their monetary contributions. However, the next attribute of the mindset of responses that are “casually” and “rarely” church members where seeking to receive benefits or clearly as a donation. Three categories had twelve respondents each. Those thirty-six respondents are equally distributed among “donations,” “God-focused,” and “receive benefits.” Ironically, ten of the thirty-five consistent church goers registered the attribute of receiving benefits for attending church.

Fallout from Finances

When determining what influences a person’s giving, corporatization brings its presence in not only why one gives, but to what one gives. Corporatization leads churches to go against the very reason it exists. That is “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to

visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”²⁹⁹

Greed is detrimental to mankind and the church is not immune to craving worldly interests and advantages. He or she who desires the office of bishop is required to refrain being greedy for money and not covetous.³⁰⁰ People want a charismatic leader but will always expect morals to supersede their energy and charisma.

Why Keep Going?

The writer sought why one in the midst of various factors remains active in ministry. There are many reasons individuals stay in ministry, but are they active? When looking at the survey tool for this thesis project, responses were grouped into six categories. Those traits are as follows: charity, godly, leadership, non-active, self-help, social.³⁰¹ The writer values this point of view because churches are utilizing the same tactics with emphasis on cosmetic aspects and extravagant buildings. Perception is critical in corporatization; thus ministries promote activities and characteristics that draw individuals to their ministry with the wrong tools and percepts.³⁰² The methods corporations use are obviously present with churches. Churches are seeking what draws people as opposed to letting Christ and His love draw individuals to their church or ministry.³⁰³

²⁹⁹Jas 1:27 NKJV.

³⁰⁰ 1 Tim 3:3.

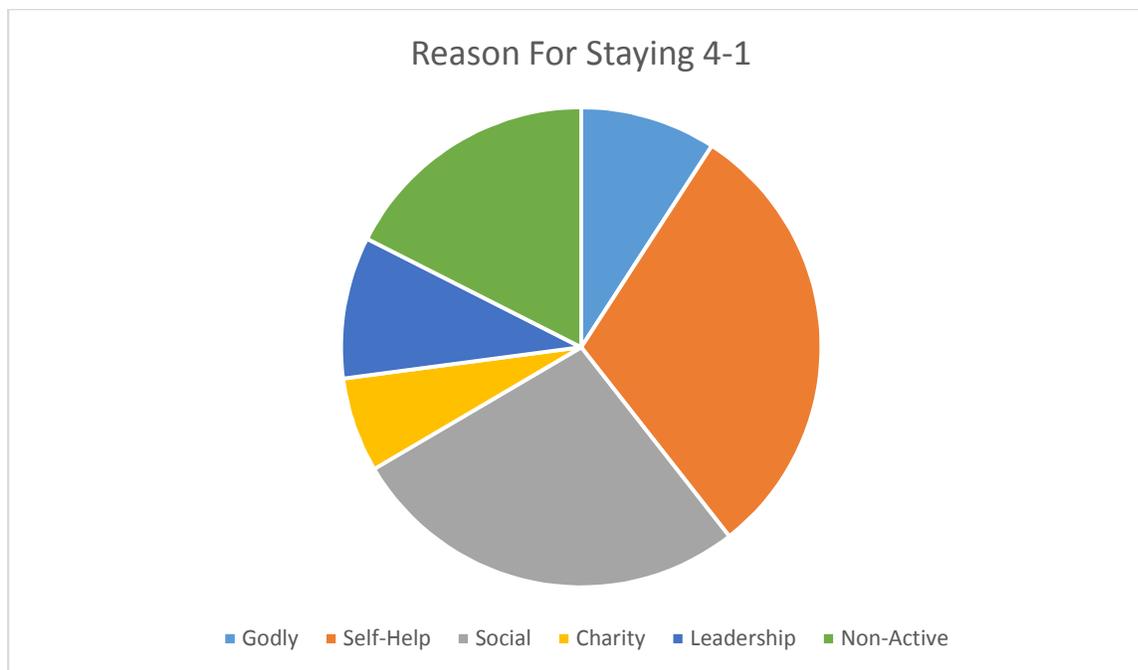
³⁰¹ Edwin B. Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the www.surveymonkey.com, 2016, https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/IWJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D.

³⁰² This statement is the basis of this section deriving from the excerpt of Roger B. White’s “An Exposition of Our Own” and other sources used throughout this project.

³⁰³ John 12:32.

The six attributes previously named were based on the responses of seventy respondents given to the writer's survey. First trait is charity. These responses are in the sense of one who gives to others solely. Respondents gave replies like "to give back" and "love for others." One individual shared he or she gives in order to stay connected with God and his or her community. The second attribute is leadership. These individuals are a part of the ministry because the pastor draws and relates to his or her life. Third is non-active. The description "non-active" is determined from individuals who state they are no longer active or they responded as "none." The fourth trait is "self-help." Many of these responses derive from people seeking "growth" and "feeling needed."³⁰⁴ The fifth attribute is social. Those individuals who seek to be at church desire to have relationships with other people and some even stated that they did not want to be alone. The last trait is "Godly." People in this category are active due to being obedient to God and seeking to please Him. This chart tells how the majority of churches seek to keep individuals active.

³⁰⁴ Edwin B. Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the www.surveymonkey.com, 2016, https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/1WJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D.



The data shows that the majority of individuals are involved with a ministry and church for personal gain and benefit. What is not accounted for is a man or woman staying active in church in this survey but others have been found to contribute to the data presented in this thesis. The writer believes that churches can either capitalize on the poverty of others by building membership to boost numbers or use God's gift to bring individuals closer to God and build dependence on Him and not the church. Churches cater to the needs of the people in the community; thus the church or ministry must draw these individuals. Ministries advertise to these needs where the authenticity of Jesus Christ and His influence in Christianity as a whole are diluted. Lifting up Christ should be the principle that draws people, but churches gratify people by promoting events and programs.³⁰⁵ The writer points to the emphasis on catering to men and women as a ploy from corporatization, as it is a basic business practice. This fortifies a

³⁰⁵ John 12:32.

broad standing and position within the body of believers. It also advertises an erroneous and fallible leadership.

Overall Perspective

The writer wants to begin evaluating the perspective of branding and how the church and parishioners view each other. The data from the writer's survey asks, "What is your perspective of your church and other parishioners?"³⁰⁶ and "What is the perspective parishioners have towards your church?"³⁰⁷ This section will be divided into two sections to accommodate the two questions. One must address if his or her church is a place of worship or a market for business. The writer will also seek how people believe their church views them themselves.

How People Believe the Church Views People?

Sixty-eight individuals responded to this question and the writer categorized it into four viewpoints. The first viewpoint is what has been deemed as positive. The answers range from a simple answer like "family," "loving, giving, high spirited," or "positive."³⁰⁸ Some gave more complex responses: "Our church is very special. I love the diversity & closeness of the people. Not sure how I learned who everyone was & their problems, but I am well respected & looked up to as someone who can help people with their problems. (Finding work, repairing

³⁰⁶ Edwin B. Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the
 1 www.surveymonkey.com, 2016,
https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/IWJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

relationships, etc.)” This gives the writer a more detailed response on which to gather data.³⁰⁹ Out of sixty-eight responses, this is by far the most with forty respondents.

The second category is “indifferent.”³¹⁰ These individuals are grouped by not stating a clear and decisive positive or negative response. These men’s or women’s answers could give a glimpse of their demeanor towards their church due to having positive and negative aspects in their answer. Examples are as follows: “I can take them or leave them” or “Depends on the church. I have been to many churches, but my mother’s church is the most consistent. I do not think much of them. I think they have grown too large, and too focused on prosperity gospel nonsense.”³¹¹ Nine responses have been grouped as indifferent.

The third category is “negative.” It is clear and pointed that these respondents are not amused nor impressed by the work of their local body of believers. Nine people responded negatively but their responses are more detailed and give why they have that perspective. One of the responses is the following: “Plastic people in a plastic steeple. Going through the motions and thinking they’re saved. No Scripture reading for most of the parishioners.”³¹² Another response is “This church is lacking in structure and there is no solid plan for continuous growth into a mature Christian community.”³¹³

The last group is no opinion or not applicable (N/A). This is more of a reflection of corporatization from the perspective of a lack of understanding the question. The same number of negative responses, nine, is interchangeable by individuals who respond with no opinion.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid.

When collaborating these survey with the readings by the research community, the writer has determined that people see the church in every light, but not in the perspective of the house of God. The failure to hold people accountable by godly standards is why individuals are not concerned with their spirituality.³¹⁴ The church is helpful in connecting people socially and being a celebrated life coach, but the writer wants to show how the church caters to the needs of people. However, the result is to please the individual not God.³¹⁵ This is not biblical due to the church being the house of God and the relationship being built is among other people instead of with people and God. This problem obstructs the building of the kingdom of God. Many responses on how one views the church and fellow church members are reflective of the declined mentioning of God. People value their interaction with other people. People value and are critical towards a ministry because they are vested in the work of the ministry. Issues arise when people value fellowship. One comes to find meaning and companionship. There is no fervor to seek God personally in developing an understanding of Him and His Word. The writer knows everyone comes to church because of God. However, this section is to show why people come. God is not primary from the findings because responses show an appreciation for other people and self-gains not for walking closer with God.

How People View the Church?

The church views people as a lifeline and means to service and survival. The previous section details how people believe the church views them and the results are mostly social and personal. The Bible states that a church is a body of believers.³¹⁶ The Bible also states church

³¹⁴ Gal 6:1.

³¹⁵ Col 3:23.

³¹⁶ 1 Cor 12:27.

exists to do the following: "...teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."³¹⁷ The general definition that both people and the Bible mutually gravitate to is that the church should not be "forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some; but exhorting one another."³¹⁸ The responses on the survey give the impression that church is a place to meet and receive instructions from the Lord.³¹⁹ The following question was used by the writer to study how people feel about the church: "What is the perspective that parishioners have towards your church?"³²⁰ The basic responses are "good," "a great place," or no definite answer.³²¹

The data that emerged as imperative is the fact many individuals do not account for how the church views them and other parishioners. Out of sixty-six responses, twenty-five individuals had no interest or idea how the church or ministry views one as a member or parishioner. The next highest response is constructive in nature due to being categorized as "supportive" or "positive/loving." Both groups of responses were eleven in number. Responses that gave a sense of helping others are categorized as "supportive." One response or instance is "Seeking Growth; influence a positive Christian walk in others." Another is a simpler answer

³¹⁷ Colossians 3:16.

³¹⁸ Heb 10:25, NKJV.

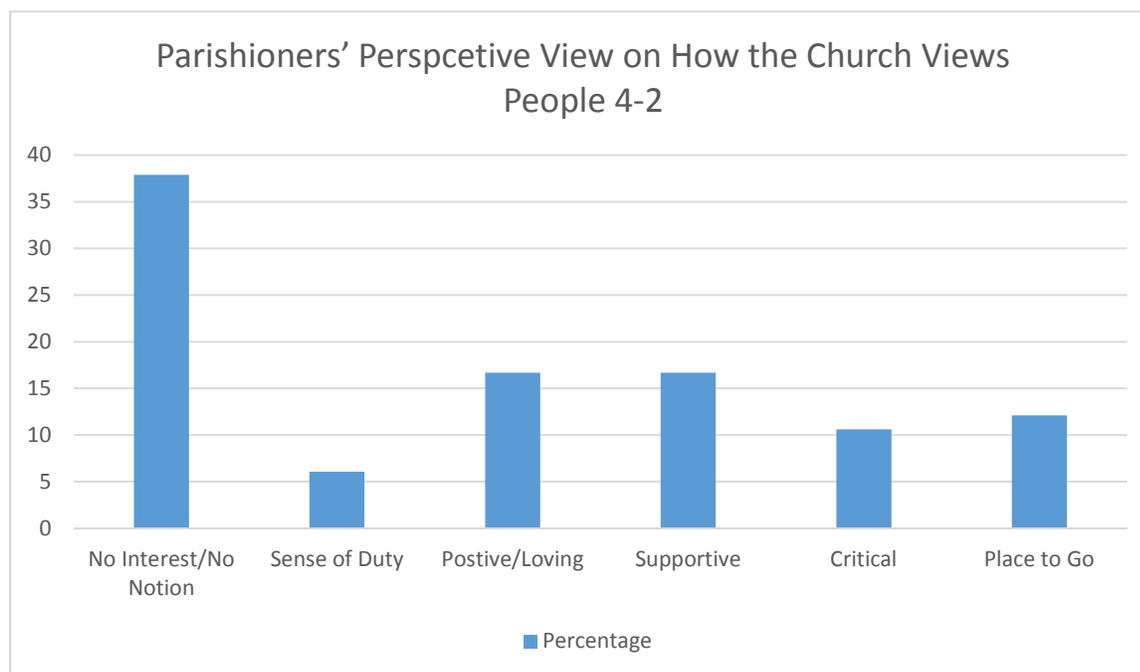
³¹⁹ 2 Tim 3:16-17.

³²⁰ Edwin B. Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the www.surveymonkey.com, 2016, https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/IWJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D.

³²¹ The author describes the responses that are "I don't know" or "not sure" as not definitive. The author also determines responses like "not sure" or "same question as 37" as not definitive as well. There are other answers that can be deemed as non-definitive as well, such as "everyone thinks he's a little much," "NA," or "none."

like “helpful.” The selection of answers that are positive in nature is grouped as “positive/loving.”

The writer also grouped the responses into more categories. The first is “sense of duty,” which derived from statements such as “a progressive, purposeful church” or “to serve God.” Another section is the responses of those who see the church candidly. The last group is “critical,” and those responses are based on negative observations of the church are grouped as such.³²² The following graph shows how detached individuals are due to not seeking to please God but seeking how the church might benefit them.



The fact that individuals do not carry much interest in how the church views them is contingent on what the church or ministry does for the individual. The writer deems this result

³²² There is a limitation to these responses because the individuals submitted answers that criticize the church but it was not from the perspective of the church. It is still helpful due to the fact that seeing the church as a “place of financial gain” carried a notion of perspective from the church and individual while other answers are just speaking about people that seems to have no spiritual nor biblical factors in his or her response.

from the effects of churches pleasing parishioners in order to build the attendance and offering numbers. The lack of mentioning Christ in one's everyday life and building a closer relationship with God correlates to other findings that church is becoming more people pleasing and less God driven. The church is the house of God and a house of prayer.³²³ One goes to church because God believes His house is holy.³²⁴ One goes to church to help other believers to be better Christians.³²⁵ One goes to church to receive instructions from the Lord.³²⁶ One can overcome and persevere through life due to being in the house of God.³²⁷ One will fortify his or her hope by going to the house of God.³²⁸ The church should always be reaching out to its congregants. A ministry should engage with the intention of helping make disciples and lifting up the Savior.³²⁹ The church is seeking to present itself with many viewpoints of interest and intrigue to its parishioners. The writer surmises that the church will be effective when it seeks to build disciples through biblical teachings as opposed to appeasing congregants to further existence through worldly criteria.

³²³ Matt 21:13; 1 Tim 3:15.

³²⁴ Exod 20:8.

³²⁵ Prov 27:17.

³²⁶ 2 Tim 3:16.

³²⁷ Acts 2:42.

³²⁸ Ps 27:4.

³²⁹ Matt 28:19-20; John 12:32.

What the Church Does for the Community?

The question was asked, “How do you view the role of your church in its surrounding community?”³³⁰ The overall responses were “positive” or to help the needy. The writer sees this viewpoint as imperative in reversing corporatization. One response is as follows: “We stand as a beacon of light to the community. We are responsible for letting our light shine so that men may see our good works and glorify our Father in Heaven.” This is an example of a biblical church because the Bible intends for God’s people to be a light to the world and bring individuals towards the light.³³¹ The church should be servants to the community and especially to the community surrounding it.

The overview of the responses of the writer’s survey demonstrates the knowledge and intention of ministries as godly, but the issue arises as to the actual work the church does in the community. This deception of treating the ministry as God is rooted in receiving people to church and not to Christ. Ministries who employ such tactics are deluding the resemblance of being a part of the body of Christ. The Apostle John shares the following which can categorize, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”³³² The Bible depiction of mislead individuals to join Christ by the following Scripture: “To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. They profess to

³³⁰ Edwin B. Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the www.surveymonkey.com, 2016, https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/IWJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D.

³³¹ Matt 5:14-16.

³³² 1 John 2:19, NKJV.

know God, but in works they deny *Him*, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.”³³³ The truth is that the gospel is not a tool to deploy one’s agenda. The church uses the way, the truth, and the life to draw individuals to the household of faith.³³⁴ Once a person authentically decides to become a part of the body of believers, he or she should be from a church using truth and love to draw him or her to be a disciple of Christ.

The writer wants to take a few of the responses to point out how even with a ministering perspective, these individuals are looking to brighten the outlook of the house of God and not God Himself. For instance, one response is “the role of a church should be to help the poor, provide a safe space for children, help the lonely, the addicted, the grieving, the wounded. It should be spearheading volunteer efforts to beautify the area, protect the environment, and help others.”³³⁵ Most responses are the church is doing or will do positive things in the community. There is also an element of what the church does for a person, not what the church does. For instance, one respondent says, “Pretty good. Could do more.”³³⁶ Another response shows that the respondent sees the potential of the church but addresses the modern dilemma of the church. That statement is as follows: “Community outreach is not consistent for growth. There are not tools to measure how we are viewed. There are no continuous programs that merge into any other needed areas of community involvement.”³³⁷ This individual gives insight into why individuals seek to have an entrepreneurial mentality to build a local body as opposed to building

³³³ Titus 1:15-16, NKJV.

³³⁴ John 14:6; 12:32.

³³⁵ Edwin B. Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the www.surveymonkey.com, 2016, https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/IWJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid.

the body of Christ. The author is not neglecting that the ministry must be in service to the community. The dilemma the writer mentioned earlier is the church is a service, not possessing servants. The predicament is churches seek atonement for the services provided to the community.

What the Community Does for the Church?

The last question of the survey is “What is the role of the surrounding community for your church?”³³⁸ This thought is discussed in the previous section because the church knows it needs the people in the community in order for ministry to function properly. Some responses are elementary: “they fill it with people...” and “provide a following.”³³⁹ There are more individuals who gave the responses “members” and another response is “provide many members.”³⁴⁰ Some deem that Jesus would be willing to go anywhere to save souls so the church should do so as well. Knowing that a ministry must have parishioners to survive, outreach and programs have more significance than having an actual relationship with God. The motivation is what determines what is righteous or not. The Apostle Paul writes,

For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ, that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel’s sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.³⁴¹

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 NKJV.

By utilizing this Scripture in a real-world sense, one can see how corporatization is evident. When a church or ministry goes out in the community taking a biblical approach, they are solely interested in connecting the Lord and an unbeliever by doing whatever is necessary in a moral sense for salvation. When a ministry or church goes out to a community and caters to the community's wants and needs in order to grow membership numbers, this is a direct result of corporatization.

The mindset and faith of a modern believer is why church focuses on what works instead of what people need. The responses from the writer's survey show that many believe the community is simply a supplier for members or a place to meet God. The response for individual eighty-two shows the negative effects of corporatization. Those responses to the question, "What is the role of the surrounding community for your church?"³⁴² will look into he or she is a prime example of the exodus from organized religion. He or she attended church rarely. This individual's view of church is that the institution leeches off society with no consideration for the souls that are to be helped.³⁴³ When a person witnesses the ugliness and ruthless nature of some people in church, their view may never be changed to anything remotely positive.

This chapter delved into how churches and ministries utilize tactics and programs in order to draw people to their church. Jesus Christ states, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself."³⁴⁴ One sees how an individual, similar to respondent number

³⁴² Edwin B. Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the www.surveymonkey.com, 2016, https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/IWJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D.

³⁴³ The author knows this is one response, but his or her answer reflects how an individual can grow weary having been involved in church for thirty years. He or she holds the view that the church helps themselves as supposed to other people.

³⁴⁴ John 12:32, NKJV.

eighty-two, can become quickly alienated due to a church-seeking members instead of making disciples.³⁴⁵ Church-goers are no longer seeking a deeper relationship with Christ, but individuals are looking for friends or help with personal needs from the charity the church gives to its parishioners. Technology, dinners, concerts, and every other outreach tool are taking precedence over the previously quoted Scripture, in which Christ says if He be lifted up from the earth, He will draw all men unto Him. The church should be the light in the community and the salt that gives that neighborhood flavor for individuals to pursue Christ and the gospel.³⁴⁶ The church should be bringing individuals to Christ and into a relationship with Him as Lord and Savior. The writer is not suggesting that a church or ministry update its tools of communication or even the methods to display this fervor to share Christ with the masses more effectively. This difficulty defines corporatization's influence when it is not tempered by biblical principles. The church is a part of the community and should strengthen it, not benefit from the community by exploiting it for members to fund the operation. Both church and community should aid each other through dependency on Christ.

³⁴⁵ Mark 16:15.

³⁴⁶ Matt 5:13-16.

CONCLUSION

Corporatization Predicament

Corporatization can be useful in organizing church by-laws and procedures.

Corporatization is helpful in improving the efficiency of church business matters such as accounting, spreadsheets, employment, and other corporate-type matters. The author is reemphasizing that corporatization becomes an issue when its principles are the foundation of a ministry and become the key factor in making decisions and giving directions. As the foundation, corporatization undermines and warps churches and God's intent for the body of His believers.

Corporatization is to develop into big business; bring under the control of a corporation board or CEO, Chief Operating Officer.³⁴⁷ Delegating, consolidating, funding, networking, and many other corporate practices can help a church.³⁴⁸ However, one who utilizes tactics from corporatization operates under one of many ideals. The ideal that begins every list for business minded people and organization is "cash is king."³⁴⁹ These strategies are helpful in organizing and simplifying operations to maintain control and consistency. Every church and ministry that operates under the lordship of Jesus Christ should have the principle of making disciples, not making dollars.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁷ Dictionary.com, "Corporatization," *Dictionary.com's 21st Century Lexicon*, accessed January 2, 2017, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/corporatize?s=t>.

³⁴⁸ Inc. Staff, "15 Things Every Business Owner Should Know," June 28, 2010, accessed January 2, 2017, <http://www.inc.com/ss/15-things-every-business-owner-should-know>.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Matt. 28:19-20.

It is attractive to prospective parishioners when a ministry is organized and possesses protocols for every imaginable situation. Jethro's advice to Moses helped the kingdom of God and eased the interactions among the Israelites.³⁵¹ Congregants are to draw men unto the love and lordship of Jesus Christ in order to spread the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ.³⁵² A business may be based off the precedent of "cash is king," but a church should never deviate from this potent Christian ideal:

...that you keep *this* commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, *He who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen.³⁵³

To utilize corporate principles and mindsets is effective under the dictate that all activities and programs are for the Father's business.³⁵⁴ This project showed 115 out of 149 people who responded currently or have previously maintained membership with a body of believers. It is paramount in the writer's findings that support the notion that God is not the priority or the main attraction for individuals to become a part of a church or ministry. Churches that are organized and able to maintain continual focus in its operations is obligated to help other ministries missing the mark of accurately representing Christ. Corporatization is a tool for order and streamlining when needed. It can be extremely effective when utilized with restraint. This disconnect also has remnants in why and how an individual interacts, contributes, and exhibits Christ and the kingdom of God.

³⁵¹ Exod 18:13-27.

³⁵² John 12:32; Eph 4:12; 2 Cor 4:5; Jer 1:5.

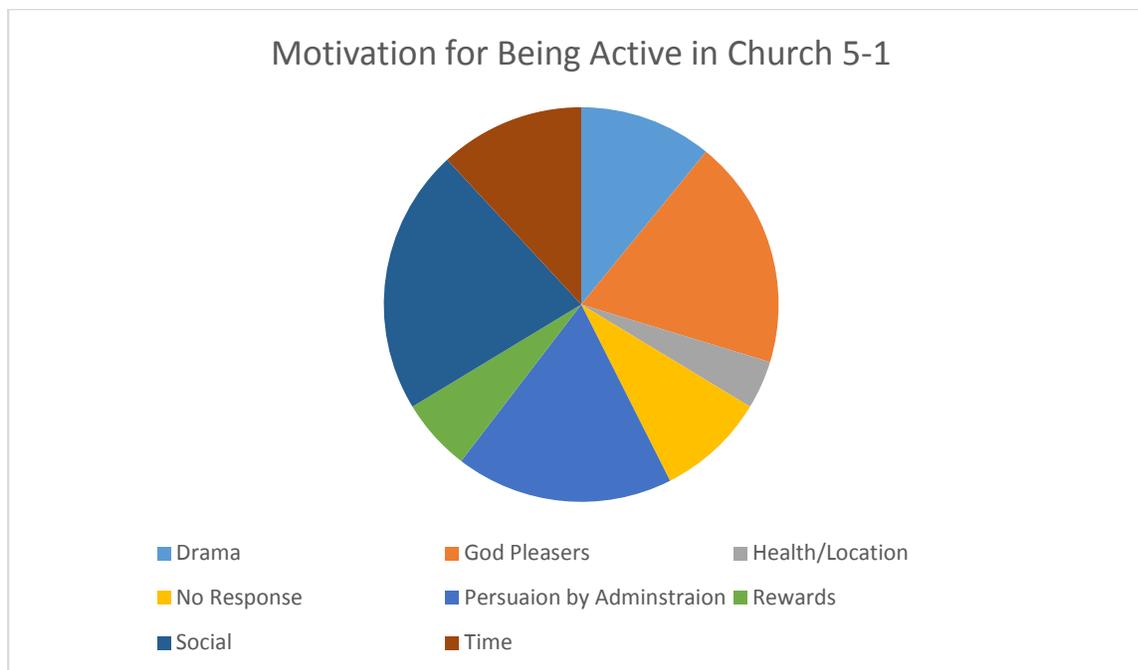
³⁵³ 1 Timothy 6:14-16, NKJV.

³⁵⁴ Luke 2:49.

Seeking to Benefit Self

The writer showed methods to fortify the findings that individuals attend church looking for an experience that meets their expectations. Making relationships and growing in fellowship is healthy and expected. Individuals continue to attend when the environment and amenities are comfortable and convenient for their individual needs. Many individuals are not seeking spiritual growth as much as they are seeking to satisfy a requirement to be exposed to spirituality and be around similarly minded people. Churches should use the desire to seek social relationships to their advantage in forming a closer bond among the congregation.

People become involved for various reasons. Some of the reasoning for becoming interested in church activities is because the ministry meets people's schedules. Another factor can be because he or she was persuaded by another Christian. An additional rationale is whether he or she sincerely wants to please God through service. One basis is the sheer convenience for a person socially or physically. One aspect that can be evaluated is the thought process for the individuals who responded to the survey on his or her activity at their personal church. The following chart will show how God's house is in contention with the tendency to value social assemblage more than pleasing God. It also shows various other elements to consider regarding why a person is active.



The answers varied, but a little over 22 percent placed emphasis on social reasons for being involved at their church. The less-stated factors are time constraints or time allowances, health reasons minimize one's capability to maintain active service, no responses, and the will to avoid any kind of commotion church work can cultivate among congregants. The individuals who answered for social reasons state that spending time with family, friends, and spouses is a core reason for being active. The individuals who are categorized as God-pleasers do what they do to please the Lord and make it to heaven. A reader may ask why reward is a separate category when there are many benefits from a church or ministry. The responses that are categorized as rewards are personal or self-rewarding as opposed to rewards that benefit the kingdom of God or social circles. There is still a strong draw towards godly principles and searching for love. Active members may initially have social reasoning behind their participation, but an intentional and concentrated effort in teaching His Word allows one to become more in tune with the Holy Spirit.

Bottom Line or Biblical Loyalty?

The writer will also explain why many parishioners possess a basic comprehension of biblical content, but the majority of the people do not practice the Bible they know. The writer shows that people understand the contents of the Word of God but fail in observing the very sacred text of which they have a proficient knowledge. One must acknowledge the positive notion of individuals having a biblical competency. When a church has that initial start, the ability to transform individuals into seasoned saints is less complicated and help increase the effectiveness of the ministry. The churches and ministries do educate their people on the subject matter of the Bible but fail in obeying the Word of God due to other factors that overtake Bible compliance related to personal gain and worth. That very detail is a direct influence of corporatization.

The relationship with the Lord is suppressed so that the brand or network of parishioners can benefit a person. Making Jesus the brand and dependence on His name benefits the world as well as the church itself. People come to church to meet people or seek acceptance. Broadcasting the message that Jesus is knocking on the door will produce better results than a group with a portfolio of a particular church ever will. Intentionally seeking biblical principles will diminish a corporate theme in church operations. Promoting God and His Son will enable the Holy Spirit to move freely and allow ministries to prioritize their mission more efficiently. Capitalizing on the knowledge members possess previously will ensure that a church will be focused, loving, and abiding by His will.

Individuals want to feel wanted and seek means to satisfy that thirst for acceptance. The data also shows some individuals want to promote self-interest and are willing to entice other individuals in order to promote a business or add interest to them personally. The result of

promoting a person not named Christ fuels one's motivation to stay relevant and known to various other individuals deems important to his or her agenda. As long as one is prospering from his or her exposure at a church, an individual will remain committed to the church's cause. The remedy to this problem is promoting Christ. The data shows the majority of the responses to the survey for this thesis (a little over 47 percent) seeks a social satisfaction first. The data does show that godly relationship and seeking the face of the Lord sustain one while in church. This statistic correlates and strengthens the notion that people come to church to meet other people and less to meet God. Previously, the question about why individuals are active in church strengthens the case of churches needing to find ways to keep members happy by catering to their wants. The question is asked, "What kind of relationships do you seek at church?"³⁵⁵ Besides the one response that he or she is seeking a sexual relationship, close to forty-eight percent of the responses show individuals seek friends as opposed to seeking God.

Congregation Suffers but Christ Suffices

However, an overwhelming majority of the reason for involvement is to benefit one's self and not serve Christ. The writer will not neglect the factor that a Christian should follow this Scripture: "...not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."³⁵⁶ The priorities of congregants in the modern church do not include God into consideration of the place where one's spirituality and morals are forged and developed. The fix is simply giving intentional consideration to Christ. When Christ is the cornerstone of every fiber within a ministry, it

³⁵⁵ Edwin B. Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the www.surveymonkey.com, 2016, https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/1WJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D.

³⁵⁶ Hebrews 10:25, NJKV.

practically guarantees self-correcting. The accountability of leaders must be placed in the forefront by those who know God's Word intimately. A Bible based church is likely to change culture due to a biblical standard being placed on all individuals. To take that accountability further, the biblical standard placed on a person should also be on the programs and activities.

This study of the people comprises churches and ministries. The last portion of this project is to confirm the writer's findings that churches utilize corporate tactics to enhance the church. Unfortunately, the programs and procedures within many churches exhaust resources, people, and patience that God should have a plethora of freedom to appropriate. Allowing God and His Word to be a deciding factor is surely a positive effect on not only the church but the community as well. A mindset on growth, perception, and involvement of the church is ensured when the body of Christ's top priority is on Jesus Christ Himself. Churches that are looking to give to the world have another expectation. These ministries also seeking to save more people from the world. Parishioners are looking to gain advantage for themselves as opposed to seeking how to give Christ a stronger advantage in the communities. People see the church as an investor that fulfills its personal needs and assists in achieving one's dreams. The community is a supplier of parishioners and not a ripe area for evangelism.

The way society sees the church is through the lens of propaganda and edifices to receive or even barter donations or business as through the church is a marketplace. The operations and functions of a church are prime examples of how corporatization has pillaged the sincerity and sacredness of the institution of church. The solution is to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these other things will be added unto thee.³⁵⁷ Looking to sell books, placing a logo everywhere possible, and possessing the capacity to broadcast worldwide have

³⁵⁷ Matt 6:33.

consumed the mentality of the church and this is corrupting the very hallowed purpose that God intended for His house. God's house is where two or three are gathered in His name and not the name of the church or lead individual.³⁵⁸ The Bible is a way to settle disputes with love and reconciliation.³⁵⁹ A sanctuary is a house of prayer.³⁶⁰ Church is an avenue to practice the spiritual gifts He gave in order to bless our brothers and sisters as well as society.³⁶¹ The writer believes there should be an emphasis on the members of a church due to the following Scripture:

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.³⁶²

Data shows from the writer's research that the majority, 41 percent of 66 individuals, either have no opinion, are indifferent, or negatively respond to what an individuals' perspective of the church in the community may be. The synergy between the church and community is disrupted by the mindset of how churches should approach the community. There is a success when the church lifts up Christ in the community and collaborates with the other churches and ministries to benefit the neighborhood.

³⁵⁸ Matt 18:20.

³⁵⁹ Matt 18:17.

³⁶⁰ Matt 21:13.

³⁶¹ 1 Cor 14:26; Eph 4:11-16.

³⁶² Ephesians 2:19-22, NKJV.

The Main Thing Must Still Be the Main Thing

The writer wants to conclude with an example of corporatization found in an episode of the TV series, *King of the Hill*. The episode that will be used is entitled “Church Hopping.”³⁶³ The Hill family collectively are an example of being fascinated at the amenities and programs of the church but ignoring the fact that Christ is not even considered a part of the church dynamic. This is a quick synopsis of the episode by the writer. The Hill family is upset when their seat at church (Arlen Methodist) is taken by some other parishioners. In disgust, they leave their current church and decide to go to the new church ironically named Megachurch, but not after looking at other churches in the area. Megachurch has everything a person could wish for and the means to do anything it might wish to do. This Megachurch begins to be more intricate than expected so Hank, the father and husband, leaves and decides to worship the way of Lucky, his nephew. Peggy, the wife and mother, becomes so involved in church activities she fails to realize she is idolizing the work and not God Himself. After getting drunk, Hank declares he is finished with church altogether. Later that night, Hank develops an idea to return to his original church by promoting the Megachurch to his old church parishioners. After a face to face with his original pastor, Hank negotiates the return of his spot. The family who took the Hill’s seat leaves for the Megachurch, and Hank leverages the departure of other parishioners in exchange for a permanent seat at his old church. The writer is using this “Church Hopping” episode as an example of what corporatization can do and why many congregations feel the need to have corporate principles in place.

³⁶³ *King of the Hill*, season 10, episode 11, “Church Hopping,” directed by Robin Brigstocke, aired April 9, 2006, on FOX. The writer acknowledges that using a TV series and information from a wiki page is unorthodox and frowned upon by academic guidelines. The writer is arguing due to the specifics of the episode, it is literally a parallel example of corporatization and its influences in Christianity today. The episode promotes comforts, convenience, the celebrity aspect of leadership, and how the church operates as a company and its parishioners are its customers. The writer sees this episode as an accurate account of corporatization corrupting Christian practices, principles, and priorities.

A congregant's sense of ownership is reflected in Hank's behavior due to his assumption that he owns a pew in the house of God. Joshua states, "And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."³⁶⁴ Hank is a direct correlation to the individuals who attend church and believe the ministry is to benefit their desires as well as to fulfill every request and inclination that they may conjure up. Parishioners and non-parishioners need to acknowledge they have no ownership in any capacity. The Bible states, "The earth *is* the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein."³⁶⁵ Corporatization becomes evident when Hank barter his way to a reserved seat by sabotaging membership at the small church. When a single congregant can derail an entire membership by threatening the bottom line or cash flow, this is the epitome of corporatization.

Peggy represents the individuals who want to be more involved, but a smaller congregation does not have a need or the means for the plethora of ideas one may have to introduce. Peggy becomes enamored with the prospects to do all she ever thought of doing and the encouragement to do so. In the writer's survey, the following question was asked, "What is the major influence for your staying active in your church?" The responses were similar to Peggy's desires to be more active and accessible. The responses were, "My need is to share with others and make world changers." Another response was "feeling needed" and "sense of belonging."³⁶⁶ Peggy also becomes controlling and tyrannical after implementing her ideas

³⁶⁴ Josh. 24:25, NKJV.

³⁶⁵ Ps 24:1, NKJV.

³⁶⁶ Edwin B. Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the www.surveymonkey.com, 2016, https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/1WJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BC_Q_3D.

because she believes she is the only one who can oversee the process. Thus, she becomes disrespectful and fail to consider the sensitivity and compassion of the functions of church. The concept of a church being God's house is dismissed due to her path to relevance and to being the only cog in the Megachurch machine with any worth.

Lucky can be characterized as the person who becomes frustrated with the absurdities of church while seeking to justify his or her methods of worship that do not include assembling together.³⁶⁷ He seeks to drink beer and relax on Sunday as his experience with God. The relaxation of his view on the faith enables him to tolerate other faiths despite their convictions being contrary to the Bible. The character even makes the statement "You need get in touch with God and not church."³⁶⁸ This comment is true but the application must be more literal.

Cole and Helfer even admit to the fact that God must take precedent in ministry and always be the cornerstone to the institution's existence.³⁶⁹ Frykholm delves into acceptance in an inclusive manner in her interview with Geoffrey Black. The idea that the church is for all people but churches prohibit individuals with unchristian character and actions is why modern age people are shunning churches.³⁷⁰ The Bible reminds believers that self-righteousness is not of God.³⁷¹ This point is fortified by the fact that everyone has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.³⁷² In the writer's survey, the most prevalent answer to the question "What factors cause you to attend church regularly or not attend regularly?" was how much the church had not

³⁶⁷ Heb 10:25.

³⁶⁸ *King of the Hill*, season 10, episode 11.

³⁶⁹ Cole and Helfer, *Church Transfusion*, 18-20, 173-76; Eph 2:20.

³⁷⁰ Amy Frykholm, "Renewal and Reinvention," *Christian Century* 127, no. 16 (August 10, 2010): 10.

³⁷¹ Rom 10:3.

³⁷² Rom 3:23.

resembled the God the church refers to everyday. The disconnect between church and parishioners is evident. If Christ died for all, He died for every individual who accepts Him as Savior regardless of his or her sins.³⁷³ The writer believes this mindset is derived from the concept of benefitting the church and not Christ.³⁷⁴ The research supports high basic Bible knowledge but since there is low biblically based actions, there is a disconnect with God and His church.

The mega-church seeks to draw parishioners with coffee shops, bakeries, limousines carts to bring congregants from the parking lots, assigned seats, and an extravagant sanctuary. Persuasion in the form of advertising is not how God draws men and women to Him. It helps to relay messaging to the masses but lifting up Christ is the method God chooses to bring individuals to the faith.³⁷⁵ To gauge their parishioners' experience, the mega-church uses surveys with responses being "extremely satisfied" or "satisfied." Johny T. Garner and Michelle Wargo study why congregants are not truthful on feedback, and they find individuals will not voice displeasure to leadership but will with every member around them.³⁷⁶ They also find that the issue of congregants not being forthcoming is due to the church being seen as a non-profit organization and not as a church.³⁷⁷ The reluctance of congregants to share their true opinions or perspectives is highlighted by the mega-church only being interested in good news or positive

³⁷³ Frykholm, "Renewal and Reinvention," 10.

³⁷⁴ Gluck, "Can the Church Learn From Wal-Mart?," 15.

³⁷⁵ "Extravagant Welcome." *Sojourners Magazine*, January 2006, 11; John 12:32.

³⁷⁶ Johny T. Garner and Michelle Wargo, "Feedback from the Pew: A Dual-Perspective Exploration of Organizational Dissent in Churches," *Journal of Communication & Religion* 32, no. 2 (November 2009): 375-400.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 376. Garner and Wargo's research is to show how the church is not a for-profit organization or even a non-profit entity. They do recognize the mislabeling of the church, which confuses it with a business and not a worshiping body of believers.

feedback. Edwin O. Haroldsen and Kenneth Harvey believe their findings show that individuals receive information more effectively through mass media as opposed to interpersonally.³⁷⁸

Mega-churches also have events and programs twenty-four hours a day.

Arlen Methodist begins to compromise with its morals in order to keep its remaining members, even allowing Hank to maneuver his way to a reserved seat by threatening to advertise to the congregants the attractions at the Megachurch. Arlen Methodist is similar to many real congregations seeking to keep membership by all possible ways and means. One response to the question “What is the role of the surrounding community for your church?”³⁷⁹ is “to suck all the time away and to make the church a profitable business which is why I refuse to attend anymore.”³⁸⁰ Mason Barnard attributes the local church losing memberships to overemphasizing characteristics that are no longer conducive to the population churches are looking to serve.³⁸¹ Barnard notices that churches receive more positive responses and people are more active when “the Church continues to conduct its most important work: providing education, support, and sustenance to the region’s poor.”³⁸² Similar to many local smaller congregations, Arlen Methodist focused on meaningless propaganda and attractions where individuals are no longer in a Christian mindset.

³⁷⁸ Edwin O. Haroldsen and Kenneth Harvey, “The Diffusion of “Shocking” Good News,” *Journalism Quarterly* (December 1, 1979): 771-75. The writer is utilizing this older source due to it being a foundation in realizing mass media is a tool to contact individuals that is used by companies since face-to-face contact would not suffice.

³⁷⁹ Edwin B. Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the www.surveymonkey.com, 2016, https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/1WJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ Mason Barnard, “Christ the Out of Touch,” *Harvard International Review* 35, no. 3 (Winter 2014): 26-28.

³⁸² Ibid.

FINAL REFLECTION ON CORPORATIZATION

This thesis project is a result of church culture and institution moving towards a business-minded phenomenon, which nullifies the impact of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This can be avoided by substituting Christ where the church or people have become the focal point. Ministries are attempting to appease prospective members by catering to the will of the people and not to the will of the Lord. When asked, “What motivates you to be active or less active at your church?” answers that featured social aspects were more prevalent than answers that featured Godly aspects by three percent.³⁸³ Twenty-two percent more individuals who responded to the writer’s survey look for friends and relationships as opposed to seeking a relationship with God. This mindset can turn when church leadership illustrates the love and accountability Christ has for His believers. The data does show people still have a respect for the Lord and to abide in His will. The Bible competency demonstrated by the majority of individuals is a basic Christian knowledge.

The writer suggests that corporatization allows ministries to prosper with more money and less time interacting with parishioners. Corporatization is why many people have no expectations for their contributions. The writer’s survey asks, “What expectations come with your contributions at your church?” and thirty-one percent of the sixty-seven responses are categorized as no expectations. The writer attributes this thinking to one paying admission and not offering it back to God. On the same question, individuals expecting their offerings to serve

³⁸³ Edwin B. Alston, *Motive and Reasoning for Attending a Church*, in the www.surveymonkey.com, 2016, https://www.surveymonkey.com/analyze/1WJQD4iXHzb3Ejz5LPKHwp1wADDQYYxzzVC6TD16_2BCQ_3D.

godly purposes also are the same 15 percent looking for a kickback.³⁸⁴ Teaching how one has life and life abundantly nullifies selfishness that arises.

Corporatization displays how one knows God's Word and truth but is willing to compromise godliness for the bottom line. The writer relates the episode of *King of Hill* because it gives a simulated example of how corporatization affects individuals directly and differently. Jesus Christ is the head of the church, and He states that if one lifts Him up, He will draw all men to Him.³⁸⁵ The writer surmises that possessing a business acumen is helpful and powerful in ministry as long as it is "My Father's business."³⁸⁶ When an individual is about his or her Father's business, menial observations and seeking the limelight for oneself is nullified. Similar to when Jesus said this to His mother at the wedding at Cana, people need to disregard distractions that benefit a person or organization only.³⁸⁷ People are looking for Christ, but He seeks to save the world.³⁸⁸ All He does is to benefit His kingdom and not bank accounts of churches and pastors. He desires for His children to prosper and be in good health as their soul prospers. So, His blessings will always be inclusive to all but exclusive to those who love Him and accept Him as Lord.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ Eph 5:23; John 12:32.

³⁸⁶ Luke 2:49.

³⁸⁷ John 2:1-11.

³⁸⁸ John 3:17.

³⁸⁹ 3 John 1:2; 2 Pet 3:9; 1 John 1:9.

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APPENDIX A

1. How often do you attend a Christian Church?
 - A. Consistently
 - B. Casually
 - C. Rarely
2. What factors cause you to attend church regularly or not attend regularly?
3. How long have you been a professed Christian?
4. How long have you been a part of your current church?
5. What motivates you to be active or less active at your church?
6. How are the services and programs at your church?
 - A. Structured and scripted
 - B. Impromptu and free spirited
 - C. Confusing and no sense of order
7. To what do you attribute your biblical competency?
8. What kind of relationships do you seek at your church?
9. What factors go into sustaining your attendance at your church?
10. What factors attribute to sustaining the relationships you seek at your church?
11. What do you believe to be the purpose for church in your life?
12. What influences you to be committed to your church?
13. What expectations come with your contributions at your church?
14. What is the major influence towards you're staying active to your church?
15. What is your perspective of your church and other parishioners?
16. What is the perspective of parishioners have toward your church?
17. How do you view the role of your church in its surrounding community?
18. What is the role of the surrounding community for your church?

APPENDIX B

April 6, 2016

Edwin B. Alston

IRB Exemption 2454.040616: Corporatization of the Church Compromises Christ's People, Purpose, and Practices

Dear Edwin,

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 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 46:101(b): (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 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 change in protocol form or 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,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP *Administrative Chair of Institutional Research* **The Graduate School** *Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971*

APPENDIX C

Good Morning Edwin,

This email is to inform you that your request to add a question, "Have you ever been a member of a Christian church or attended church on a regularly basis?" to your survey has been approved.

Thank you for complying with the IRB's requirements for making changes to your approved study. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

We wish you well as you continue with your research.

Best,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School