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THE ESSENTIAL LEADERSHIP ELEMENTS FOR
TRANSFORMING THE ETHOS OF A LOCAL CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

THE ESSENTIAL LEADERSHIP ELEMENTS FOR TRANSFORMING THE ETHOS OF A LOCAL CHURCH

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The purpose of this project is to demonstrate the essential leadership elements involved in transforming the ethos of local church from a community organization for Christians into a movement to change the world. It is a case study of what took place at Hardin Baptist Church (now Venture). In addition to published scholarship, the findings from the case study will be compared with five other churches that have experienced a similar transformation.

The reason for this project is to document the key elements of the transformation of Hardin in hopes that the changes will serve as a tool for other pastors. Additionally, it is an effort to retrospectively evaluate the transformation so that lessons can be applied to the future leadership of the church.

Abstract length: 150 words.
To my wife, my partner in this life and tireless companion in leading Venture to be a movement to change the world. To my children, who love me and support what God has called our family to do. To all those who have labored, sacrificed and suffered with me to see Hardin Baptist Church transformed into what is now Venture. To my family, friends and church that did so much to encourage and enable me to write this project. Finally, to Jesus, whom everything in this project is all about - to Him be all Glory and Honor and Praise!
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INTRODUCTION

The Problem

One web-based dictionary defines ethos as “the distinguishing character, sentiment, moral nature, or guiding beliefs of a person, group, or institution;”\(^1\) Another dictionary defines it simply as “shared fundamental traits.”\(^2\) Essentially, the ethos of any organization is truly what that organization is most concerned with. It is the ultimate reflection of the heartbeat and life of the organization. It represents not just the policies, doctrines and methods of the organization, but also the passion, vibe and purpose of the organization. An organization’s ethos is so fundamentally the authentic reality of the organization that it functions as the greatest predictor of the organization.

Throughout the author’s life, he has been inundated by individuals, churches and non-profit organizations that have demonstrated a passion to glorify God through radical obedience to Christ. Every significant influence in his life has reinforced the ethos that every believer is called by the Gospel to be wholly committed to making disciples of every people group in the world. From those who have demonstrated this trait through their willingness to diligently engage in the little things that few notice, to those energizing massive movements of believers for causes beyond their years on earth, the author has continually been influenced by people whose core values are to know God and live their life to make an eternal impact exclusively for His glory.


It was not until August 1991 when the author began college at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA that he had his first real exposure to a local church with an ethos that contradicted all he had ever witnessed. Upon arriving at Virginia Tech, he had no problem finding churches with similar structures, systems and methods, but he could not find one with the same fundamental understanding of the Kingdom of God that he had been surrounded by for eighteen years.

After two years at Virginia Tech, the author transferred to Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA. Eventually, through the providence of God, leaders at Liberty University decided to use the author all over the country to speak in churches. Almost every weekend the author was meeting pastors and lay people while preaching in youth rallies, evangelistic crusades, conferences, revivals, and regular Sunday worship gatherings. It was at this point that the author came to a crucial moment in what began the formation of this thesis project.

Since feeling called to preach as a young teenager, the author’s vision was to serve in a local church, not travel across the country speaking in different places. Therefore, in the midst of these travels, the author began to pray for God to give him a vision for what he was doing and/or give him a local church to serve in. It was a rare Saturday not traveling, that the author was sitting in his kitchen eating breakfast, praying and reading John chapter 19 - the story of the crucifixion of Christ. In this story, Jesus is nailed naked to a cross, suffocating to death, while bearing the weight of sin itself, yet all around him people are going about their lives as if nothing unusual is happening at all. Politicians are debating what should be written on the sign above Jesus’ head, soldiers are gambling over who is going to get his clothes, and only one of his closest followers is anywhere to be found! It was while reading this passage on that Saturday morning that the author felt he had an epiphany. Suddenly, he realized there was a common
thread that tied the vast majority of pastors and laypersons he had met while traveling all across
the southeast, northeast and central United States. The ethos of almost every single church he
had preached in was the same. They were all busy expending large amounts of money and
energy, but their actions rarely seemed to be rooted in the ethos he had been around his whole
life.

Prior to preaching in all of these churches, everything the author had been exposed to was
that of a radical, sold out movement to change the world with the Gospel of Christ. However,
the heartbeat and passion he witnessed in the churches he was being exposed was one of doing
life around Christ, yet seemingly disconnected from Christ (His death, burial, resurrection and
His calling on the Church) – exactly what was happening around the cross in John 19. While
traveling to all these churches, he was witnessing an ethos that presented the Church as a
community organization for Christians instead of a movement to change the world! It was over
breakfast that Saturday morning that the author began to feel his life mission was to be used of
God to change the fundamental core values of the American church. Interestingly, however,
God had begun planting a vision within him, one the author had yet to fully understand.

After graduating from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary and traveling heavily for
two years out from underneath the umbrella of Liberty, the author eventually went to work for
the Florida Baptist Convention for three and a half years as a church consultant. By this time, he
was traveling all over the country speaking and in addition, he was now engaged at a whole new
level with leaders of local churches. However, despite the additional exposure to hundreds of
churches, the testimony he was observing of what truly mattered to a vast majority of the
churches in America was not changing. Every day the author encountered church after church
and pastor after pastor in the middle of the same problems, the same fights, the same arguments,
and the same internal political battles. Every day the author saw within the church the same battles over carpets, stained glass windows, kids running in the halls, vans getting too dirty, a teenager that wore a hat, a deacon that did not wear a suit, pulpits being moved, songs not being sung enough and others being sung too much, organs being played too loud or too soft, drums being played or not being played, guitars being used or not being used, Sunday School verses Small Groups, Lifeway materials verses other publishers, Sunday worship gatherings verses Saturday worship gatherings, deacons running off preachers, preachers passing out resumes to “get a better church,” and worst of all, preachers compromising their God-given vision in order to appease people within their church or denomination in hopes of earning a bigger pay check and/or more recognition from other pastors and leaders. Every day the author had people asking him to weigh in on their debates about hair length, dancing or no dancing, clapping or no clapping, King James or New American Standard, flowers or no flowers, what color flowers, styles of music, styles of preaching, styles of church buildings, and the list goes on for eternity. The author of this thesis project found it completely rare to be exposed to a church that demonstrated the following as their ethos:

The impetus for our mission task is to understand that everything we are - everything that happens to us and everything that we do - is to align us with the kingdom purpose for God to be exalted among the nations.3

It was in the mind-numbing swirl of a constant day in and day out exposure to the same thing that the author became convinced that it was not his youthful ignorance or foolishness that led him to conclude that the church in America had a massive problem. The fights in the churches he was exposed to daily were not rooted in how to align with the Kingdom purposes of the Gospel, but rather in the desire to define and defend the “Christian” culture and religious

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3 Jerry Rankin and Ed Stetzer, Spiritual Warfare and Missions: The Battle For God’s Glory Among the Nations (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2010), 48.
institutionalism preferred by those in these churches. The dilemma was deeper for the author than the fact that churches were in the midst of disagreement and debate, but rather the tension seemed to be over the absolute wrong questions. The roar of the debate in the American church was noticeably absent of any questions dealing with a New Testament ethos.

The wrong question is whether your church is “traditional” or “contemporary” and which is better. The real issue is whether your church is biblically faithful, acting as the presence of Christ in the community at large, able to relate Christ to people in culture, and is on mission. In short, is your church “missional?”

The massive prevalence of the constant debate and destruction within the body over the wrong questions led the author of this thesis project to believe the real issue was the ethos of the church. From the author’s vantage point, the debates, fights and ultimately even the questions themselves were a result of nothing less than a shared fundamental set of values that allowed for such debates, fights and questions to even exist. The ethos of the vast numbers of local churches in America clearly appeared clearly to be drastically Biblically flawed and therefore, visibly obsolete to anyone willing to actually look at it objectively. The following is a shattering observation by Chinese Christians as they looked at the Church in America,

Believers in China, when asked how Christians in the West can pray for them, often discourage them from praying for relief from persecution. They say, “Pray that we will be faithful in suffering, but do not pray for persecution to be removed lest we become weak and lethargic like churches we hear of in the West.”

The Church in the United States, that is outrageously busy in its doing and spending money on things it calls “ministry,” is seemingly weak and lethargic to those believers living in areas of the world where persecution is prevalent and likely! Certainly, the observations of those living under persecution have something worth hearing.

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5 Rankin and Stetzer, *Spiritual Warfare and Missions: The Battle For God’s Glory Among the Nations*, 145.
It was while serving as the director of the Student and Personal Evangelism Department for the Florida Baptist Convention that the author felt he finally understood the vision God had been building within him since reading John 19 on that Saturday morning some five years prior in Rustburg, VA. The author now felt that God was not calling him to lead “The” Church in America to change, but rather to lead “a” church in America to change its ethos to one of actually being the Body of Christ. He felt led to spend the rest of his life leading a church to be the radical movement of Christ that would change the world in the way God had intended! It was that vision that led the author and his wife to a local church called Hardin Baptist Church in Dallas, NC. The author felt that spending his life leading one church to be a true movement of Christ would be the greatest way to impact “The” Church in America. The author could not remove the image of people like Dr. Jerry Falwell who had spent his life pastoring one church and through it reached an untold number of people for Christ and, more importantly, in so doing inspired innumerable churches to do the same. The author believed if God would truly change the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church, then other churches could see the difference, realize the real issue and be encouraged that God could change their church as well. He no longer believed he could have any measurable success in changing any church’s deeply held values by serving them as a consultant. Rather, the author felt God calling him to be used by God to transform the ethos of a local church to be a true movement of Christ for His glory alone and let that church serve as the example and inspiration to other churches.

Some might argue that the problem the author of this thesis project claims to have observed is not near as epidemic or infused into the culture of the local church in America as he is suggesting. However, on November 9, 2010, the author of this thesis project listened to a person present a theme interpretation at the annual meeting of the North Carolina Baptist
Convention in Greensboro, NC. In his presentation, the presenter insisted that the local church in America, the Baptist State Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention are healthy, growing and moving forward in the Kingdom exactly as they should. The problem this thesis project wants to address is demonstrated in this person’s statement, however, not in the way one might think. It is not so much the focus of this thesis project to debate or take issue with the statistical reasons why the presenter was wrong, but rather the thesis project focuses on the value system that could lead a person to interpret the current condition of the church in the United States and its entities to be “healthy.” A person’s ethos is the measuring standard and system by which he or she judges success and failure. The presenter at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s annual meeting was giving an honest and sincere evaluation based on his core identifying values. If what was centrally valuable to this man was institutions, traditions, Christian culture, and fellowship, then it is entirely possible that he had a legitimate reason to believe that all is well with the Church and the institutions he referenced. After all, has there ever been a culture with so many Christian television networks, radio stations, and other media outlets? Has there ever been a culture with so many Christian bookstores, schools, conference centers, and campgrounds? Has there ever been a culture with so many church supported organizations and consultants, so many Christian books and publications, so many seminars, webinars, podcasts and conferences? Based on this alone, if a person’s ethos is one of “Christian” culture and tradition, then the church in the United States is seemingly very healthy. However, if a person’s ethos is one wrapped around the mission, purpose and identity of the church as an organization to turn the world upside down as a radical movement for the Gospel, then there does not seem to be a great deal of evidence to support the person’s claims. The following are quotes from others that demonstrate a very different picture of the condition of the church in the
United States than what the author heard the presenter at the 2010 North Carolina Baptist Convention claim:

For the reporting years 2004 and 2005…about two-thirds of Assemblies of God churches have plateaued or declined…about 80 percent of Nazarene churches are plateaued or declining since 1995… most recently, the Leavell Center at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary did a study revealing that only 11 percent of Southern Baptist churches were experiencing healthy growth. The Leavell Center used the following criteria to define healthy churches: 1. The church experienced 10 percent total membership growth over five years. 2. The church baptized at least one person during the two years of the study.

The massive and sprawling planned communities were created wherever baby boomers wanted to colonize. Understandably, these communities could be characterized by a few emerging and identifiable patterns: homogenous, educated, and white-collar. These suburbs birthed the community church, which is-in itself-a good thing. Starting churches everywhere they are needed is always important. Yet at the same time, we can attribute much of our present dilemma to the role that the community church has played. The portrayal of the church as a fortress became a prevailing value. The church became a refuge from the world rather than a force in the world. Predictability and stability became dominant themes. The cultural environment became comfortable, and the gospel shifted from a church “on mission” to a church that supported missions.

Yet with each culture shift, it is painfully obvious that the church has become an institution rather than a movement.” The distinction lies in the fact that institutions preserve culture, while movements create culture.

Many churches are guilty of the abuse hurled at it by today’s youth.

One thing I noticed was that Baptists don’t fuss much over the hard sayings of Jesus—we just ignore them. We just consign to a drawer His admonitions about loving enemies, harboring strangers, respecting laws and authority and holding very loosely to our money. Jesus tells us how to “be” the church. Our conflicts come over how to “do” church—women in ministry, alcohol, ordination, deacons or elders, music and worship style, private prayer language, qualifications to hold certain offices and who pronounces “Shibboleth” correctly (Judges 12:4-6).

6 Stetzer and Dodson, Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too, 25.
8 Ibid., 34.
9 Elmer Towns, Theology for Today (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 1994), 449.
Because it is easier and we convince ourselves we’re actually being productive, we immerse ourselves in “church work” and call it the “work of the church.”

The quotes above are just a sampling of writers speaking to the condition of the church in America. All the research done by the author, as well as the author’s personal experiences with hundreds of churches across the United States, have led him to believe the presenter at the 2010 North Carolina Baptist Convention was either grossly misinformed or his ethos led him to interpret the facts of the church in America as something great, rather than something that, at best, is deeply disturbing. Furthermore, herein lies the problem that this thesis project will attempt to resolve.

The author will address the flawed ethos in the church and offer the essential leadership elements needed to lead a transformation of it to one centered in the Gospel. Specifically, this is a study of the key leadership elements that the author addressed and is addressing in leading Hardin Baptist Church to be what is now called Venture. This transformation has not been about leading a church to change its name or methodology, but rather an initial five-year process of leading the transformation of the church’s ethos and now an ongoing process of infusing that ethos deeper and deeper within the body and its day-to-day actions. Therefore, this thesis project is a study of the key leadership elements involved in transforming the ethos of a local church.

This change in Hardin (now Venture) has been noticed by others, including Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson who used Venture (at the time called Hardin Baptist Church) as one of the case studies that resulted in the book Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too. In 2010, the lead pastor of Venture (the author of this thesis project) was

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11 See “Official Acknowledgement of Contribution To Comeback Churches” in the Appendix.
asked by the Innovative Church Community (ICC) to host a seminar with other leaders from Venture to help churches understand the key leadership elements that were present in the change of the ethos of the church. The author receives calls on a regular basis from pastors looking to learn from what happened in the transformation of Hardin to Venture. This thesis project will hopefully be useful in seminars, pastoral training classes, and for the personal reading of pastors and other church leaders to demonstrate the theological framework, scholarly support and experiential evidence from Venture and other churches to validate the leadership elements that are essential for transforming the ethos of a local church.

Limitations

This thesis project is not an attempt to produce a guide to change a church’s methods, but rather to change the heartbeat, passion, vision, and ultimately, the actual identity of the church. Certainly, the methods of a local church make up its identity, but it is the author’s intention to move to a broader subject that will then dictate the formation and application of methods. The author’s intention in this thesis project is to dive into the elements needed to take a local church down a path of true transformation, not simply a change of the presentation of the local church to themselves and the community. Specifically, this thesis project will present the transformation of ethos within the context of leadership.

George Barna helps clarify the limitation of this theses in his statement that,

After fifteen years of diligent digging into the world around me, I have reached several conclusions about the future of the Christian church in America. The central conclusion is that the American church is dying due to a lack of strong spiritual leadership. In this time of unprecedented opportunity and plentiful

\[12\] This event had to be canceled due to scheduling conflicts and has not yet been rescheduled due to ongoing scheduling conflicts. The offer was made to the author by Ray Hardee who is the Lead Pastor of Forrest Point Church in Belmont, NC.
resources, the church is actually losing influence. The primary reason is the lack of leadership. Nothing is more important than leadership.  

Ed Stetzer points to an underlying issue in the American Church, something that seems to be driving everything else but something hidden to the current attention of churches and church leaders. Unless the church addresses the underlying cause, then it will continue to be diseased. Stetzer writes,

Turnaround leaders distinguish between obvious symptoms and underlying problems. The first step is helping the congregation admit there is a problem, and find the underlying (foundational) causes.

The spiritual aspects of the teaching of the Word, prayer, fasting and the overall supernatural movement of the Holy Spirit needed for any substantial change to occur in the Church are far more important ingredients than human leadership and are also the more obvious; however, these elements are so undeniably obvious to anyone with even an elementary knowledge of the Word of God that the author does not feel it necessary to spend time in this thesis project discussing these subjects at great length. Yet, leadership is the avenue by which everything happens in an organization. Therefore, leadership is what guides a church to value the teachings of the Word, prayer and fasting or to bury them. Leadership is the gatekeeper and catalyst for everything in an organization. For example, Rankin highlights the urgent necessity of change within a leadership element that would be deemed as communication,

You may think this is semantics, but the body of Christ needs to hear a different descriptor than ‘mission volunteer’… Volunteers do something that is not required…Paul would have never considered himself a volunteer. His burden for men, women, and children drove him far beyond volunteering for Christ. Missions were not a voluntary act for Paul. It was compulsory. He described his

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14 “Back from the Brink,” Leadership Journal (Fall 2005), 25; Quoted in Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too, 35.
commitment this way: ‘I am obligated both to Greeks and barbarians, both to the wise and the foolish. So I am eager to preach the good news to you also who are in Rome’ (Rom. 1:14-15). The language of volunteerism would be unfamiliar with the deeply burdened missionary apostle. Paul felt obligated to do something about the lostness around him. He owed them an opportunity to hear the good news of Jesus.\(^{15}\)

The above quote is a classic example of a theological issue of the ethos of the Church that comes down to how leaders lead the Church. Will leaders create an ethos of “volunteerism” or an ethos of radical obligation to change the world for Christ?

For the Gospel to take precedence in the Body, some suggest that all a church needs to do is pray. Again, not negating the power of prayer, but one must still be honest about the limitations of prayer in the Bible. For instance, the Pharisees were widely known for prayer and fasting and simultaneously also widely known for a total lack of the supernatural power of God. While praying and fasting to God they led the crucifixion of His only Son and did so believing they were doing the right thing! As a pastor, the author has had counseling sessions with those who justified divorcing their spouse because they argue too much, to not allowing certain types of people in their ministry in the church because of their economic background, hobbies or ethnicity, all while claiming peace in their decision after praying about it! Therefore, without reducing any of the significance of prayer and fasting, the author of this thesis project wants to focus on the leadership elements that must come in to play to transform the ethos of a local church.

Furthermore, this thesis project will not attempt to offer a method or formula for churches to change their ethos nor will it suggest that changing specific methods will necessarily change the core values of a church. As Barna wrote,

\(^{15}\) Rankin and Stetzer, *Spiritual Warfare and Missions: The Battle For God’s Glory Among the Nations*, 151-152.
The railroads lost their financial footing and market share because they believed they were in the railroad business. That perception prevented them from responding strategically to the culture and technological changes of the day. In reality, they were in the transportation business. Similarly, many churches have lost people and missed opportunities because they have misunderstood the business they are in. Ours is not the business of organized religion, corporate worship, or Bible teaching. If we dedicate ourselves to such a business we will be left by the wayside as the culture moves forward. Those are fragments of a larger purpose to which we have been called by God. We are in the business of life transformation.\footnote{George Barna, \textit{The Second Coming of the Church: A Blueprint For Survival} (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1998), 96.}

Barna is talking about the ethos of the Church! What needs to be focused on is not “how” or “what” we do, but more importantly “who” we are, and “who” we are “is” our ethos. It is why “who” we are will always drive “how” and “what” we do. If the ethos of a local church changes (the who) then the “how” and “what” will organically follow. In addition, even though this thesis project will certainly site specific methods and programs, it will in no way assert a list of methods that will create a formula to change the ethos of a church. Instead, this thesis project is going to focus on the fundamental leadership elements that are essential for pastors and leaders of local churches to understand and incorporate in order to lead the change of the ethos of the church where they serve.

\textbf{Theoretical Basis}

It is utterly vital that the Word of God be central in the formation of the theoretical basis of this thesis project. Furthermore, to propose the leadership elements that are fundamental in transforming the ethos of the local church, one must begin with the theoretical basis of what the ethos should be. The following, therefore, is intended to establish a Biblical foundation for the purpose of this thesis project.
Matthew’s Gospel presents the quintessential passage on what the Church is called to “do” and thus “be.” Until Christ returns for His church, the Church is to have at all times a laser focus on leading every people group in the world to be mature followers of Christ. Matthew records Jesus as saying,

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Matthew 28:19-20

A.T. Robertson comments on this passage by writing:

But here is the world program of the Risen Christ and it should not be forgotten by those who seek to foreshorten it all by saying that Jesus expected his second coming to be very soon, even within the lifetime of those who heard. He did promise to come, but he has never named the date. Meanwhile we are to be ready for his coming at any time and to look for it joyfully. But we are to leave that to the Father and push on the campaign for world conquest. This program includes making disciples or learners (μαθητευσατε [mathêteusate]) such as they were themselves. That means evangelism in the fullest sense and not merely revival meetings.17

The goal of the church is not how many people it can cause to sit in a worship gathering, give to the churches building program or convince to be baptized, but rather the goal of the church is to lead people of every tribe and tongue to be true followers of Christ. In the very beginning of his book on missions, John Piper states,

Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions. It’s the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white-hot enjoyment of God’s glory. The goal of missions is the gladness of the people in the greatness of God. ‘The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!’ (Psalm 97:1). ‘Let the peoples praise thee, O God; let all the peoples praise thee! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy!’ (Psalm 67:3-4).18


The Apostle Paul wrote many things to inspire believers towards a central vision and purpose for their lives and church. Note the following,

15 that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world. Philippians 2:15

Paul challenges them to understand who they are, and who they are is oriented in an action. He is letting them see God’s expectation of their identifying mark as light; by its very nature of existence, light has a function and purpose. The Great Commission is such a central part of the life of every believer and church that it literally becomes a part of the identity of the believer. Believers are “light,” they are “ambassadors,” they are a “royal Priesthood,” etc.

Matthew recorded Christ as saying,

13 You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. 14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5:13-16

Commenting on this passage, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown wrote an incredibly insightful and eloquent commentary,

Ye are the light of the world … it must be applied here by our Lord to His disciples only as they shine with His light upon the world, in virtue of His Spirit dwelling in them, and the same mind being in them which was also in Christ Jesus. Nor are Christians anywhere else so called. Nay, as if to avoid the august title which the Master has appropriated to Himself, Christians are said to “shine”—not as “lights,” as our translators render it, but—“as luminaries in the world” (Philp 2:15); and the Baptist is said to have been “the burning and shining”—not “light,” as in our translation, but “lamp” of his day (Jn 5:35). Let it be observed, too, that while the two figures of salt and sunlight both express the same function of Christians—their blessed influence on their fellow men—they each set this forth under a different aspect. Salt operates internally, in the mass with which it comes in contact; the sunlight operates externally, irradiating all that it reaches. Hence Christians are warily styled “the salt of the earth”—with reference to the masses of mankind with whom they are expected to mix; but “the light of the world”—
with reference to the vast and variegated surface which feels its fructifying and gladdening radiance.\textsuperscript{19}

While living in the middle of a lost world, followers of Christ are supposed to be naturally known as those who by their very existence and identity change the identity of those around them. Followers of Christ are to be by their very nature something very different, and in this difference be something that is naturally inspiring - just as a city set on a hill. Being salt and light is the natural ethos of His people! Note the following,

\begin{quote}
20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:20

9 For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building. 1 Corinthians 3:9
\end{quote}

Derek Prime expands on the expectation of 1 Corinthians 3:9 by demonstrating the marriage between our calling as followers of Christ and our identity as followers of Christ:

‘Field’ means cultivated land, that is to say, that from which God expects a harvest.\textsuperscript{20}

In setting Peter apart as a key leader in His plan, Jesus also identifies yet another common trait that should be seen in the Church. It is a unique attitude about the purpose and calling of the Great Commission. Matthew records Jesus’ words to Peter as,

\begin{quote}
18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18
\end{quote}

R. J. D. Utley notes the following concerning this passage:

This word had an active connotation of “to assault, to gain control.” Death and evil have not overcome nor even comprehended the Church of the Living God.”\textsuperscript{21}


There are a handful of profound truths in this one verse, but the one that is most important for the context of this project is the attitude Jesus was trying to transfer to Peter. He tells Peter that Hell’s best defense cannot withstand the onslaught He is going to place on death. Peter and His church are going to be a part of this onslaught and in this, Jesus is attempting to transfer His attitude to Peter that this purpose of making disciples of all people needs to be a “no holds bared,” “wide open,” “full court press.” The Church of Christ needs to have in its core passion that the mission to make disciples of all people groups has no alternative plan, no option of implementation or priority, and no chance of failure. Not even death itself can thwart the plans of God! Jesus’ statement to Peter is the equivalent of a general stirring his soldiers to understand they are being sent into battle with one purpose and one expected and guaranteed outcome – victory! Consequently this is supposed to be the fundamental attitude of the Church. The Church should be a group of warriors so motivated and inspired that they start talking about running right over top of the gates of Hell if that’s what it takes to make disciples of all people. Consequently, making disciples of all people literally runs right over the gates of Hell.

In addition to the motivational speeches, Jesus taught something even more important. In Acts, the author records some of the last words of Jesus before ascending to Heaven.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

Again, Jesus is attempting to transfer a core attitude that needed to be shared by His followers. He is informing believers that they will have all they need to get the job done. Jesus demonstrates that believers will have a God sized power within them, called the Holy Spirit, to accomplish His purpose. But here in also lies a testimony to the ethos Jesus expects to be in His church. He did not tell them the Holy Spirit was coming to empower them to be a Christian
subculture but rather a powerful movement that brings the Gospel to the ends of the earth! Every believer can march forward with extreme confidence and priority in the mission of God, because Jesus has personally guaranteed them the very thing they need to achieve the task and fulfill His purpose. Believers possess the greatest weapon the universe has ever seen – God living in them!

Later, Peter writes to a group of believers and ties all this together. He attempts to transfer to them what is supposed to be the shared fundamental trait of their identity, power, ability and calling. He writes,

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 1 Peter 2:9

Peter instructs them that they are the most equipped army in the world and that they are equipped with such a powerful identity and ability for one reason, to “proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light!”

The following are four passages that demonstrate these shared fundamental traits in the life of the early church. In these passages, it is evident to see the heartbeat of followers of Christ who at the core of their being felt the absolute need to attack darkness with every ounce of their life. As believers, we clearly see the results of a people who long for the world to know Him!

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47

1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2 And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer
and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.” Acts 17:1-7

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. Ephesians 4:11-16

12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:12-17

The Scriptures seem to set forth an identity of the Church that looks very simplistic, very radical and very focused. Based on the above passages, one could suggest a summary of a biblical ethos would simply be contained in the following three descriptions:

1. An absolute, passionate, sacrificial and urgent surrender to nothing other than Christ.
2. An absolute, passionate, sacrificial and urgent commitment to be radically involved in building each other up in the faith.
3. An absolute, passionate, sacrificial and urgent commitment to be radically engaged with the lost world in a way that destroys darkness by leading people of every tribe and tongue to be genuine disciples of Christ.

**Methodology**

**Platforms for Development**

This thesis project is going to be developed via three main platforms and elements from each of these platforms will be embedded in the applicable chapters.

**A Case Study**

A case study will be performed to discuss the leadership elements that appeared to be essential for the continual transition of the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church/Venture since October 2002. Special detail will be given to the most significant changes that occurred between October 2002 and December 2007. The thesis project will provide a critical study of the transition that took place during the five-year span and the leadership elements that drove and/or hindered it.

**Scholarship**

A study of published scholarship on the subject will be incorporated. References will not be limited to “Christian” literature, but rather a variety of scholarship that will address specific parts of each of the leadership elements within the thesis project.

**Comparative Church Analysis**

Five churches will be recruited to serve as additional case studies to provide alternative examples and critical comparisons to the elements presented in this thesis project. Special
attention will be given to any findings that appear to stand in contradiction with elements presented in this thesis project.

Chapters Forming the Body of the Thesis Project

The three platforms above are going to lead to the production of the body of the thesis project. It is anticipated that the body of the thesis project will produce “THE ESSENTIAL LEADERSHIP ELEMENTS FOR TRANSFORMING THE ETHOS OF A LOCAL CHURCH.” There will be three chapters in the body of the thesis project followed by a conclusion.

Chapter 1 - Reality

Intermittently, the author receives calls from pastors looking to lead their church through the same type of transition that the author has witnessed at Venture (formerly Hardin Baptist Church). In these conversations, the author has noticed the trend that many pastors do not seem to have a realistic understanding of change especially at the level of transformation. Even among those who seem to have a clear vision of the core values they want to see alive in their church, the author has found they very rarely have a grasp of the reality of what it is going to take to see the transformation occur. In the Gospels, Jesus spoke of the wisdom of understanding the cost of something before a person sets off on a journey; therefore, in this chapter, the four unavoidable realities of leading the transformation of the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church will be discussed. It will be argued that these realities are universal to the fundamental transformation of any organization and if not fully understood will lead to a false understanding of the process and the resulting failure and/or burnout of the leader and the ultimate failure to transform. The following are the four realities that will be presented; each will be supported by the experience of the
author in the transformation of Hardin Baptist Church as well as outside sources:

1. Successfully leading the transformation of a local church’s ethos requires the lead pastor to personally sacrifice and suffer.
2. Successfully leading the transformation of a local church’s ethos is dependent on the level of leadership of the lead pastor.
3. Successfully leading the transformation of a local church’s ethos requires that the lead pastor never compromise the core fundamental values that define the new ethos.
4. Successfully leading the transformation of a local church’s ethos requires a core group of leaders who are totally committed to the transformation.

Chapter 2 – Catalyst

By definition, a catalyst is something one adds to a chemical equation that accelerates the reaction but does not interfere with the end result of the reaction nor does it lose its own identity in the process. For instance, if one is attempting to produce substance “C” by combining substance “A” with substance “B”, but they want the reaction to take place much quicker than the natural process will allow, then they need to add a catalyst to the process that will accelerate the transformation of substance “A” and “B” into substance “C” without diluting the purity of what “C” is intended to be. With certain reactions a catalyst is required to overcome the entropy that leaves the process void of the necessary energy to convert substance “A” and “B” into substance “C.” In these instances, substance “A” and substance “B” will simply run out of energy to complete the process of becoming substance “C” or not have enough to even begin the process in the first place. The end result in these instances is that one ends up with a new
substance that is unintended and different from the intended substance “C” or still just substance “A” and “B”.

With this in mind, Chapter 2 of this thesis project will present as examples the catalysts that produced the momentum that energized the church through the transformation process of its ethos. These are the items that reduced entropy and increased energy without causing the church to lose sight of the vision and end up with a different ethos than the one that was intended. They are the items that without their introduction the church would have never had enough energy to complete the transformation process and therefore would have resulted in either no change at all or something that was unintended. Information from outside sources will be incorporated to both bring credibility to the observations as well as further insight.

**Chapter 3 - System**

In this final chapter, two leadership systems will be discussed that were fundamental to the success of the transformation of the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church into what is now Venture. Not only will the thesis project examine these systems and the role they played in the transformation of Hardin Baptist Church, but it will also present information from external sources to both validate the observations as well bring depth to the readers’ understanding and value of them. The following are the two systems that will be discussed:

1. Governance - A biblical local church leadership structure that enables God-ordained leaders to lead the church.

2. Execution – A management system for execution called OGAP that will be presented.
Conclusion

The conclusion of this thesis project is going to lead to the ultimate conclusion of any study on leadership: there is no single absolute formula for success but rather guiding principles that, if applied correctly, can provide a template for success. Therefore, a list of questions will be given to the reader to use as a guide to evaluate their situation in the context of the essential leadership elements presented in this thesis project. The purpose of the conclusion and the questions in it is to provide a guiding framework that encourages the reader to seek the will of God for him/herself and do so with a realistic and practical understanding of what they need to discover from Him in order to lead the transformation of the ethos of their local church.
Review of Literature

The following is a review of twenty references that will be used in key ways to develop the scholastic support of this case study.

1. *An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind*, Erwin McManus - McManus focuses heavily on changing the Ethos of the local church. He argues why it must change and what it should look like when it does. He uses Biblical and philosophical reasoning to address the subject as well as practical examples from the church he pastors and ones he has been exposed to through his ministry. The text is essentially about the battle for the heart of the church to be a movement of Christ instead of a stagnant club for Christians to hide from culture. This book is primarily used in the introduction to establish the foundation of this thesis project as well as the role of momentum as a catalyst for change.

2. *Good To Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don’t*, Jim Collins - The entire premise of *Good To Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don’t* is change. The change he and his team focus on is specifically centered around businesses that were able to climb out of a long period of plateau into a long period of high leveled sustained growth. Collins pinpoints key leadership elements that are essential to the transformation of a good organization into a great organization. This book is primarily used to support the realities of core values and leaders.

3. *Reinventing Leadership: Strategies to Empower the Organization*, Warren G. Bennis and Robert Townsend - This book is a recording of the conversation between the two authors with additional notes by Warren Bennis. The basic concept of the book is that most organizations are stuck in an old model of leadership they call COP (control, order and predict). They predict the death of any organization that refuses to move to the new
paradigm of leadership they call ACE (acknowledge, create, and empower.) The quintessential chapter of the book is chapter 7, which is entitled “Leading the Transition”; however, information from this book will be used throughout the entire thesis project.

4. Confessions of a Reformation Rev: Hard Lessons From an Emerging Missional Church, Mark Driscoll - Driscoll writes a testimonial of transitional leadership. This, in essence, is the power of the book. It is not a “leadership” book, but a book about a leader and everything he has learned through each transformation of the church he planted. It is a great tool to demonstrate to a pastor what he must be willing to endure if he plans on changing the ethos of the local church he is called to lead, therefore, this book will primarily be used to demonstrate the reality of the sacrifice and suffering needed to lead God’s people.

5. Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership, Alexander Strauch - It is the premise of this thesis project that an essential leadership element to transform the ethos of a local church is establishing a leadership structure that can actually implement change. Strauch presents an extensive study of the structure of the local church in the New Testament and in it the structure the Bible has naturally created to lead God’s people to follow Him. This book will be primarily used to demonstrate a structure that enables change.

6. Leading Change, John Kotter – This is a very practical overview of the process of leading change in an organization and has elements that apply to many sections of the thesis project. This book will be used throughout the thesis project to support many of the leadership elements involved in transforming the ethos of a local church.

7. Sticky Teams: Keeping Your Leadership Team and Staff on the Same Page, Larry Osborne – This book is full of practical advice from a local pastor who has led his church through many
transitions as it has grown from a small dying church to a mega church. The advice focuses heavily on the Core Team of the church, and it will be certainly used in that context for this thesis project; however, the book is also able to provide support for numerous other elements involved in transforming the ethos of a local church.

8. *Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done*, Larry Bossidy & Ram Charan – Transforming the ethos of a local church comes down to the execution of Biblically based leadership. Bossidy and Charan do not write about Biblical principles, but they clearly present the fundamental elements of leading execution that are universal truths. Without proper execution no plan to change the ethos of a church will exceed, therefore, this book will provide excellent support to ideas that are essential for leading a church.

9. *Strategic Organizational Change: A Practitioner’s Guide For Managers and Consultants*, Michael Beitler – This book targets change consultants; however, in teaching consultants how to walk an organization through a significant process of change, Beitler is able to present universal truths of leadership and management that are essential for leading the transformation of a local church ethos. Beitler’s book will used to support of variety of the elements in this project.

10. *Developing the Leader With You*, John Maxwell – An essential leadership element in changing a local church is the leadership level of the Lead Pastor. This book will used in other areas of the project but will be specifically used to discuss how the Lead Pastor must grow as a leader in order to lead his church through substantial change.

11. *The Equipping Church: Serving Together to Transform Lives*, Sue Mallory – This book is all about creating a process that multiplies leaders in the Body. It assumes a transformation must be made in most churches to get to this point but ironically getting to this point is what
ultimately and truly transforms a church. This book will primarily be used to support a variety of elements in the thesis project.

12. *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too*, Ed Stetzer & Mike Dobson – Hardin Baptist Church (now Venture) was one of the 300 churches studied for this book. It presents the common traits the authors found in the 300 churches that were able to change and, as a result, begin to grow and reach people for Christ. This book is primarily used in the introduction to help establish the foundation of this project.

13. *Spiritual Warfare and Missions*, Jerry Rankin & Ed Stetzer – The authors build a case for leading a church to truly be missional and, in so doing, address the battles and strongholds that will resist it. This thesis project is all about transforming the ethos of a local church from a community organization for Christians to a movement for Christ. Rankin and Stetzer address the battle for the heart of the church from beginning to end. This book is primarily used in the introduction to help establish the foundation of this project.

14. *Management Rewired*, Charles Jacobs – Jacobs’s writes a book on management based of what has been learned through neuroscience. He challenges much of the conventional thinking on management and provides significant thought towards determining and measuring success so that change can be achieved.

15. *The Prevailing Church: An Alternative Approach to Ministry*, Randy Pope – Pope writes from his experience as the Senior Pastor of Perimeter Church. He gives an overview of all they do to continue growing and changing as a church. This book will contribute in a variety of ways but especially on the measurement and analysis of goals.

16. *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap*, Thom Rainer – Rainer takes the same approach in studying how churches move from stagnation to rapid sustained growth as Jim
Collins takes in *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don’t* in studying for-profit corporations. As a result, Rainer and his team have identified essential leadership elements to transforming the ethos of a local church; therefore this text will be used to contribute in varying ways throughout the thesis project.

17. *Bad Leadership: What it is, How it Happens, Why it Matters*, Barbara Kellerman – Kellerman’s book presents ten detrimental leadership traits and uses as case studies well known leaders and corporations that exemplified these traits. One particular trait (insular leadership) will be highlighted in this thesis project that if not addressed will undermine any successful attempt at leading the transformation of a local church.

18. *The Heart of Change Field Guide: Tools and Tactics for Leading Change in Your Organization*, Dan Cohen – Cohen provides a guide of tools and tactics for leading change in an organization. Because this book covers a variety of subjects involved in leading change, it will be cited throughout the thesis project.

19. *Making Sense of Change Management: A Complete Guide to the Models, Tools & Techniques of Organizational Change*, Ether Cameron and Mike Green. This is a textbook approach to demonstrating the models, tools and techniques of leading organizational change. This book’s main contribution will come in the area of emotional intelligence.

20. *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, Robert Coleman – Coleman offers this book as a study of how Jesus led his disciples. Within the text, he presents essential leadership elements for transforming the ethos of his disciples to men who were sold out to the mission of bringing the Gospel to the ends of the earth. This project will primarily use this book to support the idea of building a core team of leaders who are completely sold out on the vision to transform the ethos of the local church.
The following are the twenty Biblical passages that are fundamental to the development of this thesis project. With each passage is a short statement of its purpose to the thesis project.

1. Matthew 4:18-19. 18 While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. 19 And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." - Jesus clearly taught that if His disciples followed Him, He would mold them into men whose ethos was leading people to be followers of Christ. This passage addresses the identity of believers and the church as having a purpose to engage a lost world with the Gospel.

2. Matthew 5:13-16. 13 You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. 14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. - This passage again deals with the identity of the individual believer as well as the church. Both are purposed to proclaim the Glory of God to a lost world and in so doing provide a clear reference point for the world to find Christ.

3. Matthew 9:9-13. 9 As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him. 10 And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 12 But when he heard
it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." - Jesus clearly communicated an ethos that was opposite of religious popularity and prominence. The ethos he infused into His disciples was to be one living organically infused into a lost world not the formation and growth of a religious subculture.

4. Matthew 9:35-38. 35 And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; 38 therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." - This passage illustrates the priority of an evangelistic ethos for God’s people. The issue was not the availability of those ready to repent and believe in the Gospel, but rather the availability of those who would bring the Gospel to those who would repent and believe.

5. Matthew 10:16-22, 34-36. 16 "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. 17 Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, 18 and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. 19 When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. 20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. 21 Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, 22 and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. … 34 "Do
not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36 And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. - Those who live with a Kingdom ethos will be persecuted. Those who initially persecuted the followers of Christ were not pagans but were the family members and countrymen of the early believers and were, ironically, also those who called Yahweh their God.

6. Matthew 16:18. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. – The church is a movement to set people free and not a community organization for Christians. This is the fundamental identity of the church.

7. Matthew 28:19-20. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. - Some call this the Great Commission, but the author of this thesis project simply calls it “the” commission. It is “the” mission of the church. No other mission statement appears in the Bible.

8. Mark 8:31-33. 31 And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

- Religion wants a Kingdom built in the context of this world, whereas Jesus came to
establish a very different Kingdom. This passage demonstrates the natural tendency of man to skew the person and cause of Christ into something that has its value not in eternal things but rather the temporal. Peter and the disciples thought Jesus was there to make Israel great; instead, Jesus was there to redeem man and establish a very different Kingdom.

9. Luke 5:29-32. 29 And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. 30 And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” 31 And Jesus answered them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” - Jesus very clearly taught that his focus was not on entertaining the preferences of “God followers,” but instead redeeming those who were not. This passage illustrates the contrast of a church with a movement ethos as opposed to a religious club ethos.

10. Luke 14:16-23. 16 But he said to him, “A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. 17 And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ 18 But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.’ 19 And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.’ 20 And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ 21 So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ 22 And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ 23 And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be
filled. – Jesus’ parable illustrates both the open door to the gentiles and also the ethos of His servants. Those who follow Him are going to have a purpose of bringing the lost world to worship Him.

11. John 17:16-19. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. - Followers of Jesus are to have a value system, purpose and identity that is foreign to this world. They are set apart by God and sent by Him into a lost world. Followers of Christ are not to hide from a lost world to protect themselves from it but are rather equipped by the Word of God to be infused into a lost world to bring the redemption of Christ to it.

12. Acts 1:8. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. – Believers are empowered to engage a lost world. They need not hide from a lost world because they have been equipped by the Holy Spirit to redeem it.

13. Acts 2:42-47. 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. – When a church is truly functioning as a community of believers, they are not repulsive to a lost world but
instead they are attractional. There is a huge different between living in spiritual community and being a community organization for Christians.

14. Acts 17:1-7 - 1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2 And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." 4 And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. 5 But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. 6 And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, 7 and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus. – Those who live out the mission of the Gospel will radically change the world; however, religious people will be the most offended. Those whose ethos is the Kingdom of God should not be surprised when those proclaiming to be followers of God persecute them.

15. 1 Corinthians 3:9. 9 For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building. – The identity of a follower of Christ is to labor with Christ. His followers are His Church, His body and His arm into a lost world to bring His salvation to all who will repent and believe in the Gospel.

16. 2 Corinthians 5:20. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. – The ethos of
followers of Christ is to live on mission to bring the Gospel to a lost world. In addition, followers of Christ live with a value system and identity that is not rooted in this world. Followers of Jesus are aliens to this world and everything valued in it.

17. Ephesians 4:11-16. 11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. – There is a defined strategy in the Bible to grow up believers so that they can continually live out the mission of Christ. This passage outlines key elements to God’s design of the Church.

18. Philippians 2:15. 15 that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world. – To be light in darkness is to be something very different than the darkness. This passage does not create religious identity markers but rather a supernatural identity that can only be formed in mankind by God Himself.

19. Colossians 3:12-17. 12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in
perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. – This passage develops keys to be a healthy church. It begins with followers of Christ understanding they are chosen by God and therefore belong to Him and His values.

20. 1 Peter 2:9. 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellences of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. – The very purpose of God’s people is to proclaim the excellences of God; that is The Gospel! The identity of believers is not to cause them to formulate religious clubs, subcultures and hierarchies, but instead, as those who are eternally different than the world, they are to engage a lost world and lead it to worship Christ.
CHAPTER ONE

REALITY

Chapter one addresses the realities involved in leading the transformation of the ethos of a local church. Basic wisdom implies that those who commit themselves to something should first understand the cost or reality involved with it. Jesus said,

28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace (Luke 14:28-32)

Sun Tzu is quoted as saying,

One who knows the enemy and knows himself will not be endangered in a hundred engagements. One who does not know the enemy but knows himself will sometimes be victorious, sometimes meet with defeat. One who knows neither the enemy nor himself will invariably be defeated in every engagement.¹

Therefore, chapter one of this thesis project is a discussion of the unavoidable realities the author discovered while leading the transformation of Hardin Baptist Church into what is now Venture. A person getting ready to lead a transformation needs to truly understand these realities or risk failing if for no other reason than simple ignorance. Specifically, this chapter will explore the four unavoidable realities the author observed while leading the transformation of the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church. They are as follows:

1. Sacrifice and suffering are unavoidable.
2. The level of leadership of the Lead Pastor is paramount.
3. Core values can never be compromised.

4. A core group of leaders who are completely committed to the vision of transformation must surround the Lead Pastor.

Sacrifice and Suffering Are Unavoidable

The first unavoidable reality the author observed while leading the transformation of the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church was the reality that sacrifice and suffering are unavoidable. If change were easy, there would not be shelves at bookstores filled with books on how to lead change. Understanding the daunting reality of leading change creates a nightmare when one is reminded that change is merely an alteration, yet it is guaranteed to cause pain and agony throughout the entire process. Cohen writes,

Equally important, you’ll know that communication efforts are having impact when more resistance to the change emerges:

- The vision (or its communicators) may be contested, argued, or criticized.
- Numerous guiding teams and leaders of the organization get pushback from various parts of the organization about the validity of the vision or the feasibility of the strategy.
- Complaints surface that the vision is too much of a departure from the “way we do things.”

Cohen is suggesting that the reality of resistance, criticism and outright attack on a change initiative is so much the reality of leading change that if one is not experiencing this type of aggressive resistance they should back up and make sure that the change is being properly communicated! The nightmare that this presents is that the context of Cohen’s statement is leading change; however, the context of this thesis project is leading the transformation of the culture and values of local church that fundamentally define it. If this is the expected response to

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good communication in a change effort, then what response should be expected in a transformation effort?

In the book, *Better Together: Making Church Mergers Work*, the authors try to help the reader understand that a church merger is not a change but a transition, which in reality is another word for a transformation. When two churches become one they both become a new entity – they are transformed. In this context, the authors of the book claim one of the top landmines for the failure of two churches merging together is “underestimating the pain involved in the transition.”

To begin, Jesus Christ came to inaugurate His Kingdom. Everything about Christ and everything about His Kingdom was revolutionary to everything the Jews were expecting the Messiah to be and do. Jesus came to transform humanity and launch a Kingdom whose ethos is totally different than any Kingdom concept that was or is present in the world – including that of the pious religious leaders of Israel and the closest followers of Jesus. Commenting on Mark 14:46-49, Timothy Keller writes,

> To Peter and to all of us, Jesus is saying, “My Kingdom is not of this world. It’s completely different. This is how I’m going to change things: I’m going to put others ahead of myself. I’m going to love my enemies. I’m going to serve and sacrifice for others. I’m not going to repay evil with evil; I’m going to overcome evil with good. I will give up my power, my life. Weakness, poverty, suffering, and rejection will now be at the top of the list. My revolution comes without the sword; it is the first true revolution.”

In John 4, we find an example of this transformative teaching of Jesus. He declares something that was truly not just a change or alteration but very much a transformation. John records,

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19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." John 4:19-24

So what was the result of the leadership of Jesus to transform the world? In short, He was betrayed by one of His closest followers, and those who had Him arrested broke all their laws to make sure they got the conviction and punishment they wanted, had Him beaten, brutally scourged and hung Him naked on a cross until He died. Because Jesus was leading a transformation of the world they held so dear, they wanted nothing but to destroy Him for it!

But it goes deeper. Jesus not only stated that He was going to be despised and rejected but that those who went out preaching His Good News and calling people to repent and believe would be hated and persecuted as well! Note,

16 "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. 17 Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, 18 and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. 19 When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. 20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. 21 Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, 22 and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. Matthew 10:16-22

It is important to remember that those who killed Jesus called themselves followers of God and in so doing upheld all the laws and traditions of the Old Testament. Saul (later Paul) killed Christians and did so with the belief that he was glorifying God. Once Saul became a follower of Christ and changed his name to Paul, people were constantly persecuting and seeking to kill him. Paul certainly had many pagans seeking to destroy him (for example in Ephesus),
however, it cannot be overlooked that some of the most violent, determined persecution of the New Testament saints came from Jews who considered themselves followers of God. The point being this, it is unfortunately Biblically normal and expected that the strongest, most violent resistance to those calling people to follow Christ will come from those who proclaim to follow God!

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! (Matthew 23:37)

Therefore, it came as no surprise to the author of this thesis project that there was an all-out war against him and everyone else involved in attempting to transform Hardin from a community organization for Christians into a movement to change the world. It all began literally one week after the author of this thesis project arrived as the new pastor of the church. Over the previous four months, he had spelled out in detail the principles and the processes; he was going to take the church through to transform them into the church God had given him a vision of. After over-stating things to the search committee and intentionally trying to scare them off with his vision, the search committee still felt God had called the author and his wife to Hardin.

The night before the church voted on him there was a town hall meeting to go over this vision, the principles behind it and the process he would lead the church through if they elected him. He told them the church would be focused on reaching the lost, and that the “lost” were so overwhelming those in Generation X, that they needed to transform everything about the church to prioritize communicating with and reaching Gen X and the children of Gen X (Gen Y). He told them they would totally change their music, eventually do away with Sunday night worship and replace it with Home Groups, and they would even need to change their entire system and
structure of governing the church from a deacon-led approach to an elder-led approach where he was the Lead Elder. He told them this would be a constant step-by-step process that would take up to five years. He told them, however, that out of the gate he saw his job as the Lead Pastor, not visiting the hospital but preaching, teaching, leading and equipping the body to mature in Christ, to love one another and to live with extreme intentionality to lead those who do not know Christ to become followers of Christ and repeat the process. The author made it clear that he could not be separated from his vision for the local church, therefore, if the church elected him, they needed to understand he was going to come and lead them in the exact vision he was communicating to them. A vote for him was inseparably a vote for his vision. The author did not want to be confused. He made it clear that he and his wife felt called to a church that wanted to be transformed into the kind of church he had described to them that night and had described to the committee through the interview process. He wanted the committee and the church to know that if they offered him the position then he was assuming it was because they were hunting a pastor to directly and without hesitation lead them to be the kind of church he was describing.

It is an understatement to write that there was not universal excitement in the room the night of the town hall meeting. Surprisingly, the main issue was not the conversations about elders, home groups and music but that he did not see the Lead Pastor’s job as visiting the hospital. The author told them he would certainly be ministering in the midst of serious issues and tragedies (for instance, a child is diagnosed with cancer or a person is losing their faith in Christ because of the physical trials they are enduring), but that they should not expect to see him visiting people with routine problems, surgeries, etc. He explained to the church that he had, personally, had numerous surgeries and never once felt it was the job of a pastor to come
entertain and babysit him while he recovered! The conversation during the meeting around the subject of a pastor being the leader and equpper of the church or a hospital chaplain that happened to preach on Sunday caused enough tension in the room that the author and his wife went back to their hotel and for the first time in the entire process they had a conversation about what percentage of the vote they needed to see supporting them before they agreed to come. Both wanted to see a unanimous vote, but the author was not brave enough to say it was absolutely mandatory. Up until that point, there had never been a doubt or worry that God was calling them to Hardin. They had received different kinds of confirmation along the way, one of which was their house in Jacksonville, FL selling one hour after listing it with a sales agent. Anticipating God was going to move them to North Carolina to lead Hardin they decided to go ahead and list their home before they were voted on, so that they could get it sold and move as soon after the vote as possible. They had anticipated it would take months to sell the house; instead, it took one hour!

The morning after the town hall meeting the author showed up without a tie to preach the trial sermon at their regular 11:00 AM Sunday worship gathering. He preached on worship and hit the church hard that their music styles could not be a preference that they held on to because music is not of itself worship. The author said God does not call music worship, but rather calls worship responding to Him in spirit and truth! The challenge was harsh and direct. The church would have to be willing to give up their traditional and southern gospel music preferences to communicate with and reach the unchurched. He told them if they truly understood worship as a relational response to Jesus as opposed to a style of music, then it would not matter to them what style of music was played in a worship gathering but only that the truth was proclaimed and people were given the opportunity to respond to it!
After the sermon, the author and his wife were escorted to a conference room while the search committee presented their unanimous recommendation to the church to extend the call. Because of the previous night’s tension and the statements in his trial sermon, the author was sure that Hardin would never vote unanimously to agree with the search committee’s recommendation. The author and his wife set almost speechlessly in the conference room as they waited. Soon, Scott Pasour, the chairman of the Deacons, opened the door and told them the church had voted to extend the call. The author asked Scott how the vote went, and he energetically told him it was unanimous. They brought the author and his wife in the auditorium, and everybody began to clap and cheer and embrace and welcome them. There was so much excitement in the room that the author and his wife left thinking the process of transforming Hardin was going to be quick and easy!

One month later they relocated to Gaston County, North Carolina. On Thursday, October 24, 2002, the author completed his last day at work for the Florida Baptist Convention, he and his wife closed on the sale of their house in Jacksonville and then drove to a Hampton Inn in Gastonia, NC. They got up the next morning and closed on their new home in Lowell, NC then drove up to Morgantown, NC to pick up the truck the author had purchased to replace the State Convention fleet vehicle he had previously been using. They got to their new home late that evening with nothing but some clothes, travel necessities and an air mattress.

First thing in the morning on Saturday, October 26th, the moving truck pulled in. The pastor and his wife spent all day Saturday and late into Saturday evening with the movers unpacking all their stuff. On Sunday, October 27th the phone rang. Ironically, at this point, the author didn’t even know his own phone number. It was a member of the search committee calling to tell the author what he should wear to preach! The man told the author that even
though he had not worn a tie when the church voted on him that he should wear one for his first Sunday anyway. The author politely told the member of the search committee that it was not going to happen and he looked forward to seeing him that morning. To the man’s credit, he was standing on the sidewalk waiting on the author when he pulled up and apologized for trying to tell him what to wear. The author accepted the apology and shrugged the whole thing off as no big deal.

October 27, 2002 was his first Sunday preaching as the Lead Pastor of Hardin Baptist Church, and it was also his first official day at work. He launched a series that morning he called “Paul’s Philosophy of Ministry.” He began preaching through passages of Scripture that demonstrated the principles and methods by which Paul used to fulfill the Great Commission. Immediately after his very first sermon, which never principally stated anything other than what he had been telling the church for the previous four months, people began to openly criticize him and wanted him removed as the pastor! Before the author could preach his second sermon, the man who apologized for telling him what to wear for his first sermon, the same man who as one of the search committee members that had whole heartily recommended the author to be the pastor of the church, called the rest of the active deacons and told them that he had made the worst decision of his life and that they needed to immediately fire the author of this thesis project as the pastor of Hardin. The deacons met the morning of the author’s second sermon and voted to keep him, but the war had started and never got easier. In his first week of ministry, he had already had his job legitimately threatened and all he had done was unpack boxes and try to figure out where everything was and who the existing leaders in the church were.

Through the entire process of leading the transformation of the ethos of Hardin all kinds of accusations, character assignation attempts, gossip, lies, etc. were spread about the author and
anybody else who was helping him lead the transformation of the church. One person wrote a letter to the editor of the local regionally published newspaper implying that the author had deceived and stole their church. Of course, the newspaper could not help but print the letter (on the wise counsel of the other elders the author of this thesis project never publically acknowledged the letter). Senior citizens that supported the transition were particularly targeted. To this day, seniors that supported the transition continue to be told by friends they have had for decades that they do not love them, that they are traitors and that they ruined everything. One particular senior adult had spent his entire life working in the textile mills in the region and happened to also be illiterate. He was a supporter of the changes mostly because through them one of his children came to know Christ and be baptized. Senior adults that hated everything about what the church was becoming were constantly trying to get him to stop supporting the changes. Eventually, a senior adult the man trusted came to him and told him the author of this thesis project had sent a letter to all the senior adults of Hardin telling them that they were no longer welcome in the church. The man never returned even though such an absurd letter was never written or sent.

Soon after starting the transformation process, people began withholding their tithes and despite Malachi 3:8 still defended it as a just action. On the many occasions that the staff could not be paid on time, the author of this thesis project volunteered to have his check withheld until they could. He went through one, two-month period where he had to completely give up his entire salary so that the staff would not have to be laid off. On two separate occasions, for a period that extended over a year, the author gave up a significant percentage of his salary to be able to continuing paying his staff. This was not because the church treasurer was refusing to sign checks but rather because so many people were withholding their tithes; there was simply
no money left in the church accounts. Meanwhile, the author kept having to have surgeries, and debt piled up on debt. Through God’s provision they were always able to keep their head above water. God’s provisions most frequently came in all kinds of additional side jobs that he and/or his wife worked in addition to the more than forty hours a week he was putting in to the church. Hence, leading the transformation of a local church requires sacrifice and suffering.

As of the writing of this thesis project, there are still people all over the town of Dallas, NC and the surrounding region that are being told by “Christians” that the author is a mean, hateful, deceptive, liar who is lost and leading the church straight to Hell. One person has openly told others that they pray for the author’s death. At another church’s function held beside some property owned by Venture people in attendance were warned not to step on the ground owned by Venture because it was cursed as a result of Venture being a demonic church.

Throughout the transition process every single thing the author did, no matter how small and inconsequential it was, was exhaustively criticized and talked about repetitively with harshly negative language and emotions. One Sunday, an angry church member told the author that he was a failure. The person’s reasoning was that the author was being unfaithful to his calling in ministry in that he did not leave his wife and son during their Christmas vacation to return to North Carolina and attend (not lead!) the funeral of their elderly aunt, who ironically had never even attended Hardin!

To further illustrate the absurdity of the attacks, on another occasion a man was dying. The man who was dying and his wife had become very close with the author of this thesis project and his wife. The author and his wife had both counseled and consoled with them through some very difficult and personal issues. The author and his wife had been guests in their home, ate with them, prayed with them, laughed with them and even cried with them. The man regularly
called the author to encourage him to keep pressing forward with his vision. Yet, when the man was in the hospital dying, the man’s family (children, brothers, sisters, etc.) would not allow the author to visit him and did not want him at the funeral. Prior to his health deteriorating to the point where he was dying, the man’s family had so heavily criticized him and his wife for supporting the author’s vision that the man felt he and his wife were being excluded from many things going on with the family. He had shared specifics with the author over the years and told the author on numerous occasions that he prayed for his family to care more for the lost than they did for all their religious preferences. Yet, when he was in the hospital dying, the author was met in the hall by some of the man’s family and told he was not welcome and forbidden to enter the room. Not wanting to cause a scene, the author accepted the reality and simply left the hospital. After the man died, his wife was told by some of the same people that kept the author from entering the room that he never came to visit her and her husband.

Night-after-night and day-after-day the pastor spent untold hours on the phone and face to face with people angry about the missional transformation that was taking place. The author used every line of reasoning, prayer, fasting, preaching, teaching, listening sessions, focus groups, letters, phone calls, counseling sessions, other speakers, videos, testimonies, etc., to try and help those who were tirelessly opposing everything. However, nothing seemed to turn the tide of negativity and attacks. In fact, the more the author reached out, the harder they would push back. No matter what compromise was made with methodology, the moment it was instituted everybody that asked for the compromise would start saying it was not enough, that it was unfair and that the author clearly did not care about them.

When the church launched a Sunday morning traditional worship gathering at 8:00 AM in an attempt to keep people in the fold who just could not stand the methodology used at the
9:30 and 11:00, the initial response was euphoric. Some of those who had been bashing everything being done at the 9:30 and 11:00 services called the author and thanked him for starting something that was going to strictly be what they called “traditional.” They sang praise after praise for the decision, for about a week, and then at the launch service most of those who had called for the change and shouted the praises of the compromise did not even show up – some never did! There had only been a gap of a few weeks between when the compromise was reached and when the worship gathering was launched and those who had screamed the loudest to have it and praised the announcement of it the most immediately began to attack and criticize everything about it! Everything they asked for they got except the time. They wanted it at 11:00 but after a lot of dialog agreed that the 9:30 and 11:00 time slots needed to be focused on reaching the lost and the unchurched; therefore, the best time left for the traditional gathering was going to be 8:00 AM. They could then leave and attend their Sunday School classes at the traditional 9:30 AM time, like they had always done. Five years later, Venture still offers the traditional gathering at 8:00 AM. It was an honest compromise that the author of this thesis project still leads for the now handful of senior adults left who endured the community’s punishment for embracing and encouraging the transformation of Hardin Baptist Church into what is now called Venture.

Often the author of this thesis project watched as people who had been entrenched in the religious club mentality of the church get beat back into the submission of the crowd that was fighting what God was doing. It was painful to watch as a person’s negativity and misery turned to joy and positive involvement only to later get turned back in to negativity and divisiveness by a barrage of discord from those who claimed to be mature followers of Christ, yet they hated the idea of the church becoming a movement to reach the lost.
Amazingly, some of those who left the church during the first five years of the transformation still to this day continue to spread lies, gossip and even attempt to discourage non-believers from being a part of the ministry. Anything and everything seems to continue to be a justifiable means to attempt to ruin the reputation of the author of this thesis project, as well as anybody that supports Venture’s vision.

Having traveled all over the United States and spoke in tons of churches of varying denominations, the author has concluded the response he received and continues to receive is not out of the ordinary but is sadly very much the ordinary. In 1995, the author preached his first full fledged revival in a town in northern Virginia. The pastor of that church wept while telling the author he did not know what to do. Older members of the church were intentionally running off everybody he led to Christ that did not fit the religious culture of the church! The more he led to Christ, the more people complained and worked to get rid of those he brought in.

Another pastor the author knows well (his father-in-law) was trying to transform a church when he earned his Master’s Degree from Liberty. Members of the church who opposed his vision to reach people told people in the community that he had lied about attending seminary. They claimed his oldest son had used a computer to create the photo of him shaking the hand of Dr. Jerry Falwell as a part of the commencement exercises. The implication was that he had stolen the money the church had given him for his education. Furthermore, the people pedaling this lie in the community claimed they had personally called Dr. Falwell, and that Dr. Falwell personally told them the author’s father-in-law had not graduated from Liberty. The author of this thesis project and his wife, personally, witnessed his father-in-law graduate. Not to mention anyone who knows anything about Liberty University and Dr. Jerry Falwell knows how
ludicrous the idea is that somebody who had never met Dr. Falwell could call and personally speak to him on the phone to ask a question about who graduated from Liberty and who did not!

Furthermore, it is not only the personal experiences and first hand observations that have caused this author to conclude sacrifice and suffering is a reality involved in leading the transformation of a church, but it is also the opinion, experience and observation of many others. In all five of the “comparative” interviews done with other ministries, all at some level spoke of the pain, suffering and persecution involved when leading the transformation of their local church. At a conference the author attended, the keynote speaker was the lead pastor of a church the author interviewed for this project. The pastor comically spoke of an almost constant, pronounced twitch that he developed in one of his eyes while leading his church through the transformation of their ethos. The pastor stated it became increasingly hard to get people to follow his leadership all while looking at them with an eye that kept spastically twitching!

Why is this point being so heavily illustrated in this thesis project? Simply put, it is a reality that is terribly painful and in the author’s opinion is likely the top reasons pastors give up on the vision God has given them. Based on the author’s exposure to hundreds of local churches, he has concluded that many pastors believe they can transform their church into a missional movement to change the world without sacrifice and suffering. It is a false expectation that sets them up to feel like failures when they truly begin to have to sacrifice and suffer to move the church forward.

Perhaps Thom Rainer, the president of Lifeway Christian Resources and the founding dean of the Billy Graham Scholl of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, states it best in his book Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap. Rainer took a similar approach to studying the church as Jim Collins famously
did in Good To Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don’t with corporations. Rainer and his team set a truly high standard for defining a great church, and then researched to find churches that were able to come out of long periods of decline or plateau and achieve greatness. From there they looked to see the common traits between the churches that were able to make the transformation. The following are a sampling of excerpts from the book that demonstrate the veracity and seriousness of the point the author of this thesis project is attempting to make within chapter one.

Because the American church is mired in mediocrity, change is difficult and often wrought with conflict.\(^5\)

The cost of moving a church to greatness is often measured in crises, sometimes severe crises.\(^6\)

To an outsider, the attendance plateau could be easily explained by the lack of worship space. But Bishop Graves knew the problem went much deeper. He keenly desired to lead in the building of a larger sanctuary, but his suggestions met stiff resistance from many key leaders. They knew that the larger facility would make room for people who were not like them. A group of 300 church members met with Graves on numerous occasions, hoping to change his mind. This opposition group threatened to withdraw their significant financial support from the church if their demands were not met. After much prayer, Graves decided to hold the course and build the new sanctuary. The entire leadership group left the church. Graves was devastated. He describes this period as one of “anguish and doubt.” He attempted to no avail to reach out to those who left the church. Because of the reduced financial resources in the church, many ministries ceased operation. Even the Temple Academy closed after a decade of ministry. The bishop internalized his pain and became physically ill. He was hospitalized for weeks at a time. His family physician encouraged him to retire from pastoral ministry, but he refused to stray from the vision God had given him for the church. Eventually his health returned and the church recovered from its losses of members, leaders and money. The Temple Church began the transition to greatness. … The crisis in the church reached its peak in 1991 when attendance hit a ten-year low of 659. … Over the next twelve years the church’s membership grew to 3,000 … and the number of ministries to the community became greater.

\(^5\) Thom S. Rainer, Breakout Churches (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 89

\(^6\) Ibid., 90.
than ever. A good church became a great church without changing pastoral leadership. 

The breakout church leaders, however, never used the word impossible to describe even their direst moments. When tough times came to them and their churches, they acknowledged their pain but soon began anticipating how God would give them the next victory. They moved forward. And it was the step of moving forward that inevitably ushered in the next phase, “Crisis.” By this point in the book, you may be greatly inspired by the numerous stories of leaders who persevered in the midst of significant trials. On the other hand, you may be scared to death by the high cost these leaders paid to move their churches to new levels of excellence. You have already read of leaders who were dismissed, stressed-out leaders who found themselves in the hospital, and leaders who faced the wrath of those who were once supporters. Unfortunately, difficulties are commonplace in churches that move to greatness. Sometimes moments of crisis are sensed internally by those who lead the change in the church. Inevitably the crisis also takes place with many of the members. And more often than not, the members who experience the crisis blame the pastor for the difficulties they encounter.

I must admit that I did not expect crises to be a part of the stories of all the breakout churches. I also admit that my bias caused me not to want to convey this information in this book. Frankly, I fear that many leaders may be dissuaded from leading churches to greatness once they read these stories of conflict and pain. If you are one of those who has reacted in the way I feared, please hear two important responses. First, most of the churches that made the breakout cut were congregations that had become mired in mediocrity and in clear patterns of decline. Any changes that put these churches on paths of growth and health would bring major institutional disruption. These changes could very well precipitate spiritual warfare as well. Change is difficult. Major systemic change often engenders a battle cry. Second, virtually every leader in Scripture endured some type of conflict in his or her life. The cost of following Christ is great. We cannot become complacent with the status quo to avoid conflict. We must lead. Yes, we must love the people, and we must console them when change becomes increasingly painful to them. But we must lead. We cannot be content with a life and a ministry that could be described in the epitaph: “This leader avoided conflict well.”

Mark Driscoll is the pastor of a mega church in Seattle, Washington that has intentionally influenced the birth of new churches all over the United States. Driscoll is not only the current

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7 Ibid., 18-19

8 Ibid., 85-86

9 Ibid., 87.
Lead Pastor, but he is also the one who started the church. In 2006, a book was published that he wrote called *Confessions of a Reformission Rev. Hard Lessons from an Emerging Missional Church*. In this book he honestly and sometimes humorously chronicles the transitions and transformations he and the church had to make through each stage of growth from birth to an average weekly attendance of 4,000 people. Throughout the book, he is constantly referring to the periods of burnout, physical, mental and emotional exhaustion, spiritual warfare, and doubt that seemed to accompany each period of transition and transformation. He is also the second transformational pastor the author has been exposed to who speaks of developing a nervous twitch in his eye from the stress of leading a local church. The book has chapter titles like, “Jesus, Our Offering was $137 and I Want To Use It To Buy Bullets,” “Jesus, If Anyone Else Calls My House, I May Be Seeing You Real Soon,” and “Jesus, Why Am I Getting Fatter and Meaner?” Of everything this book contributes to leading a church, perhaps one of the most significant statements in the book came as he chronicled the transformation of the church that led to it growing from 350 in weekly worship attendance to 1,000. Driscoll writes,

At this point, we had been in four locations, had held services at four different times, and had had six phone numbers in a few years. I had worked myself to near burnout and was still the only paid pastor on staff although there was enough work for ten people. To make matters worse, I was not even certain that I would pastor Mars Hill for a long time. My plan had been to start the church and possibly hand it off to one of the elders and move on and plant another church. It was pretty devastating after a few years of hard work to be back to a core group under two hundred and starting over. I remember going for a walk one day along Lake Washington, which was near my house. I stopped and stared at the ground for an hour, running through my options in my mind, trying to figure out what to do, and feeling like a caged animal. Should I shut down the church? Should I contact one of the other churches in the area and come in as a church-within-a-church service for them? Should I jump ship and let Lief or Mike figure it out? Should I hang in there and either turn things around or die trying? I loved the elders and the members in the church who were willing to hang in with me no matter what happened. And I felt obligated to do everything in my power to fight for the mission Jesus had called me to and I had called them to. I vividly remember the day shortly thereafter when I stood before what was left of my
church and told my people that I was giving them my life. I was going to buy a home, plant my flag in the ground, and give the rest of my life to them, our city, and our mission. I promised them that we would succeed or I would literally die trying and begged them to do the same.\textsuperscript{10}

Throughout the book, Driscoll documents the constant attacks from people calling themselves Christians and doing everything they could to undermine what God was doing through Mars Hill. Mostly, he documents the intrinsic sacrifice and suffering involved in constantly leading God’s people to be transformed and follow Christ! It is a constant battle and burden that can be absolutely overwhelming to the point that real physical, emotional and spiritual consequences are seen and felt. In this context is why the above quote from Driscoll is so significant. This was the moment in his ministry when he finally committed to lead the church regardless of the outcome. This was the moment that he accepted suffering as a part of the deal when obeying Christ, and obeying Christ meant far more than receiving the approval and/or support of men. Obeying Christ meant far more than fulfilling his definition of success. This was the moment when the fear of failure was dealt a serious blow, and Driscoll determined that no matter how much he was going to suffer he was not going to abandon the church God had led him to pastor.

This is a moment that every transformational leader has to have, especially those with the title of Lead Pastor/Senior Pastor/Pastor. There will come a day when the transformational pastor has been beat on so hard and so often that he has to decide to be committed to what God has called him to do or to succumb to the suffering and quit. When Dickie Spargo became the Senior Pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Gastonia, NC, the church had shrunk to the point it was on the brink of having to sell its property. Bethlehem had become an inward focused church and for all practical purposes just wanted a chaplain to help them die. Spargo humbly stated in

\textsuperscript{10} Mark Driscoll, \textit{Confessions of a Reformation Rev: Hard Lessons From an Emerging Missional Church.} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 119-120.
an interview with the author of this thesis project that the reality is that one of the two most important factors to the transformation of Bethlehem Baptist Church was his longevity. No matter how hard it got and no matter how tempted he was to leave, he put his head down, sought the Lord for strength and would not quit. On the day of the interview with Spargo, he had been serving as the Senior Pastor of Bethlehem for over twenty-two years. The church now has three campuses and 2,500 people in attendance each week.\textsuperscript{11} Larry Osborne commented on this reality and the necessity of this moment,

\begin{quote}
But demonstrating long-term commitment to the church is a different matter. It can be done, but it starts with an honest look inside. I always ask pastors to honestly answer this question before attempting to take a strong leadership role: is this a step in my career path or is this a long-term calling to these people and this community? … Let’s be honest. When a tough crisis comes along, many pastors bail out. One denominational study found that a pastoral crisis occurs every eighteen months. Coincidentally, pastors from this same group moved on an average of every eighteen to twenty months. Something tells me there might be a connection. While these pastors spoke of a calling, their resumes revealed something that looked far more like a career track. And when things dried up, most of them went searching for greener pastures. It’s no wonder that boards, staffs, and congregations often respond with a kneejerk “No” when a new pastor suggests anything risky. They’re trying to protect their church from a mess they’re pretty sure the new guy won’t stay around to help clean up. In my case, our board members and congregation had to see me demonstrate my long-term commitment with my finances, my use of time, and a couple of decisions to stay even when more enticing opportunities and bigger platforms came my way. They had to be convinced I was more concerned about our church than my ministry. Once that happened, it was amazing how open they were to being led.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

This is the story of this author. Those who have stuck with him are those who suffered with him to lead Hardin to be transformed by Christ from a community organization for Christians to a group of people whose ethos is to be a movement to reach the world with the Gospel. Continuing to lead the church forward despite the trials and tribulations or sacrifices and

\textsuperscript{11} Dickie Spargo, interview by author, Gastonia, NC, 4 June 2012.

\textsuperscript{12} Larry Osborne, \textit{Sticky Teams: Keeping Your Leadership Team and Staff on the Same Page} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 90-91.
suffering told those leaders around the author that he was not going to forsake them. Sacrifice and suffering were unavoidable realities in the process but not quitting during those times became a clear part of what God used to unify those who believed in the vision, and in the end, that commitment propelled the transformation. Longevity and perseverance, while having to sacrifice and suffer, is an essential leadership element for leading the transformation of the ethos of a local church.

Perhaps two of the most well known statements by the late Dr. Jerry Falwell that the author of this thesis project often heard Dr. Falwell repeat are the ones written on the wall of the memorial built around his grave. One is, “You do not determine a man’s greatness by his talent or wealth, as the world does, but rather by what it takes to discourage him,” and the other, “Never quit.” From the observations of this author on the realities of leading the transformation of a local church there could possibly be no more applicable statements that those.

The Level of Leadership of the Lead Pastor Is Paramount

The second unavoidable reality the author observed while leading the transformation of the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church was the reality that the level of leadership of the Lead Pastor is paramount. Tony Morgan and Tim Stevens put it rather bluntly when they write,

You may love the vision, but if you don’t respect the leader, you probably won’t sign on to the team. We all need to know if the leader can lead and if he or she possesses integrity and honesty. We’ve all been in positions in which someone says (either verbally or through their actions), “I like the vision…I just don’t like you.”

In his book, Developing the Leader Within You, John Maxwell writes,

13 Tony Morgan & Tim Stevens, Simply Strategic Volunteers: Empowering People For Ministry (Loveland, CO: Group, 2005), 49.
The effectiveness of your work will never rise above your ability to lead and influence others. You cannot produce consistently on a level higher than your leadership. In other words, your leadership skills determine the level of your success—and the success of those who work around you.  

We cannot lead anyone else farther than we have been ourselves.

My friend Rick Warren says, “If you want to know the temperature of your organization, put a thermometer in the leader’s mouth.” Leaders can never take their people farther than they have traveled. Therefore the focus of vision must be on the leader-like leader, like people. Followers find the leader and then the vision. Leaders find the vision and then the people.

Transformation is the pinnacle of change and therefore arguably requires a higher level of leadership than what is required to merely alter something. Perhaps this is why the author has observed that Maxwell’s Law of the Lid is an unavoidable reality in leading the transformation of a local church’s ethos. Maxwell writes,

Leadership ability is the lid that determines a person’s level of effectiveness. The lower an individual’s ability to lead, the lower the lid on his potential. The higher the individual’s ability to lead, the higher the lid on his potential. To give you an example, if your leadership rates an 8, then your effectiveness can never be greater than a 7. If your leadership is only a 4, then your effectiveness will be no higher than a 3. Your leadership ability—for better or for worse—always determines your effectiveness and the potential impact of your organization.

The author of this thesis project can testify to the reality of the Law of the Lid. The transformation of the ethos of Hardin to Venture is a prime example that everything rises and falls on leadership and that the success of an organization is determined by the level of leadership of the one leading it. Therefore, based on theLaw of the Lid and the previous statements from Maxwell, it is likely not a coincidence that the things that went well in the

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14 John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1993), Ibid., viii

15 Ibid., 43.

16 Ibid., 144-145.

transformation of the ethos of Hardin were closely associated with the strengths of the author and the things that struggled were closely associated with the weakness of the author. The author’s strengths are in vision, strategy and the verbal communication of each. Therefore, the author shinned at developing and communicating a vision, developing the fundamental strategic building blocks to accomplish the vision, motivating people to embrace and be excited about the vision, and explaining the vision and strategy in ways that were understood and endorsed by those who heard him. Throughout the transformation these were the leadership skills that drove the transformation. On the other hand, the author scores as average to weak in areas of leadership with relationships, managing and equipping teams to lead, empowering others to grow as leaders, etc. To no surprise then, the leadership teams in the church (especially the Core Team of the Staff, Trustees and Elders) have struggled to experience community (despite the author’s excellent level of verbally communicating this Core Value and a strategy for it being accomplished). Because of his weakness, throughout the transition process the author found himself massively overworked from having to constantly support everything himself, burning out leaders and stifling the creativity and leadership of others.

The problems and difficulties in the transformation pointed the author directly towards the many areas of his leadership that he needed to improve and/or find others who were greater in those areas. Since the author has taken this approach, the Law of the Lid has been further testified. As the author improves in an area or is able to attract and successfully plug in a leader who is great in an area where he is weak, the results are directly seen in the production of the Core Team and thus the success of the church as a whole in fulfilling its mission.
Furthermore, in Maxwell’s 21 Laws he has one that truly correlates with his Law of the Lid. Maxwell’s seventh Irrefutable Law of Leadership is called the “Law of Respect.”

He writes,

“People don’t follow others by accident. They follow individuals whose leadership they respect. People who are an 8 in leadership (on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the strongest) don’t go out and look for a 6 to follow – they naturally follow a 9 or a 10. The less skilled follow the more highly skilled and gifted. Occasionally, a strong leader may choose to follow someone weaker than himself. But when that happens, it’s for a reason. For example, the stronger leader may do it out of respect for the person’s office or past accomplishments. Or he may be following the chain of command. In general, though, followers are attracted to people who are better leaders than themselves. That is the Law of Respect.”

In the transformation of the ethos of Hardin, the author saw that in every area of the flow chart of the church that a high level leader would only endure following a lower level leader for so long before the higher level leader quit and moved on. The author observed that when a higher-level leader is under a less talented leader, then the higher-level leader is dumbed down and limited to the size and scope of leadership the lower level leader. The effect of this slows down progress, creates frustration and division and can even completely halt progress if not properly addressed.

The following are some opinions of others that reflect the same principle found in Maxwell’s Law of the Lid and Law of Respect.

Leaders who lack discipline frustrate their fellow workers as well as those they lead. Not only are they poor examples, but they cannot accomplish what needs to be done. Consequently, their flock is poorly managed and lacks adequate spiritual care.

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18 Ibid., 73.

19 Ibid., 76.

Research has consistently shown that strong pastoral leadership is a key ingredient in virtually every healthy and growing church.\(^{21}\)

The Law of the Lid and The Law of Respect both demonstrated themselves in numerous ways through the transformation of Hardin Baptist Church. Without exception, everything that was abated, inhibited or sidetracked during the process of transforming the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church came back to the inabilities, the shortcomings and the weaknesses of the leadership of the author of this thesis project. This is not a statement to pronounce humility or relieve guilt but rather a statement of reality. For instance, the cycle of burnout of the leaders around the author who supported the transformation was a direct result of the author not pouring enough time into them socially so that he could see their burnout coming and adjust things to keep it from happening. His weakness in building a sense of community with the key leaders around him cost precious time and energy and ultimately the loss of some of the gifted leaders who were totally committed to the vision of transformation.

Another example could be seen in the author’s responsibility to get the right people on the bus and put them in the right seats to best lead the church. The author did not totally fail at this, however, there were indeed failures, and each of these failures slowed and limited the transformation. In short, every strength and weakness and every success and failure in the leadership of the author as the Lead Pastor was spotlighted by, at minimum, a proportionate success or failure in the transformation of the churches ethos.

This reality was also testified by a Senior Pastor the author interviewed for this project. In April of 2012, the author of this thesis project interviewed Dr. David Chadwick, Senior Pastor of Forrest Hill Church in Charlotte, NC.\(^{22}\) When Dr. Chadwick became the Senior Pastor in

\(^{21}\) Larry Osborne, *Sticky Teams: Keeping Your Leadership Team and Staff on the Same Page*, 100.

\(^{22}\) Dr. David Chadwick, interview by author, Charlotte, NC, 19 April 2012.
1980 there were 150 people who were a part of the church. Upon arriving, some of the Elders told him his job was to basically come alongside the church and help them bury it with grace. The church was primarily dying because it was located in a transitional neighborhood that they had been unable and more appropriately unwilling to reach. However, after Dr. Chadwick had spent about five years preaching and teaching, the church began to grow. It grew enough that they felt they needed to relocate in order to continue to grow. The church relocated with about 800 people involved in the ministry.

Yet, in 1991 Dr. Chadwick began to look at the church in a different way. He saw that even thought it was growing it was still inwardly focused. This is when he received a passionate vision from the Lord to lead the church to a mission and purpose that was truly rooted in the Great Commission. He felt God calling him to lead Forrest Hill from being a community organization for Christians to one that was truly reaching and serving the “least and the lost.”

Along the way he tried to accommodate everybody and in so doing led the church to have a blended-style worship gathering; ironically there was still a lot of complaining and resistance. He realized the rationality that led him to do a blended-style worship gathering was slowing the transformation of the church because it had “hamstrung them with people pleasing” instead of focusing on doing what was necessary to reach the “least and the lost.” This is when Dr. Chadwick realized that he was still not being driven by his vision to reach the “least and the lost” but rather to keep people happy and in the church. He decided he needed to choose which burden he was going to bear – either the burden of being led by vision and the loss that would come with that, or the burden of trying to please people and keep them happy and consequently the loss that would come with that as well.
Once realizing this, he made his choice and started transitioning the church to an evangelistic/attractional style of worship and church ministry. In the beginning of the process, Dr. Chadwick took his leaders on a retreat and laid out his vision for what the church needed to do. He built his presentation to a climax with an ultimatum. He told his leaders that if they did not agree to his vision he would leave the church. As a result, he got a vote of support but he did not get any visionary ascent to it. The following two quotes highlight what happened,

Everything rises and falls on leadership. There are two ways you can get others to do what you want: You can compel them to do it, or you can persuade them. Compulsion is the method of slavery; persuasion is the method of free men. Persuading requires an understanding of what makes people tick and what motivates them, that is, a knowledge of human nature. Great leaders possess that knowledge.23

Early on in my ministry, I made a big mistake. In my efforts to get everyone on the same page, I confused lobbying with training. It’s a common error. Faced with a major decision, golden opportunity, or a new vision we want people to adopt, many of us pull out all the stops to make sure that everyone has the same information we have, in the hope that they will come to the same conclusions we have. But our timing is all wrong. We may think we’re training people. We may think we’re giving them essential information. But they know better. They are being lobbied. … When information is presented too close to a decision-making process, most people will view it as a lobbying effort, not as a training exercise. … When people don’t agree, we become frustrated by their lack of understanding. We wonder why they don’t get it, especially in light of all the valuable information we just presented. But that’s not how others see it. They don’t feel informed; they feel pressured. They don’t feel trained; they feel lobbied. And no one likes to be pushed or lobbied into a decision they aren’t sure of.24

Now, it is the opinion of this author that there is a time and place for authoritarianism. No one later appreciates the leadership of the captain of a ship who does not force everybody to get on a lifeboat in an efficient and orderly manner when the ship is sinking! Furthermore, not a single book read by the author, an interview recorded by him, nor a personal experience, suggests that if enough training, time, listening and love is given then everybody will get on

23 John C. Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You*, 182.

24 Larry Osborne, *Sticky Teams: Keeping Your Leadership Team and Staff on the Same Page*, 127-128.
board with a vision of transformation, especially when the transformation involves a church transitioning from being a community organization for Christians to a movement to change the world with the Gospel. As previously stated in this project, Jesus, Himself, taught that people who call themselves Christians are going to violently oppose the very idea of the Kingdom of God! This is, therefore, not a suggestion to compromise the vision or core values of the transformation. As a matter of fact, later in this chapter, it will be presented as a reality that a pastor simply cannot compromise the core values that make up the vision of the transformation. However, what is being asserted is that the attitude and persona by which the pastor leads, then creates an environment of a person either manipulating and lobbying or a person leading and equipping. Both have the same end point in mind, but both get there two different ways, and one tends to have more people on board for the long haul than the other. This is yet another specific example of what was personally experienced by the author of this thesis project regarding the reality of the level of the leadership of the pastor directly impacting the process of the transformation of the ethos of the local church. It is also one expressed by Dr. Chadwick.

In Dr. Chadwick’s case, after making his ultimatum for the leaders to agree with his vision, they all voted to do so but soon began to talk to one another about their concerns and criticisms instead of to him. This continued for about a year until an Elder came to him personally and confronted him. Soon thereafter, Dr. Chadwick went away on a vacation and read a book called *In The Name Of Jesus: Reflections On Christian Leadership*, by Henri Nouwen. While reading, Dr. Chadwick came under serious conviction about the way he was leading. He felt convicted that he had to start serving the people instead of using them for his glory. He came back, confessed to the rest of the Elders and told them he would joyfully lead whatever vision they had for Forrest Hill Church. The author of this thesis project is not
endorsing the idea of not following the vision God gives a person, however, the author is endorsing the change in heart and attitude that led Dr. Chadwick to say what he said.

To Dr. Chadwick’s surprise, the Elders then came back to him and said they wanted to go wherever God was telling Dr. Chadwick to take them. Instead of hijacking the vision, they embraced him as God’s man to lead the vision of the church. He restarted everything by taking the next year to craft a new vision with them. Over time he still lost a few Elders who just could not make the change; however, the transition of Forrest Hills followed suite with his growth as a leader, and now there are over 5,000 people worshiping together as Forrest Hill Church. The church continues to grow and impact the region with the Gospel. As John Maxwell writes, “The one who influences others to lead others is a leader without limitations.”

Taking this thought a little deeper one can see that by definition a church cannot be managed to change but rather they must be lead to change. Much has been written on the difference between management and leadership. Both are important, but for the ethos of a local church to be transformed, a pastor must lead. Kotter writes,

Management is a set of processes that can keep a complicated system of people and technology running smoothly. The most important aspects of management include planning, budgeting organizing, staffing, controlling, and problem solving. Leadership is a set of processes that creates organizations in the first place or adapts them to significantly changing circumstances. Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles.

Great management is absolutely needed for any organization to do anything well and this certainly includes the church (i.e. Acts 6). Leadership gives way to management not management to leadership. Because great management occurs when there is great leadership, the level of management within the body is directly associated with the level of leadership of the

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pastor. In his book, *Leading Change*, John Kotter provides the following chart to illustrate the differences between management and leadership. It is easy to deduce from the chart the need for both, but it is also easy to deduce why the level of the leadership of the pastor is directly associated with the potential of a local church to be well-managed and able to change. This is by no means a statement to water down the power of the Holy Spirit. Rather, if the Holy Spirit is going to transform a church, He is most likely going to have to first transform the Lead Pastor into a Leader who has enough leadership ability to faithfully lead and equip God’s people to follow Christ.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANAGEMENT</th>
<th>LEADERSHIP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ <em>Planning and budgeting:</em> establishing detailed steps and timetables for achieving needed results, then allocating the resources necessary to make it happen.</td>
<td>➢ <em>Establishing direction:</em> developing a vision of the future – often the distant future – and strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve that vision.</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ <em>Organizing and staffing:</em> establishing some structure for accomplishing plan requirements, staffing that structure with individuals, delegating responsibility and authority for carrying out the plan, providing policies and procedures to help guide people, and creating methods or systems to monitor implementation.</td>
<td>➢ <em>Aligning people:</em> communicating direction in words and deeds to all those whose cooperation may be needed so as to influence the creation of teams and coalitions that understand the vision and strategies and that accept their validity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ <em>Controlling and problem solving:</em> monitoring results, identifying deviations from plan, then planning and organizing to solve these problems.</td>
<td>➢ <em>Motivating and inspiring:</em> energizing people to overcome major political, bureaucratic, and resource barriers to change by satisfying basic, but often unfulfilled, human needs.</td>
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- Produces a degree of predictability and order and has the potential to consistently produce the short-term results expected by various stakeholders (e.g., for customers, always on time; for stockholders, being on budget)
- Produces change, often to a dramatic degree, and has the potential to produce extremely useful change (e.g., new products that customers want, new approaches to labor relations that help make a firm more competitive)²⁷

²⁷ Ibid., 26.
Finally, another prime example of the reality of the leadership of the Lead Pastor being paramount to the success of the transformation of the ethos of the local church is seen in the level of emotional intelligence of the leader. Esther Cameron and Mike Green write in their book, *Making Sense of Change Management: A Complete Guide to the Models, Tools & Techniques of Organizational Change*,

Further research carried out by Hay/McBer looked at data from 40 different corporations to determine the difference in terms of competencies between star performers and average performers. Again emotional competencies were found to be twice as important as skill-based or intellectual competencies.

The following are what Cameron and Green identify as emotional competencies:

**Self-awareness**
Knowing one’s internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions:
- Emotional awareness: recognizing one’s emotions and their effects.
- Accurate self-assessment: knowing one’s strengths and limits.
- Self-confidence: a strong sense of one’s self-worth and capabilities.

**Self-management**
Managing one’s internal states, impulses, and resources:
- Self-control: keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check.
- Trustworthiness: maintaining standards of honesty and integrity.
- Conscientiousness: taking responsibility for personal performance.
- Achievement orientation: striving to improve or meeting a standard of excellence.
- Initiative: readiness to act on opportunities.

**Social awareness**
Awareness of others’ feelings, needs, and concerns:
- Empathy: sensing others’ feelings and perspective, and taking an active interest in their concerns.
- Organization awareness: reading a group’s emotional currents and power relationships.
- Service orientation: anticipating, recognizing, and meeting customers’ needs.

**Social skills**
Adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others:
- Developing others: sensing others’ development needs and bolstering their abilities.
- Leadership: inspiring and guiding individuals and groups.
- Influence: wielding effective tactics for persuasion.
• Communication: listening openly and sending convincing messages.
• Change catalyst: initiating or managing change.
• Conflict management: negotiating and resolving disagreements.
• Building bonds: nurturing instrumental relationships.
• Teamwork and collaboration: working with others toward shared goals.
  Creating group synergy in pursuing collective goals.  

Every single emotional competency identified above can be directly associated with a Biblical characteristic, qualification and expectation of an Elder in the body of Christ. For instance,

1 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. 2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil. 1 Timothy 3:1-7

5 This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you-- 6 if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. 7 For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, 8 but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. 9 He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. 10 For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. 11 They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. 12 One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." 13 This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth. Titus 1:5-14

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To tie this all together, one can see that Paul clearly understood the value of what Cameron, Green, Goleman and others would much later call emotional intelligence. The competencies can be clearly linked to the Biblical qualifications to even be considered a pastor in local church. According to the Bible, a local church both needs and requires the leadership of pastors, and as seen in this reality, without a gifted enough leader among those pastors functioning as the first among equals (the Lead Pastor/Senior Pastor), the church will fail. It is, therefore, a reality both from a secular and a Biblical viewpoint that the level of the leadership of the Lead Pastor of a local church is paramount to the ability of a church to be transformed from a community organization for Christians to a movement to change the world with the Gospel of Christ.

Core Values Can Never Be Compromised

The third unavoidable reality the author observed while leading the transformation of the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church was the reality that core values can never be compromised. Note the following,

Vision plays a key role in producing useful change by helping to direct, align, and inspire actions on the part of large numbers of people. Without an appropriate vision, a transformation effort can easily dissolve into a list of confusing, incompatible, and time-consuming projects that go in the wrong direction or nowhere at all.  

For the author, the development of the vision and the core values of ministry begin first with establishing what the Core Doctrinal Beliefs are that under no circumstance can be compromised by himself or the church. Those beliefs appear in the churches bylaws as follows:

1. The Bible - “The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author,

29 John P. Kotter, Leading Change, 7.
salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.


2. God - God has always been the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (The Trinity). They are three and one simultaneously. God is the creator of all things including space, time and matter. There is no other God but the Trinitarian God of the Bible. (Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 13:14).


4. Spiritual Growth - Spiritual growth (Sanctification) is a transformation that is only accomplished by the Holy Spirit through a person’s genuine intimate relationship with Christ. As a believer walks in the Spirit, which is to walk in submission to Christ and His leadership in our life, the Spirit matures the believer and produces fruit through the believer
that testifies of the Holy Spirit's work. This is a lifelong process that is not completed until
the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6). This process is fueled by a person’s personal
commitment to learn and apply the Word of God, prayer (both talking and listening to God)
and genuine spiritual community with other believers (the local church). The result of this
process affects every aspect of life. (Galatians 5, John 15, Romans 6:19; 12:2, Ephesians
2:10; 3:14-19; 4:11-16; 5:17-21; 6:10-18)

5. The Church - The Church is not a community organization for Christians but a radical
movement of Christ followers who are united together to connect each other and the world to
the person and cause of Christ! The Church consists of all who follow Christ, but The
Church is called to organize itself into localized fellowships that demonstrate the love of
Christ towards one another in a practical and real way to equip one another to do the same in
a world that does not know Christ. (Matthew 16:18; 28:18-20, Acts 4:32-37; 5:17-33,
Ephesians 2:20-21; 3:10; 4:1-16; Philippians 2:14-15, 1 Peter 2:9-10)

These five doctrines are what produced a vision to be a movement of Christ followers
connecting people to the person and cause of Christ. This vision is stated in the context that
overwhelmingly the generations that are the most unexposed to the Gospel are Generations X
and Y, yet almost every church in the region is geared to reach the Builder and Boomer
generations. As a result, everything in the church must be overwhelming geared to effectively
connect Generations X and Y to the person and cause of Christ. To fulfill the vision of the
church to be a movement that is connecting Generations X and Y to the person and cause of
Christ, four Core Values were developed that every ministry or program must naturally and
purposefully fulfill or that ministry or program simply cannot exist. The Core Values are as
follows:
1. Spiritual Community - Spiritual community is the environment that spiritual growth and the movement of Christ take place. It is not a clique for “Christians” but an open door for all who dare to experience the platform of accountability, growth, and encouragement in which God designed. (Galatians 6:2, Colossians 3:9-15, Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 Peter 4:10)

2. Discipleship - It is this process that leads believers to grow in their faith and therefore, “Trust in Him with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, but in all our ways acknowledge Him so that He will make your pathway straight.” (Proverbs 3:5-6) It is the process that leads us to be followers of Christ, and He, in turn, leads us to be fishers of men! (Mark 1:17) It is not teaching people religious rules but rather equipping them to Walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5), so that they will obey Christ and produce much spiritual fruit (John 15).

3. Evangelism – The primary platform for evangelism is genuine relationships. The only tool for evangelism is sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with those who have yet to repent and believe in Him. (Romans 1:16, 10:10-20)

4. Missions – Missions is a broad term used in many positive ways; however, in the context of this ministry, it is used to describe tangibly impacting our world in a way that testifies of the unconditional commitment of God to man through Jesus Christ. (Matthew 4:23, John 4:7-9, 8:7, 10, 11).

   It is the understanding that these Core Values function in a cyclical pattern in that if one is done right it will naturally feed into the other, creating an ever-increasing perpetual movement.\footnote{See Appendix for illustration.} For instance, as people in the body work together to serve the lost community, it naturally leads to a growth in spiritual community among the body, which leads to discipleship, which always leads to evangelism, which in building genuine relationships with those who do
not know Christ one begins to love and care for the needs of the lost world so that the love of Christ can be clearly demonstrated, which then leads to the cycle repeating yet again and typically with more people and speed and thus increased momentum. Also, it is understandable that people will enter this cycle at different points. Some will get on board through community, some discipleship, some evangelism and some missions.

Furthermore, it is essential to have a short list of Core Values. Larry Bossidy and Ram Charan write,

Leaders who execute focus on a very few clear priorities that everyone can grasp. Why just a few? First anybody who thinks through the logic of a business will see that focusing on three or four priorities will produce the best results from the resources at hand. Second, people in contemporary organizations need a small number of clear priorities to execute well.31

With that said, it was the experience of the author of this thesis project in leading the transformation of the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church that any deviation from the Core Values of Ministry led to a distraction from the vision/purpose of the church – thus, a slowing down in the process of transforming the ethos of the church. Deviations from the Core Values of Ministry created alternate vision and purpose and seemed to always become strongholds to defend the very ethos he was trying to transform – that is one of being a community organization for Christians instead of a movement to change the world with the Gospel. Later, when the ethos of the church had been transformed, deviations did not necessarily present a return to being a community organization for Christians, but they did still create alternate visions and distractions that, at minimum, diluted the focus, energy and resources of the church and therefore reduced the overall effectiveness of the church.

In his book, *Good To Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don’t*,

Jim Collins presents an idea that heavily supports this reality. Collins calls it the Hedgehog Concept. He writes,

Are you a hedgehog or a fox? In his famous essay “The Hedgehog and the Fox,” Isaiah Berlin divided the world into hedgehogs and foxes, based upon an ancient Greek parable: “The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing.” The fox is a cunning creature, able to devise a myriad of complex strategies for sneak attacks upon the hedgehog. Day in and day out, the fox circles around the hedgehog’s den, waiting for the perfect moment to pounce. Fast, sleek, beautiful, fleet of foot, and crafty – the fox looks like the sure winner. The hedgehog, on the other hand, is a dowdier creature, looking like a genetic mix-up between a porcupine and a small armadillo. He waddles along, going about his simple day, searching for lunch and taking care of his home. The fox waits in cunning silence at the juncture in the trail. The hedgehog, minding his own business, wanders right into the path of the fox. “Aha, I’ve got you now!” thinks the fox. He leaps out, bounding across the ground, lightning fast. The little hedgehog, sensing danger, looks up and thinks, “Here we go again. Will he ever learn?” Rolling up into a perfect little ball, the hedgehog becomes a sphere of sharp spikes, pointing outward in all directions. The fox, bounding toward his prey, sees the hedgehog defense and calls off the attack. Retreating back to the forest, the fox begins to calculate a new line of attack. Each day, some version of this battle between the hedgehog and the fox takes place, and despite the greater cunning of the fox, the hedgehog always wins. Berlin extrapolated from this little parable to divide people into two basic groups: foxes and hedgehogs. Foxes pursue many ends at the same time and see the world in all its complexity. They are “scattered or diffused moving on many levels,” says Berlin, never integrating their thinking into one overall concept or unifying vision. Hedgehogs, on the other hand, simplify a complex world into a single organizing idea, a basic principle or concept that unifies and guides everything. It doesn’t matter how complex the world, a hedgehog reduces all challenges and dilemmas to simple – indeed almost simplistic – hedgehog ideas. For a hedgehog, anything that does not somehow relate to the hedgehog idea holds no relevance.\(^{32}\)

Jim Collins found that every single company that met their matrix of a Good To Great:

Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don’t company lived by the Hedgehog Concept. Those who are interested in a presentation of how to use the Hedgehog Concept to develop a defined narrow vision and guiding core value system should read chapter five in *Good

To Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don’t entitled “The Hedgehog Concept (Simplicity within the Three Circles)” and chapter six entitled “The VIP Factor” in Thom Rainer’s book, Breakout Churches.

One of the broadly accepted principles of change management is to first create a sense of urgency for a needed change. The personal experience of this author in leading the transformation of the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church to what is now called Venture, as well as the comparative research this author performed, points to the reality that Core Values must be unapologetically, boldly and stubbornly defended and advanced with the utmost urgency. Logically, if they are indeed “Core” then nothing should be able to compete with them. In addition, John Kotter argues that nothing says “urgent” like boldly eliminating big things that have nothing to do with the Core Values. For instance,

Increasing urgency demands that you remove sources of complacency or minimize their impact: for instance, eliminating such signs of excess as a big corporate air force; setting higher standards both formally in the planning process and informally in day-to-day interaction; changing internal measurement systems that focus on the wrong indexes; vastly increasing the amount of external performance feedback everyone gets … Creating a strong sense of urgency usually demands bold or even risky actions that we normally associate with good leadership. … Bold means cleaning up the balance sheet and creating a huge loss for the quarter. Or selling corporate headquarters and moving into a building that looks more like a battle command center.33

This is why many programs and ministries at Hardin Baptist Church were eliminated during the transformation. Some were eliminated simply because they were not effective, and others were eliminated because they did nothing to fulfill the church’s core values of ministry. For instance, there was a “missions program” in the church that spent lots of money buying magazines and DVD’s from the Southern Baptist Convention and other SBC agencies and affiliated groups about other people doing missions yet ironically, did very little missions

33 John P. Kotter, Leading Change, 42-43.
themselves. The church had split its mission approach between the men and women. The men were active in some things and had done some trips and other projects over the years, but they spent far more time reading and listening to stories about missions than actually doing missions. For the women, one would need a truly creative eye to have found anything that resembled missional activity, especially as defined by our Core Values. The “straw that broke the camel’s back,” and unfortunately caused the exodus of some men and woman from the church, was when the Church Administrator/Treasure refused to write a check out of the tithes and offerings of the church to send the WMU ladies on an all-expense paid trip to yet another conference on missions. After attending conferences, seminars and for decades meeting weekly to read and talk about missions, they were still doing little to nothing that resembled missions. Therefore, the Church Administrator, the Trustees, as well The Lead Pastor (the author of this thesis project), and the rest of the Elders did not feel the non-budgeted spending request to send a dozen woman to a “conference” on missions was actually going to have any effect on missions. It did not fit the vision or Core Values of the church so it simply was not done. They were not told whether they could go or not, but they were told the church was not going to pay for it. This decision required a structure that enabled the leaders to actually lead and make decisions based on the vision and Core Values of the church. A discussion of this structure will occur in Chapter 3 of this thesis project.

Eventually, the church launched a vision to revitalize the southeastern portion of Dallas, NC. It is a section of the town that has a high percentage of generational poverty, gang influence, drug dealing, single mothers, and a high percentage of children and young adults (Gen X and Y) living within it. This vision fit perfectly into the church’s Core Values and overall vision. As a result, the church, in all practicality, gave its facilities to another church and purchased a
warehouse in the middle of southeast Dallas. The church launched a variety of initiatives, programs and relationship building opportunities targeted at the community – all of which clearly reflect the Core Values of the church. In addition, at the time of writing this thesis project, the church is beginning a building campaign to upfit the warehouse into a physical hub for ministry to southeast Dallas, NC and the surrounding region. It will not only house Venture’s worship gatherings, but more importantly, it will serve as a daily launch pad for ministries to the community and region that non-believers will be able to clearly identify as love.

The same philosophy is the testimony of Mosaic in Los Angeles, California. In an interview with Ralph W. Neighbour III, a staff member at Mosaic, he spoke of the transformation Erwin MacManus led them through. The following is a summary of that conversation:

Tom Wolfe took over the leadership of the church in 1969 and led it to become a major mission sending church of young adults. They were one of the top churches for raising up and sending international missionaries in the Southern Baptist Convention but they were not being effective at evangelizing Los Angeles and therefore not being true to the Great Commission. McManus was asked to become the lead pastor in 1994 and he initiated a radical new vision for the church to become a movement that focused on reaching the young non-believing cultural leaders of L.A. This required a radical transition of values, methods, etc. in the church and it was a very difficult transition. To begin the transition Erwin created a new church within the church. He started a new gathering on Sunday evenings. He only invited a small group of people to actually be a part of it. He was always changing the look and feel of the room and did something different every week. The gathering was in the facility at Church On Brady until what was happening on Sunday evenings was larger than what was happening on Sunday mornings. He then moved that gathering to a Night Club in L.A. During all this a war was erupting in the church. There was huge resistance against everything that was happening. Adding to the difficulty was the fact that Tom Wolfe, who had handed the reigns over to Erwin McManus to be the Lead Pastor, was still an Elder in the church and was increasingly doing things that conflicted with the vision McManus was trying to instill in the church. Finally, Erwin came to elders and submitted his resignation asserting the church couldn’t have two lead pastors wanting to go two different directions. The Elders rejected his resignation and affirmed Erwin as the Lead Pastor. They encouraged him if there were all that was left in the church they would stick by him. They then asked Tom Wolfe to
step down and take a leave of absence. Wolfe left but it wasn’t pretty. There was a fairly healthy exodus of people who left the church that were committed to Wolfe and the old ways of the church.

Soon afterwards they sold the property and created a very different movement where there was no centralized gathering point at a property they owned. They took a multi-campus strategy and sought to utilize existing spaces that they could quickly relocate in and out of if needed (leased rather than own.). Everything about the church was set to be changed whenever necessary so that the movement could continue to grow. The ethos became one of change for the purpose of the mission.

This ethos was breathed into the church community by the lead pastor. It was driven by what the lead pastor did and did not do. If he was there to be the custodian then that would have dictated the ethos but if he was there to lead a movement then that would create it. It was, therefore, essential that Erwin was clear on his vision (where they were going and how), that he exemplified perseverance (unwillingness to let go of the core vision), that he constantly verbalized the vision and find new ways to reinforce it. McManus has a bulldog level of tenacity when it comes to their Core Values and Vision, that is “I will die before I let go.” He had a willingness to sacrifice greatly and take huge risks to advance the vision.

Through the transformation the leadership culture changed to tightly control values rather than tightly controlled program. In Mosaic leaders are raised up and released to create programs and methods that are in the confines of a tightly held system of core values. They are always examining where they are tight and where they are lose to make sure it fits their mantra.

Finally, selling the church building was key. McManus believes one of the biggest roadblocks to change is the church building. He believes it drives the budget, programs, and vision. He also believes that it’s the extremely rare church that is able to get beyond the walls of the physical church building.34

In an interview with Farrell Lemings, the Lead Pastor of Grace Covenant Church in Cornelius, NC, he stated that at the beginning of their transition process, and still today, they “narrow their focus on five priorities and build their management team around it.”35 In the experience of this author leading the transformation of Hardin, those he interviewed and in those

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34 Ralph W. Neighbour III, phone interview by author, Los Angeles, CA, 13 March 2012.

35 Farrell Lemings, interview by author, Cornelius, NC, 7 May 2012.
he read about, all had a common trait of uncompromisingly and tenaciously striving towards their vision by requiring that nothing happened that did not perfectly and naturally fit in their Core Values of Ministry. In chapter three of this thesis project, the management system used in the transformation of Hardin to make sure the Core Values of Ministry were implemented without dilution will be presented; therefore, to conclude the matter of this reality, consider the following statements,

Transformational leaders “are sensitive to criticism, but they do not let their critics deter them from the goals and visions they sense God has given them.”

Transformational leaders “never consider a setback a failure.”

Because vision consists of three components, any of which may change, the entire vision is never constant. Our breakout churches, however, were amazingly consistent in their visions year by year. They were open to changing the vision, but they were very careful not to chase the latest fad, the latest methodology, or the presumed most pressing need.

The strategy-driven approach to organizational change assumes that every organization is more effective when “all the horses are pulling in the same direction.” Team building, conflict resolution, or restructuring interventions are doomed to failure until all the organizational members are aware of the organization’s mission and its strategy to fulfill that mission.

The more a mental process is used, the stronger it becomes. … The more I think a given idea, the more it shapes the environment of the mind. … In practical terms, if we get the big ideas right, everything else will follow.

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36 Thom S. Rainer, Breakout Churches, 51.
37 Ibid., 67.
38 Ibid., 128.
A Core Group of Leaders Who Are Completely Committed To the Vision of Transformation Must Surround the Lead Pastor

The fourth unavoidable reality the author observed while leading the transformation of the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church was the reality that a core group of leaders who are completely committed to the vision of transformation must surround the Lead Pastor. If there had not been twelve to fifteen people that sacrificially embraced the vision and were willing to be totally hated if necessary to see it happen, then this thesis project could have never been written as a case study of the author’s church. Inside the twelve to fifteen key people were three that labored and sacrificed even more intensely than the others, and of the three, there was one who perhaps put more of himself in to the process than anybody. There is no amount of argument or rationality that could ever convince the author of this thesis project that the transformation of the ethos of Hardin, or for that matter any other church, can be successful without a core group of leaders surrounding the Lead Pastor who are sacrificially and tenaciously working to see it happen.

The Core Team must certainly be in constant touch with the needs of the people, but the Core Team of leaders can never be confused that they are called to lead the body, not follow the body. Larry Osborne writes, “Good leaders are always in touch with their people. But good undershepherds never forget that they work for the Chief Shepherd, not the sheep.”

This kind of Core Team does not happen on accident, and if a person is modeling their ministry on the methods of Jesus, they will absolutely set out to build such a team. Robert E. Coleman wrote,

The determination with which Jesus sought to fulfill this commission is evident as one reads through the subsequent Gospel accounts. Contrary to what one might expect, as the ministry of Christ lengthened into the second and third years He

41 Larry Osborne, Sticky Teams: Keeping Your Leadership Team and Staff on the Same Page, 53.
gave increasingly more time to the chosen disciples. … The time, which Jesus
invested in these few disciples, was so much more by comparison to that given to
others, that it can only be regarded as a deliberate strategy. He actually spent
more time with His disciples than with everybody else in the world put
together. He ate with them, slept with them, and talked with them for the most
part of His entire active ministry.\footnote{Robert E. Coleman, \textit{The Master Plan of Evangelism} (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company,
1964), 40-43.}

Whether he realized it or not, in his book, \textit{Leading Change}, John Kotter did nothing but
describe the ancient truth revealed by Christ of the necessity of a radically committed inner circle
of leaders. Kotter writes,

Major change is often said to be impossible unless the head of the organization is
an active supporter. What I am talking about here goes far beyond that. In
successful transformations, the president, division general manager, or department
head plus another five, fifteen, or fifty people with a commitment to improved
performance pull together as a team. This group rarely includes all of the most
senior people because some of them just won’t buy in, at least at first. But in the
most successful cases, the coalition is always powerful - in terms of formal titles,
information and expertise, reputations and relationships, and the capacity for
leadership. Individuals alone, no matter how competent or charismatic, never
have all the assets needed to overcome tradition and inertia except in very small
organizations. Weak committees are usually even less effective. Efforts that lack
a sufficiently powerful guiding coalition can make apparent progress for a while.
The organizational structure might be changed, or a reengineering effort might be
launched. But sooner or later, countervailing forces undermine the initiatives.\footnote{John P. Kotter, \textit{Leading Change}, 51.}

Later in the book, Kotter writes another profoundly applicable paragraph:

Major transformations are often associated with one highly visible individual.
Consider Chrysler’s comeback from near bankruptcy in the early 1980’s, and we
think of Lee Iacocca. Mention Wal-Mart’s ascension from small-fry to industry
leader, and Sam Walton comes to mind. Read about IBM’s efforts to renew itself,
and the story centers around Lou Gerstner. After a while, one might easily
conclude that the kind of leadership that is so critical to any change can come
only from a single larger-than-life person. This is a very dangerous belief.
Because major change is so difficult to accomplish, a powerful force is required to
sustain the process. No one individual, even a monarch-like CEO, is ever able to
develop the right vision, communicate it to large numbers of people, eliminate the
key obstacles, generate short-term wins, lead and manage dozens of change
projects, and anchor new approaches deep in the organizations culture. Weak committees are even worse. A strong guiding coalition is always needed – one with the right composition, level of trust, and shared objective. Building such a team is always an essential part of the early stages of any effort to restructure, reengineer, or retool a set of strategies.44

This was certainly the case in the transformation of Hardin Baptist Church, and although the author can look back and see many areas of weakness in his leadership (i.e. his failure to build the kind of social relationships that were needed with his team), he still cannot look without clearly noticing that the majority of his efforts (as poor as some of those efforts may have been) were almost entirely directed at some level or another to the pastors (paid and unpaid), the trustees, the chairman of the deacons, the paid staff, and the lay ministry team directors who by no mistake or coincidence were the ones who at the end of the day were used by God to make the vision become a reality.45

Michael Beitler is a management consultant. In his book, Strategic Organizational Change: A Practitioner’s Guide For Managers and Consultants, he writes about what he considers to be the essential elements for change to occur in an organization. Beitler, referencing John Kotter, writes:

The issue here is not executive knowledge. I have met some extremely knowledgeable executives. The issue here is “buy-in.” Without buy-in from key players, the change effort will fail. Kotter (1996) suggests four key member characteristics for effective coalitions:

1. Position power – the coalition needs key players, including board members and line managers.
2. Expertise and diversity – the coalition needs the expertise and diversity necessary to make informed, intelligent decisions.
3. Credibility – the coalition must have the credibility, based on the member’s reputations, to be taken seriously.
4. Leadership – the coalition must have proven leaders (p.57)

44 Ibid., 51-52.

45 An explanation of each of these positions will be contained in chapter 3.
Kotter (1996) also suggests qualities to avoid; people to keep off the team. He recommends avoiding big egos and “snakes.” … The change agent must have a team (coalition) of committed leaders leading the change effort in each team. These team leaders must pass along essential information to organizational members. Team leaders must immediately confront rumors and provide inspiration for their teams. These leaders must “know how to encourage people to transcend short-term parochial interest” (Kotter, 1996, p.65).

Among the transformational Lead Pastors the author interviewed for this project, two of them made this point the clearest. Dickie Spargo stated one of the biggest keys to the successful transformation that occurred with Bethlehem Church in Gastonia, NC was that he focused his “main efforts on a key group of leaders.” The other was Farrell Lemings. Lemings said that in the first two years of the transformation he focused almost entirely on just building relationships with leaders and potential leaders. He would frequently have two breakfast appointments and two lunch appointments on any given day. From his third year through the present time he has spent the majority of his efforts on the leadership development of those he deems as current or potential key leaders in the church.

In *Good To Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don’t*, Jim Collins argues immensely for leadership, so much so that the first thing he argues a leader should do is find people, that is even before the leader has a vision of what he wants to do with them! Collins writes,

When we began the research project, we expected to find that the first step in taking a company from Good To Great would be to set a new direction, a new vision and strategy for the company, and then to get people committed and aligned behind that new direction. We found something quite the opposite. The executives who ignited the transformations from Good to Great did not first figure out where to drive the bus and then get people to take it there. No, they first got

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47 Dickie Spargo, interview by author, Gastonia, NC, 4 June 2012.

48 Farrell Lemings, interview by author, Cornelius, NC, 7 May 2012.
the right people on the bus (and the wrong people off the bus) and then figured out where to drive it.\textsuperscript{49} 

The author of this project is not challenging this point; however, the vision of Christ’s Church is clearly laid out in Scripture. In the church it is not just finding smart and talented leaders; it is also finding people who already agree with the Biblical mandates of the church. That is, if a church believes in the Bible then the vision and purpose of their local church is not up for debate but rather should be simply read in the Bible and followed. Christ’s expectations for His church are clearly laid out in the New Testament. To Collin’s credit, he is writing to a secular audience with secular goals of profitability as their objective. On the other hand, this thesis project is about transforming the ethos of a local church to match the New Testament ethos of living to reach the world with the Gospel as opposed to living to defend, protect and propagate a religious sub-culture in the name of Jesus. The specifics of how the vision looks in the day-to-day practice of the systems and processes involved in leading a local church are certainly not prescribed in the Bible, but the principles of spiritual community, making disciples, engaging with those who do not believe in Christ and sharing the Gospel with them, etc. are absolutely clearly presented in the New Testament as mandates for the local church. Hence, the author defends presenting his vision as an inseparable part of electing him as the Lead Pastor rather than getting elected and then asking the people what they want to do. It was this vision that brought together a coalition of people. The coalition was not formed around him but around the shared vision that everyone believed came from the Lord and was easily confirmed in the Scripture. It was a vision that many of those in the coalition had been wanting to see happen long before they had ever heard the name of the author of this thesis project. Given that the vision for the transformation of the ethos of Hardin Baptist was not one that needed to be created but rather

\textsuperscript{49} Jim Collins, \textit{Good To Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don’t}, 41.
clearly read in the Bible, the author felt the freedom to build a coalition not to create a vision, but rather to build a coalition that agreed with the Biblically-mandated vision of the church and that would consequently work together to figure out how to transform the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church so that it matched it. As Jim Collins writes, “In a good-to-great transformation, people are not your most important asset. The right people are.”

It was certainly not the case that the core leaders had to agree on everything, but they could not disagree on the overarching vision and core fundamental values. The diversity of gifts and opinions among the leaders led to all kinds of different discussions and outcomes on the details of what to do and when to do it. But, they had to be “all in” with the vision and core values so that they could objectively and constructively come up with the what, when, where and how’s. As harsh as it may sound, it is a cold hard reality that those who simply refuse to buy in to the vision and core values of the Kingdom of God have to get off the leadership bus or they will be guaranteed to cause the bus to wreck. As long as it is the Great Commission, pastors have the authority and mandate of Christ to draw the line in the sand with their flock and only put people in leadership who are on hundred percent in agreement that the church is not a community organizations for Christians but a radical sold out movement of Christ followers who live for nothing other than to bring the Gospel to every tribe and tongue in that He alone may be glorified!

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50 Ibid., 51.
CHAPTER TWO

CATAYLST

In the transformation of the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church, it was observed that strategic and consistent change was a catalyst to create momentum, which of itself is a necessary catalyst for transformation. As discussed in the introduction, a catalyst is something that speeds up a reaction between substances so that the final outcome can be achieved quicker and in some cases even achieved at all. Without a catalyst, some combinations of substances have such great entropy that there is simply not enough energy to even begin the chemical reaction. Other combinations have enough energy to begin but lack the energy needed to overcome the level of entropy and complete the reaction or transformation. In both of these cases, the outcome is unintended and undesired unless the appropriate catalyst is used.

Why a catalyst?

It is the personal experience of leading the transformation of the ethos of Hardin and the author’s observations of other ministries, as well as written scholarship, that the vast majority of local churches will unfortunately not be transformed simply by the preaching of the Word. It is a heart wrenching reality to those who love God and love his Word, and to some possibly even a blasphemous statement that the preaching of the Word of God mixed with God’s people will, unfortunately, not always result in the transformation of those who have adopted an ethos of the church as a community organization for Christians instead of a movement to change the world with the Gospel of Christ. However, from a Biblical standpoint, this should come as no surprise. John the Baptist preached and lived a new ethos, and he was beheaded. Jesus preached and lived a new ethos, and he was crucified. All but one of the Apostles was killed for preaching a new
ethos, and almost, if not all, of these deaths were associated in some manner with those who claimed to love God and follow His ways.

Even the church in Jerusalem, birthed in all the glory and power of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, quickly forgot the Great Commission of Jesus was not just for Jerusalem. It took the martyr of Stephen and the proceeding real threat of severe persecution (ironically being led by Saul who later became Paul) to scatter the church and thus cause the Gospel to move outward to the nations instead of centering itself in and around the temple and synagogues of Jerusalem. These early believers were not idle pew sitters, playing games with their newfound faith in Christ. They were not withholding the Gospel. These early Christians were selling all they had to support the church. They worshipped together daily, and the Good News was spreading all over Jerusalem and people were being added to the church daily.

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47

However, in all this excitement they were not living to take the Gospel out of the city; rather, they were living an ethos that said we love Jesus, He is King, and if you want to hear about it, come to Jerusalem, get on board with us and we will gladly tell you! This certainly is not the picture of the typical “frozen chosen” dead church one might think of when they picture a church in need of a transformation; yet, in all the passion, power, signs and wonders going on among the believers in Jerusalem, in what was literally the first local church, there was still no ethos to take the Gospel from Jerusalem to the outermost parts of the earth. The last words of
Jesus were for them take the Gospel to the nations, not expect the nations to come to them to get it! Whether intentional or not, the vision had become the church in Jerusalem, not the church as a movement to the nations - that is until God introduced a catalyst to the mixture of the teaching of the Word. That catalyst was the brutal murder of Stephen. In Acts 7, Luke writes out the speech (or more rightly the sermon) Stephen gave those who had rose up against him. The following is what happened at the end of it,

54 Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. 55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." 57 But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. 58 Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep. 1 And Saul approved of his execution. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. 3 But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. 4 Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. 5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. 6 And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. 8 So there was much joy in that city. Acts 7:54-8:8

Further note how some scholars demonstrate the catalytic nature of this event,

The great persecution (this episode is the first time that Acts uses the word) and scattering throughout Judea and Samaria that it caused is the backdrop for the chapters that follow. Saul’s actions in this persecution are confirmed from his own letters (1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13, 23; Phil. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:13). Saul went house-to-house looking for Christians, which suggests that they no longer met openly in the temple (5:42).1

On that day indicates that the persecution of the church was signaled by Stephen’s martyrdom. It implies that Jewish leaders approved of Stephen’s execution. Israel was in the process of confirming its tragic choice to reject Jesus as her Messiah. The fact that all the Jerusalem believers except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria was God’s method of fulfilling the mandate of 1:8. The word “scattered” (diesparēsan), also used in 8:4, comes from the verb speirō, used to refer to sowing seed (Matt. 6:26; 13:3–4, 18; 25:24, 26; Luke 8:5; 12:24; etc.) This statement also prepares the way for the ministry of Philip in Samaria (Acts 8:4–25). Though Luke refers to “all,” he could not have included everyone, for the church continued on in Jerusalem. From the context it may be concluded that the primary objects of persecution were the Greek-speaking Jews. They would have been easily identifiable and would have been associated with Stephen. Why the apostles did not leave the city is not stated. Perhaps their sense of obligation to the church in Jerusalem kept them there. The Jerusalem church undoubtedly became more Jewish with the evacuation of people who would be more sympathetic with Stephen. At the same time this persecution deepened the cleavage between the church and Judaism.²

It took persecution—mainly the scattering of the bicultural, foreign Jews—to get the church to begin to do what Jesus had commanded them back in 1:8. As the second-century North African theologian Tertullian pointed out, “the blood of Christians is the seed” of the church’s growth.³

One can certainly find events in Scriptures where it was only the Word of God preached or personally read that led to transformation. However, on many occasions in the Scripture it was the Word of God and other God-ordained catalytic events (like the persecution of the church) that led the people of God to repent and engage with a new set of core values (ethos). The base formula for the transformational work of God is certainly His Word and His Spirit mixed with human obedience: however, a reader of the New Testament cannot miss the signs and wonders throughout the ministry of Jesus and the proclaimers of the Gospel of Christ in the New Testament that were used to open the eyes and heart of those to whom they were preaching. These signs and wonders were God-ordained catalysts introduced to the equation to overcome


the entropy of the heart and energize the system so that a transformation could take place!

Whether it be how God designed man or what is left of man after the fall, either way, the use of catalysts to stir and energize man to obey God is seen all over both the Old and New Testaments.

For some it is the experience of the fruit of their sin, others the death of a loved one, and for some it is just the void in life itself that God uses as the catalyst that overcomes the entropy in their life and energizes the system in a way that brings about repentance and transformation.

This is not meant to be a theological construct of how humans are saved but only to recognize throughout the Scriptures and church history that God frequently tosses in things to the delivery of His Word and the conviction of the Holy Spirit to energize humans to repent and believe.

It is the assertion of this thesis project that those catalytic items added to the mixture of the Word of God and the people of God all fall under the very idea of what discipleship and leading and equipping God’s people is all about. For most believers, the key “catalytic” element in their spiritual growth is nothing more than the intentional Gospel-centered relationships they have with other believers. It is those relationships that bring the needed energy to the system for the person to consistently respond to the acquired knowledge of the Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit in them. For some it is the local church itself that serves as the catalyst to say yes to Jesus. Note the writing of Thabit Anyabwile,

In addition to these excellent recommendations, a church member should recognize the centrality and usefulness of the local church in evangelism. Where we are involved in gospel-preaching churches, then by God’s grace the gospel will be preached in each Lord’s Day gathering. Inviting our non-Christian friends to church services is an excellent way to expand on the personal conversations you have had with them about the gospel. It’s also an opportunity for them to see the gospel “fleshed out” in the lives of an actual congregation of believers. In the church, non-Christians should see the kind of unity and love that testifies to the truth and power of the gospel and God’s love (John 13:34-34; 17:20-21). Our friends will see the gospel with their eyes as they witness Christians observing baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Both in the way we live together as a church and in the ordinances of the church, we display the gospel in ways that complement
the preached word of the gospel.⁴

It is, therefore, the job of the leaders of the local church to pray, fast and study the Word to get a vision from God on how they are to lead His people to follow His will and by doing that find out from Him what catalyst they need to energize people to obey the Scriptures and the leadership of the Holy Spirit. It is why Farrell Lemings, Lead Pastor of Grace Covenant Church in Cornelius, NC, said they have a constant huge emphasis on prayer and fasting. They believe their job as pastors is to get with God and get a vision to lead the people – to find out the catalyst God wants us to use to stir His people to follow Him!⁵

Sometimes it may truly just be to read the Word to the people, but other times it may be to preach the Word in “x fashion” along with doing “y” and “z” that God uses to open closed eyes, deaf ears and soften cold hearts to listen to His word and respond. These added elements are nothing less and nothing more than catalysts to equip God’s people to obey God’s Word. They do not replace the Word or the Holy Spirit, but rather serve as a catalyst to overcome the entropy in the system that leaves the system so outweighed by entropy that it is static. These catalysts must obviously be Holy Spirit initiated or they will not induce the church to obey God. If a catalyst is not led of the Holy Spirit, it will very likely energize people towards idolatry.

**Why momentum?**

To better understand the practical implication of this catalytic principle in the transformation of Hardin, one must also understand how a catalyst and momentum work hand-in-hand. The following are pertinent excerpts from different authors to help the reader see the

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⁵ Farrell Lemings, interview by author, Cornelius, NC, 7 May 2012.
link between a catalyst, momentum and their necessity in leading the transformation of the ethos of a local church.

Momentum is the greatest of all change agents [(a Catalyst!)]
More than 90 percent of the successful changes we’ve instituted in our organization have been the result of creating momentum before asking people to change.  

The formula for momentum is \( P = MV \). \( P \) being momentum, \( M \) equaling mass, and \( V \) equaling velocity. Science understands momentum as the combination of mass and velocity. … In other words if you’re missing either mass or velocity, the equation ends at zero. There’s zero momentum. But any mass and any velocity joined together begin to create momentum. 

Mass equals people. Without people there is no momentum.

We cannot underestimate the importance of mass in the acceleration of momentum, but the warnings should not be taken lightly. We must listen carefully to the characterizations that exist so that we do not miss the warnings that we need to embrace. Bigger is not always better. The size of the mass does not equal the degree of momentum. There are extremely large things that have no momentum at all. … In my experience, I have seen that, before churches grow, they often first decline. I know that’s been the case in my own life. Jesus speaks of pruning the tree before it bears fruit. It’s hard for us to believe that, before you can grow larger in a way that honors God, you may actually have to grow smaller. But growing smaller is not the goal. You don’t prune the tree to kill it but to thicken it and allow healthy growth to take place.

For mass to become momentum, there must be velocity. Just as momentum is dependent upon mass, if there’s no velocity, there’s no momentum either. So you can have a substantial mass without velocity and miss the objective God has for the church. Velocity is the church’s answer for speed. Speed contains less information than velocity. Speed is used only to express how fast something is moving, but it contains no directional or coordinate information. Velocity is different. It always specifies direction. So while speed is about motion, velocity is about movement. Velocity is speed with somewhere to go. Velocity is speed with a purpose, speed with intentionality. Velocity made human is action with direction. It is speed focused around a goal.

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6 John C. Maxwell *Developing the Leaders Around You*, 18

7 Erwin McManus, *An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind*, 67.

8 Ibid., 67.

9 Ibid., 68-69.

10 Ibid., 71.
To be in movement is by definition to be in constant motion, which requires momentum. To create momentum, a catalyst has to be introduced, but once momentum is achieved, momentum itself becomes a massive catalyst to not only further accelerate the transformation but, if done correctly, to keep the transformation running toward the goal (velocity). J. D. Greear, Lead Pastor of Summit Church in the Raleigh/Durham region of North Carolina, said in an interview with the author of this thesis project that the number one most impactful and/or noticeable leadership element in the transformation of Summit Church was only fighting battles that created momentum. He then said this went hand-in-hand with only making changes that correlated directly with the values being preached from the stage. Each change was a catalyst to inspire people to obey the Scriptures and in so doing built the necessary momentum to transform the church.

In the life of Hardin, the goal was to see the ethos of the church become that of a movement to change the world instead of a community organization for Christians. McManus possibly stated it best when he wrote,

> Change isn’t new. There has always been change. What’s new is how fast and how dramatically things are changing. The pace of change is simply different. In many ways the church was unprepared for the acceleration that has hit us. As the church was building on values that affirmed stability, security, predictability, and standardization, the era of change seemed to catch us by surprise. This is ironic when you consider that the church was intended to be a revolution – a movement, not an institution. While we must always endeavor to be relevant to the culture in which we live, we must also remember that we are strangers, out of town guests, in this world. We are to pitch tents, not to build cathedrals. The church must always be ready to move. But sometimes we choose to build monuments rather than create movement.

John C. Maxwell wrote it this way, “Not all change is improvement, but without change

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11 J. D. Greear, interview by author through the phone, Raleigh, NC, 24 May 2012.

12 Erwin McManus, *An Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God Had in Mind*, 64.
there can be no improvement.”\textsuperscript{13} Maxwell also wrote, “When you’re through changing, you’re through.”\textsuperscript{14}

In reality, change should be a constant part of the life of the church. Bibliically, there should always exist a momentum of change in a local church. If the Holy Spirit is constantly changing the individuals who make up a local church (Philippians 1:6) then logically, if each individual part of something is changing, the sum of those individual parts is changing as well. But change is not just an academic doctrinal reality for the Body of Christ; it is also a tremendous practical catalyst in the Body of Christ. Change, when done right, creates momentum, and as previously discussed, momentum is the greatest catalyst that exists. The author has encountered too many pastors who seem to be waiting on a sign from the people that they are ready for change, but in fact, change is what makes people ready for change because change creates momentum, which serves as the greatest catalyst to change! This is why leadership consultants encourage rapid, meaningful, strategic and consistent change as the catalyst to transform an organization,

One of the myths in organization and leadership is that it takes a long time to transform an organization. I thoroughly disagree with part of that. Certainly it would take a long time to change General Motors. Big organizations are very difficult to change. My point is, smaller organizations like Brunswick, the bowling and fishing equipment manufacture that underwent a turnaround, can be and must be changed very rapidly or they won’t change at all. You’ve got to get the attention of the people and make the changes while they’re looking. The way you attack big organizations, if attack isn’t too hostile a word, is you take the part of the organization that seems ready, then you make changes very fast. … The first step, and I’m talking generically, is that he or she has got to do something that’s dramatic, that’s visible, and that has resonance throughout the whole organization – something that signifies direction.\textsuperscript{15}

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\footnotesize\textsuperscript{13} John C. Maxwell, \textit{Developing the Leader Within You}, 73.
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\footnotesize\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 52
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When you look at theories of organizational change, theories of transformation, they always have three phases. One is the unfreezing phase, where you have the wake-up call. The second is where you undergo a lot of rapid change. And the third is kind of refreezing; you know, installing the changes, making sure they’re enduring. The process is ongoing, it’s three acts, but there’s never a completion to the third act. You’ve just got to keep rolling over and continuing again.  

Most major change initiatives are made up of a number of smaller projects that also tend to go through the multistep process. So at any one time, you might be halfway through the overall effort, finished with a few of the smaller pieces, and just beginning other projects. The net effect is like wheels within wheels.  

When change itself becomes a part of the life of the church, in that change is no longer the enemy but the expectation, odds are the church is following the leadership of the Holy Spirit and longing to do whatever can reach people with the Gospel! There is a strong likelihood that a church where change is the expectation is also a church with noticeable momentum. Osborne writes of the church where he serves as the Lead Pastor,  

Basically, we’ve been able to build an openness to change into our DNA that is best illustrated by a conversation I had with a man and his family a few years after we’d made a particularly significant church wide programming change. He said, “We grew up in a church where ever change was a major battle, so we were bummmed when a few weeks after we’d decided to settle in, you got up and talked about the changes that were going to take place. We were so worried that we even thought of leaving before the battle broke out. We couldn’t believe it when nothing happened. We still can’t believe how easily this church accepts change.” Of course, it wasn’t nearly as easy as it looked. But I sure was glad that he saw it that way.  

What Changes Were Used as Catalysts to Create Momentum in the Transformation of Hardin Baptist?  

The author of this thesis project led Hardin through constant and consistent change. The

16 Ibid., 94.  
18 Larry Osborne, Sticky Teams: Keeping Your Leadership Team and Staff on the Same Page, 182.
one thing that became normal was that nothing remained normal! However, change was not random. Every change was designed to be a catalyst to increase mass and velocity and thus build momentum and create the necessary catalyst to energize the transformation. Each change was intended to increase the amount of people and/or increase the church’s ability to increase the amount of people who believed the church was a movement to change the world and not a community organization for Christians. Anything big or small that served to defend or propagate the church as a community organization for Christians had to be eliminated or changed to something that would propagate the church as a movement to change the world. Anything that carried a neutral effect on the ethos of the church was deemed dead weight on the transformation and either eliminated or changed to propagate the church as a movement to change the world. Not everything was changed at once, but over the first five years of the transformation process almost everything was changed at some level; it is no coincidence then that the five-year mark was also when the ethos of the church had clearly changed. Although the new ethos in the body was very immature, infantile and vulnerable, it still had clearly changed. The following is a sampling of some of the things that were changed in the first five years. Chapter 3 will discuss some of the most essential changes that made these possible.

Sunday Morning Worship

One of the catalyst for change that the author felt needed to be introduced into Hardin Baptist Church to energize the transformation, was a constant and steady process of changing the Sunday AM worship gathering to one that would intentionally reach the target group. In the beginning of the transition, there was only one Sunday morning worship gathering, and it was at 11:00 AM. This was not a one-time change but rather a constant process of change that in each
Step brought the worship gathering closer and closer to what the author and the other leaders believed to be the ideal “style” and level of excellence that was needed to best connect with the unchurched Gen X and Gen Y in the region. This thesis project will not describe the specifics so that the reader is not left with a recommendation for a style of worship. The point here is that through prayer and fasting the author and other leaders felt led of the Holy Spirit to create a certain type of worship gathering that they believed would be attractional, comprehensible, inviting and relevant to the unchurched Gen X and Gen Y people that were invited to attend. Murren writes,

Something very profound happens in a congregation when we decide that making the message of Christ accessible and intelligible for new comers takes precedence over our own needs. [Note, an ethos opposite of being a community organization FOR Christians]. That priority, I believe pleases God. And as we open our hearts to include the new, the lonely, the broken, we find that they are healed, and so are we. My guess is that no more than 10 percent of the churches in the United States consider reaching new people their major focus. If you’ve ever had the opportunity to observe a highly evangelistic congregation, however, you’ve probably noticed that while the challenges are great moral is hither there than in other places … Most believers, I think, are unaccustomed to seeing such a sustained concern for reaching the lost; but once they do, they become involved with great enthusiasm.19

There were guiding principles involved in changing the worship gatherings, one of which was that the preaching of the Word had to remain the most prominent part of the worship gathering. Although many things were changed to add to the presentation of the sermon (custom made graphics and videos for each series and individual sermons in the series, stage props, drama, etc.), at no point did the process of constantly working things towards a specific new “style” and level of excellence for the Sunday morning worship gathering have as an option lowering the priority of the preaching of the Word. In his book, Effective Evangelistic Churches:

19 Doug Murren, Churches That Heal: Becoming a Church that Mends Broken Hearts and Restores Shattered Lives (West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing Co., 1999), 103.
Successful Churches Reveal What Works and What Doesn’t, Thom Rainer writes,

The size of the church, measured in average attendance, did not change the overwhelmingly positive response to preaching. In churches with an attendance above 1,500 or below 100, the two extremes in our study, 100 percent of the respondents called preaching the most important factor in their churches’ growth. That response never fell below 85 percent for any size church.20

From the very beginning of the author’s ministry and still at the time of the writing of this thesis project, the author/Lead pastor of Venture (formerly Hardin Baptist) preaches a weekly sermon that lasts, on average, up to 45 minutes. He continues to preach expositional type sermons that he writes himself. He spends ten to twenty hours a week preparing one sermon that he will preach three times every Sunday morning (at the time of this thesis project, Venture has a worship gathering every Sunday morning at 8:00, 9:30 and 11:00). He also spends a great deal of time preparing the series itself. For instance, the author has preached through the books of John, Galatians, Proverbs, Genesis, Colossians, James, etc. As previously stated, a tremendous amount of work goes in to packaging these sermon with a high level of creativity to, at minimum, inspire people on the importance of listening to them and to appeal to their senses as much as possible, thus, maximizing their understanding of the subject matter. At the writing of this thesis project, the author is preaching through a series he wrote that covers all the teachings of Christ in all four of the Gospels. Each Sunday every attender is given note sheets that accompany a visual presentation that runs while the author preaches. In addition, in recent years, one week in advance the author posts to the church’s website study helps for the Scriptures he will be preaching the following Sunday. It is fundamental that the style on Sunday morning is never confused with the substance. The style is only there to be a catalyst to the substance. Furthermore, this is not being written in any way to bring praise to the author but to emphasize

the point that the author believes the constant improvement of what was done on Sunday morning, both in the excellence by which it was done as well as what was actually being done, produced a vital change to create catalytic momentum towards being a movement to reach the unchurched, as opposed to a community organization for Christians. Elmer Towns and Warren Bird write,

Tex Sample grew up in an oral culture. … Today Sample is a professor of church and society at a seminary and he says it concern him greatly “that my children and grandchildren find church ‘boring’ and not relevant to their lives.” His newest book, The Spectacle of Worship in a Wired World, says that a chasm separates the generations born since 1945 and those who came before that time. At the heart of the difference between these generations, he argues, is electronic culture, a framework that involves fundamentally different ways of experiencing and knowing the world. “If we are to reach the generations that have grown up with television and other electronic media as daily parts of their lives,” he says, “we must understand that for those steeped in this ‘wired’ culture, [meaning arises from] the convergence of image, sound, and visualization, rather than from any one of them individually.” A number of churches are doing just that with their worship and training. Teachers and preacher are putting just as much energy and creativity into the delivery as into the content. “Talking head” monologues are being replaced by team presentations, dramatic illustrations, and other multimedia enhancements. Or they’re at least being supplemented by creative visual support, such as colorful overheads or PowerPoint-style video projection. Churches that reach high percentages of the unchurched or the younger generations almost without exception are very intentional about maintaining high standards of excellence and cultural relevance in communication. There are many ways to increase a church’s effectiveness in these areas. The only requirement is biblically motivated passion to show that God cannot be limited to yesteryear. … Your church can’t afford not to capitalize on the opportunities today to increase your communicate effectiveness by using multi-sensory, multimedia tools.21

Therefore, changing the “style” and level of excellence of the Sunday Morning worship gathering was all about providing a catalyst to focus the church on what was effective with the unchurched as opposed to the preferences of the community organization for Christians. It was also meant to create momentum through increasing the number of people attending the worship gatherings and specifically increasing it with those who had a high potential of walking in the

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front door with a value system inclined towards reaching the unchurched as opposed to performing a ritualistic service for those in a weekly meeting of their club.

The effect of each change that was made in the Sunday Morning worship gatherings drew more and more people into the church. People were committing their lives to Christ, being baptized and partnering with the church (gaining membership). In addition, people starting partnering with the church who had stopped attending as a child or when they graduated high school. These people came with a distain for doing things simply because it was the way it had always been done. They wanted to do things that would reach their friends for Christ and not discourage their friends, like they had previously been. The result was that excitement grew from the increasing numbers of those in the church who were cheering on the vision of the new ethos, and they quickly outnumbered the ones trying to keep it from happening. The enemy went into overdrive and used people to constantly discourage and run people off who supported the new vision. But, as big as the backdoor was, the front door was bigger, and that front door was clearly the Sunday morning worship gathering. So many new people partnered and so much momentum was gained from the worship gatherings that there was never a time when an official vote of the church did not overwhelming support what fit the new ethos.

Some would argue against such growth because it results in far more immature believers in the local church than mature ones. Some may suggest that a church should “be” mature, meaning it should always have more mature, churched people in it than newly converted/unchurched people. The author of this thesis project argues against that assertion. If indeed Jesus meant that if we followed Him then He would make us fishers of men (Mark 1:17), if we believe that our identity in Christ and our actions are intended to underline and highlight the Gospel we preach so that the world will glorify God (1 Peter 2:9-12), if we believe that our
very identity is ambassadors of Christ to bring the message of reconciliation to the world (2 Corinthians 5:17-20), and if the mission of the church is indeed to intentionally bring the Gospel to the lost world, call it to repentance and belief in Jesus, and teach it to follow Him (Matthew 28:18-20), then that means if we are mature and doing what we as Christians are supposed to do, we will then be managing a constant overwhelming influx of people into our local churches who are brand new to the faith and full of spiritual immaturity. If we are being faithful to our task (the sign of maturity) then we will have a boat full of fish flopping around and in desperate need of leadership. No good fisherman is considered a good fisherman if there are more fisherman in the boat than there are fish, and no honest evaluation of the New Testament can lead a follower of Jesus to think they are not supposed to be fishing for men. This Biblical truth is the underlying reason O. S. Hawkins wrote a book entitled, *Drawing the Net: 30 Practical Principles For Leading Others to Christ Publicly and Personally*,

> Drawing the net is what the preacher or layman does when he extends the gospel invitation. Drawing the net is what the Christian does when, after presenting the message of salvation, he calls for a decision. Drawing the net is what Peter did at Pentecost when the Bible says, “With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them [to come to Christ] (Acts 2:40). This book is designed to equip the reader to become better prepared to extend the invitation of the good news publicly as well as personally. It is for the pastor in his pulpit. It is for the businessman sitting next to a lost person on an airplane. It is for the young man sitting across the lunch table at school. It is for the lady in the courtroom or the boy on the football team. It is designed for the bi-vocational pastor, the evangelist who wants to sharpen his tools. In short, this volume is designed for anyone anywhere who will take seriously the call of Christ and become active in drawing the net.”

**Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting**

Another example of something that was intentionally changed to be a catalyst was the

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22 O. S. Hawkins, *Drawing the Net: 30 Practical Principles For Leading Others to Christ Publicly and Personally* (Dallas, TX: Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 2002), 16.
Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting. The term “prayer meeting” had been used loosely because the expectation of the old ethos was that it would be yet another preaching service followed by a short time of prayer. The prayers were almost uniformly always to heal physically sick people who were headed to heaven. There is certainly nothing wrong with praying for the healing of brothers and sisters in Christ; however, the church prayer list would be overrun with Christians who had anything from a common cold to a sore toe yet hardly ever the mention of somebody dying and headed for hell! About a month in advance the author announced what would be a new format for the Wednesday Night Pray Meeting. Instead of preaching with a little prayer at the end, they would instead just pray for the spiritual needs in the church and the community!

The “community organization for Christians” crowd despised the change because the purpose was clearly to remove yet another bastion of inward focus where they only needed each other, to an outward focus where everybody clearly needed Jesus. Although many never did understand and/or agree with the idea, the few that did brought energy and life to the church – catalytic momentum! One such story is that of a man named Tim.

Tim spent the majority of his childhood, teenage years and adult life in and out of prison and addicted to drugs. Before the author became the Lead Pastor of Hardin Baptist, Tim had actually taken part in a robbery with another man who brutally murdered a person in the process. Tim’s testimony, along with other corroborating evidence, helped seal the murder conviction of his friend, but Tim still bore a tremendous amount of guilt about what happened. Add to that guilt the long, long list of bad things he had done and there left was a man in his 40’s who regretted almost everything about his entire life.

The attendance at the first night of the new Wednesday night prayer meeting was cut in half from the previous week. Adding to that was the dead air in the room when the pastor and
author of this thesis project started the gathering with a request for people to share only the prayer requests that had an obvious spiritual component and was about themselves or a person they were directly involved in ministering to (no request for somebody’s second cousin’s, neighbor’s, former dog’s owner that they didn’t even know the name of). For what seemed an eternity, everybody just sat there and stared at the Lead Pastor until suddenly Tim raised his hand.

Tim easily weighed over 350 pounds and stood over six feet tall. He had a big deep voice that had been rasped by years of heavy cigarette smoking. For about five minutes he poured his heart out on his need to find victory over sin. Even those who had been sitting silent and mad about the change could not remain unmoved and tears filled their eyes. Everyone gathered around Tim and prayed for him, and despite his appearance and smell of smoke and must, most everybody hugged him as best they could. In that moment, Hardin Baptist resembled a movement of Christ. As Jim Cymbala wrote, “We began to think of ourselves as a “Holy Ghost emergency room” where people in spiritual trauma could be rescued.”23 The author cannot testify that a Brooklyn Tabernacle type story came from that night’s prayer meeting, but a few years later when the physical consequences of all that Tim had done to his body finally bore its full fruit and killed him, the author of this thesis project preached his funeral with joyful tears in the confidence that he will see Tim in heaven worshiping Jesus for all eternity. For those who despised the ethos the church was becoming, Tim’s story only served as a temporary appeasement before they soon began to work just as hard as ever to stop it. But, the church now had a story; a story that was a catalyst to create another notch of momentum to help the church know what it feels like to be a movement of Christ instead of a community organization for Christians. It was catalytic!

23 Jim Cymbala, Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire: What Happens When God’s Spirit Invades the Heart of His People (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 29.
Stopped Regular Business Meetings

The church only went into a business session to vote on something that required the vote of the church. This will be further discussed in Chapter 3. For the purpose of Chapter 2, it should just be noted that the business meetings created nothing but opportunities to fight each other and had no benefit whatsoever for equipping the body for the work of the ministry. These meetings were an incredibly bad way for the church to be led.

For example, prior to the author of this thesis project becoming the Lead Pastor of Hardin Baptist Church, someone made a motion in a regular monthly business meeting to purchase twenty-eight acres of land. Without any further research at all, the church voted to purchase the property. The reasoning is said to have been that God was not making any more land in Hardin and that the church might want to build a youth camp on it one day. In the end, only one acre of the land was suitable for building and the land proved to be a totally worthless for the purposes of the church. Even those who had saw the church as a community organization for Christians agreed it was a useless purchase. The irony was that if the church had held on to the land they could have likely turned a profit with it; instead, they voted to sell it before the land ever had a chance to increase in value. The land was river front property and a perfect location for a high-end home. The church had already listed the property for re-sale before the author of this thesis project became the Lead Pastor.

In another monthly business meeting before the author became the Lead Pastor of the church, the church ended up in an outrageous fight over what the Bible teaches on divorce and its relevance to any level of service in the church. Months later a consultant had to be hired to help them sort out the problems, and the overall process resulted in a large exodus from the church and an end to the evangelistic movement that was going on at the time.
In short, it was clear to see that the negative experienced from the regular meetings overwhelmingly outweighed any positive benefit that ever came from a monthly business meeting. Furthermore, for far too many people the focus and conversation of the church was the monthly business meeting and not the ethos of reaching people who did not know Christ. This, of itself, was enough to justify ending them as a necessary removal of a barrier to becoming a movement of the Gospel. Of course, the discussions from the previous month’s business meetings lingered all month in the halls of the church building, people’s phone lines and the local breakfast and lunch spots. It was the opinion of this author and the leaders of the church that almost any form of communication and interaction with the church had to be better than the regularly scheduled business meeting. In Chapter 3, the structure that enabled this to be changed will be discussed. Business meeting began to only occur when there was a matter dictated by the new Bylaws that needed to be voted on.\(^{24}\) The results were that it lowered the noise and inefficiency throughout the church caused by the monthly business meetings and therefore opened the door for a different conversation to take place. It also became a catalyst for the new leadership structure in the church to more efficiently lead the transformation of the church to be a movement to change the world rather than a club with a monthly business meeting where everyone gets to gripe and complain about all that did not happen that month in the way they wanted it to happen (to be discussed in Chapter 3).

Canceled Vacation Bible School And Started A Soccer Camp In Its Place

The church used the funds and volunteers it would normally use for Vacation Bible School to launch a five day soccer camp at a local city park. It was free to anybody in the

\(^{24}\) Refer to the Appendix to read the Bylaws. Included is a copy of the first Bylaws approved by the church in the transition as well as the most recent version as of the writing of this thesis project.
community that wanted to attend. Far more unchurched people attended this than anything else the church did throughout the year. The Gospel was shared every night and follow-up teams visited with everybody that either did not attend Hardin or expressed a need for some kind of follow-up. As of the writing of this thesis project, some of the key leaders in the church are people that were reached through soccer camp. This thesis project is in no way suggesting that Vacation Bible School cannot be an effective outreach strategy; however, in the context of leading the transformation of the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church, the author and the other leaders felt this change would create catalytic momentum towards getting the church to see how effective the Gospel could be if it was a movement outside the walls of the church.

Paid Off the Land Debt of a Church Plant

There was approximately $15,000 dollars in the “mission fund.” The author of this thesis project heard of a growing church plant in their region that was focused on reaching people living in one of the largest truly low-income areas in the region. He led Hardin to use its mission fund to pay off the church plant’s land debt so the church plant could build a small building to hold its worship gatherings and weekday ministries for the this neighborhood. Spending the entire fund on this church plant was a huge change from the past habits of sending very small checks to a long list of ministries. It was a change that created an immediately celebrated win and thus created momentum towards the formation of the ethos of the church to be a movement sold out to the Gospel and not a club for Christians. In the club mentality, everybody’s opinion had to be specifically pleased. This translated into a long list of ministries being supported with very little funding. However, in a movement, the goal is to unify people around a narrow goal and pour all the energy into that goal. Using the mission fund all on one project became a
catalyst to help the church see what could happen if it focused on doing one thing great instead of tons of things with little to no impact other than appeasing Christians within the church.

**Stopped Paying For Sunday School Materials From The Church Budget**

The money was instead used for outreach events and service projects in the community. Those who could not afford the Sunday School material were still given a copy free of charge. Everybody knew those who truly could not afford it (i.e. some of the elderly widows living on social security who could barely afford their food and medicine). The material only cost a few dollars a piece every three months but cumulatively added up, especially when people protested the changing ethos by withholding their tithes. This change demonstrated that when things needed to be cut it was not going to be those things that used resources to bring the Gospel to those who needed to be saved. It was a catalyst to teach the church to sacrifice its comforts to advance the Gospel. This is opposite of what clubs do. Clubs are isolationist; movements are not. This change created a catalyst that demanded people start considering what was more important – the ease of receiving printed materials they had received for years or reaching people for Christ. This small change created noticeable momentum in the process of transforming the ethos of the local church.

**The Lead Pastor Quit Baptizing People**

To emphasize each individual’s personal responsibility to make disciples, the Lead Pastor and author of this thesis project stopped baptizing people. People were now going to be baptized by somebody in the body that was going to take responsibility for their spiritual growth. Dads’ started baptizing their children, women started baptizing the other women they led to Christ
(Titus 2), etc. It is not the belief of this author that it is wrong for a Lead Pastor to baptize people, and he himself has since done so; however, by making it a policy that is only deviated from in the very rare case, it formed a catalyst to create momentum in teaching people that the church, that is everybody in it, are a part of the movement to change lives with the Gospel. This ethos must be at the grass roots level of the church or it will not be the ethos of the church.

Stopped Calling People Members and Start Calling Them Partners

Calling people members did nothing but reinforce to a person that they were joining a club. However, when a person partnered they were told they were committing to play a role in the local church to assists it in the movement of Christ. The difference between “membership” and “partnership” was clearly spelled out in the class people took before officially becoming a part of the church. Those who were looking for a “membership” ethos were told Hardin was likely not going to be the kind of church they were looking for. This was a small semantic change that was clearly used as a catalyst to create momentum in the transformation of the ethos of the church.

Stopped Calling It Hardin Baptist Church and Started Just Calling It Hardin

Again, in the end this was nothing but a semantic change; however, no one has likely ever heard somebody seriously introduce themselves as “Bill Smith Human Being,” so why does the church feel it is necessary to keep telling everybody they are a church? Is it because the actions of the church do not make it clear? If churches function according to the Biblical definition of the church then everybody in the community will clearly know it is a church and its head is Jesus Christ! Movements, nor their ethos, ever go unnoticed! The author does not feel it
is wrong to use the word church in referring to one’s local church, but the author did feel it was a change that created a catalyst to build momentum in teaching the church that they are a movement and not a community organization for Christians.
CHAPTER 3

SYSTEM

Everything functions in some sort of system. Bad, good, random or planned, everything functions in and from systems. The reality is that those systems contain within them the potential outcome of whatever is operating in them. Michael Allison and Jude Kaye write,

A vision without a plan is a hallucination. … The starting place for the implementation of the strategic plan should be on identifying the changes – the skills needs, systems and structures, and organization culture changes – that bridge the gap between the old way of doing things and the new way things need to be done.¹

The above is the best explanation of why an essential leadership element for leading the transformation of the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church was creating the best possible systems for supporting the transformation.

The specific systems being discussed in this chapter are not being given as the only possible way to lead the transformation of a local church’s ethos but are those that had the most impact on the transformation of Hardin Baptist Church. The general idea of the first system will be heavily defended as the Scripturally mandated way to govern a local church. The second system will be presented as what the author felt was the wisest way forward in leading the transformation of Hardin Baptist Church. It is the opinion of this author that regardless of the specific methods chosen by a Lead Pastor to lead his church through a transformation, he will, at minimum, be forced to seriously and significantly address the general areas these two systems address.

In addition, the truth is that each of these systems could be viewed as yet another “catalyst” that should have been included in chapter two of this thesis project; however, the

author felt it prudent to set these two systems apart to both highlight the need to understand and address the systems in the church as well as the critical and massive importance each of the ones being presented in this thesis project had on the successful leadership of the transformation of the church. The two systems that will be addressed in this chapter are as follows:

1. Governance
2. Execution

**Governance**

Why does it matter?

If everything truly rises and falls on leadership then how a church is governed cannot be overlooked. The author has had other pastors suggest to him that the system of governance in the church has little to no bearing on the ministry productivity of the church; however, this statement has no logical or historical credibility whatsoever. Would the United States be the United States if its system of governance were the same system that exists in communist China? The fact is that whatever system of governance is applied to an organization creates the framework of how decisions are made, who makes those decisions, and thus enormously dictates the outcome. How and who are by far some of the most determining factors of what.

The fact is, no society – religious or secular – can ever afford to be careless about the structure of its government. This is especially true of the Christian community because great and precious principles are at stake. People who are deeply involved in the actual operation of a local church know from personal experience that the government of the church affects every aspect of the inner life of the church and that it is an extremely relevant topic.²

In a 2013 publication by the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, they documented the transformation of a local church that was in serious decline. One of the key elements to the success was a leadership process that enabled the pastor to actually make decision. The success of the transformation was summarized as follows, 

… refocusing on God, giving the pastor the ability to make decisions, focusing on the community and a renewed desire for evangelism ignited among the membership.³

Based on first hand exposure to hundreds of churches, it is the observation of the author that the governance of most churches is a huge barrier to becoming a movement. In the hundreds of churches the author has been exposed to, likely 95% or more are structured in a way that creates chaos, conflict, stagnation, and the protection of the preferences of the church members over the needs of the unchurched. The governance system of most churches is designed to guard the values of being a community organization for Christians, rather than unshackling the church to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit and change the world.

In the hundreds of churches the author of this thesis project has been exposed to, there seems to be a general lack of trust for one another and especially the Pastor(s). This seems to be one of the dominant reasons why there are typically so many governing committees in churches, so many business meetings, and so many votes. Despite the fact that Jesus said the second greatest commandant is loving one another (Matthew 22:39) and that one of the defining characteristics of this love is trust (I Corinthians 13:1-13), churches still defend an organizational flow chart that keeps the church from moving forward because they feel they need to have as many checks and balances as possible so that everything is done “fairly” and so that nobody can mislead the church. It would be comical if it was not so heartbreaking that the observation by

this author is that almost all of these types of churches are mired in arguments of what everybody wants rather than a Holy Spirit led process consumed by the Great Commission! There are typically so many checks and balances that the entire system is overburdened and too obese to move. Most churches are structured exactly opposite to the recommendations of Rick Warren. Warren writes,

If you are serious about mobilizing your members for ministry, you must streamline your structure to maximize ministry and minimize maintenance. The more organizational machinery your church sets up, the more time, energy, and money it takes to maintain it – precious time, energy and money that could be invested in ministry to people instead. If you release people for ministry and relieve them of the maintenance, you’ll create a far happier, more harmonious church with a much higher morale. Fulfillment comes from ministry, not maintenance. Having God use you to change lives will change your whole attitude.  

Furthermore, in all the author’s exposure to local churches, the “fairness” structured churches (including when the author arrived at Hardin Baptist Church) ironically seem to constantly breed battles (typically between a couple families) over who will have authority and who is being more fairly treated over the other. It seems as if the motive behind the formation of the structure has a lot to do with what is produced by that structure. Larry Osborne calls a “fairness” structure a representative structure and in doing so writes the following,

Representatives are more likely to see themselves as lobbyists for a specific constituency. Chris may become the champion of the longtime members, while Leif defends the youth. Meanwhile, Erica fights for the right of the Sunday School, and Tim champions the need for community outreach and missions. Representative-oriented teams also have a harder time reaching consensus when faced with a controversial issue. By definition, representatives seek to protect their constituency. The result is often a stalemate rather than a solution. Finally, representative-oriented boards find it more difficult to justify keeping anyone off the board. If the primary role of a board members is to carry out the wishes of the

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congregation, who is to say that someone nominated by the congregation isn’t qualified to be on the board?  

In an effort to form a structure that prioritizes the will of the people and guards against the leadership of the pastor(s), the results are been division, infighting, turffism, mistrust, gossip, bitterness and decay. The local church governance observed by this author far more resembles the motif and ensuing conversation of preschoolers arguing over toys than it resembles those who have been redeemed and called and equipped by God to lead the world to follow Him! This, again, was the history of Hardin Baptist Church when the author became the Lead Pastor, and it is why before the author was elected he repeated to the search committee, and to the church as a whole that the first thing he was going to lead them to do was change the structure of the church to the one ordained in the Scriptures (Elders). It is the assertion of this author that as long as local churches are governed by man-made systems that disregard the Scriptures they should not be surprised that they continue to reap far more fruits of the flesh than they do fruits of the Spirit.

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Galatians 5:16-26

It should also be noted, however, that the Gospel is bigger than any system of governance in the local church and that it has the ability to save with or without a Biblical system of governance in the local church.

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5 Larry Osborne, *Sticky Teams: Keeping Your Leadership Team and Staff on the Same Page*, 51.
16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." Romans 1:16-17

Yet, pointing to the fact that people are being saved through the ministry of churches with a non-Biblical model of governance does not justify the church’s rejection of the Scriptures and lack of faith in God to be led as He has directed the church to be led.

Furthermore, not that church history should ever take precedence over proper exegesis of the Scripture, but to those Baptists who value church history as a predicate for Biblical interpretation, Mark Dever addresses the criticism that to be an “elder” led church is to contradict the historical position of a Baptist,

Elders could be found in Baptist churches in America throughout the 18th century and into the 19th century (e.g. A.T. Robertson, Life of Broadus, p. 34; O. L. Hailey, J. R. Graves, p. 40). W. B. Johnson, the first president of the Southern Baptist Convention, wrote a book on church life in which he strongly advocated the idea of a plurality of elders in one local church. Whether through inattention to Scripture, or the pressure of life on the frontier (where churches were springing up at an amazing rate!), the practice of cultivating such textured leadership declined.6

What is the Biblically Mandated Local Church System of Governance?

It is the position of this author that a New Testament system of local church governance requires at least three ingredients. These three minimum ingredients are:

(1) A plurality of elders who oversee and lead the church. Good leadership practice means there should be a first among equals who leads the team, but, nonetheless, there is clearly a plurality of elders called to govern the church.

(2) Biblically based expectations/job description for the Elders.

(3) God-called and God-equipped men who meet the Biblical qualifications of being an elder.

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It should be noted that the author simply cannot identify a single reference in the New Testament that gives the responsibility of governing the church to anybody other than the Apostles and the Elders. However, because the office of Apostle can (by definition) no longer be a position in the church, the Scriptures leave only local church Elders to govern local churches. Apostleship was an office ordained of God to establish the church, but because an Apostle had to meet qualifications that could not possibly exist beyond the 1st Century, it clearly eliminates this position of governance as a present day office. Charles Hodge writes,

Who then were the Apostles? They were a definite number of men selected by Christ to be his witnesses, to testify to his doctrines, to the facts of his life, to his death, and especially to his resurrection. To qualify them for this office of authoritative witnesses, it was necessary, (1.) That they should have independent and plenary knowledge of the gospel. (2.) That they should have seen Christ after his resurrection. (3.) That they should be inspired, i.e., that they should be individually and severally so guided by the Spirit as to be infallible in all their instructions. (4.) That they should be authenticated as the messengers of Christ, by adherence to the true gospel, by success in preaching (Paul said to the Corinthians that they were the seal of his apostleship, 1 Cor. 9:2); and by signs and wonders and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost. Such were the gifts and qualifications and credentials of the original Apostles; and those who claimed the office without possessing these gifts and credentials, were pronounced false apostles and messengers of Satan. When Paul claimed to be an apostle, he felt it necessary to prove, (1.) That he had been appointed not by man nor through men, but immediately by Jesus Christ. (Gal. 1:1.) (2.) That he had not been taught the gospel by others, but received his knowledge by immediate revelation. (Gal. 1:12.) (3.) That he had seen Christ after his resurrection. (1 Cor. 9:1 and 1 Cor. 15:8.) (4.) That he was inspired, or infallible as a teacher, so that men were bound to recognize his teachings as the teaching of Christ. (1 Cor. 14:37.) (5.) That the Lord had authenticated his apostolic mission as fully as he had done that of Peter. (Gal. 2:8.) (6.)“The signs of an apostle,” he tells the Corinthians,” were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.” (2 Cor. 12:12.)

Furthermore, although the New Testament references four different titles as those who lead a local church (elder, overseer, bishop and pastor), it is still almost universally accepted that these four titles refer to the same position. Because the overwhelming interpretation among

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Protestants is that these positions are one and the same, this thesis project will not take time to justify that they are.

The following is a survey of New Testament Scriptures that testify of the three minimum ingredients for a God ordained structure of local church governance:

**Acts 6:1-7**

1 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. 2 And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." 5 And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. 6 These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them. 7 And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. Acts 6:1-7

In Acts 6:1-7, the Apostles leadership of the church is clearly seen. There is a serious concern being raised that certain widows were being neglected because of their ethnicity. This neglect related to the amount of food the Hellenists widows were being given in comparison to the Hebrew widows. If the complaints were true, it would be a very serious problem. Keener writes,

The Bible mandated caring for widows, who had no other means of support if they had no family nearby. Judaism took this responsibility seriously, in contrast to Gentile cultures. But because it was considered virtuous to be buried in the land of Israel, many foreign Jews would come to spend their last days there, then die and leave widows. (Palestinian rabbis eventually provided further theological incentive to immigrants; according to one common tradition, the dead would be resurrected only in Israel, so the righteous dead of other lands would have to roll the whole way back to Israel underground, and this was thought to be a very unpleasant experience.) Thus a disproportionate number of foreign Jewish
widows lived in Jerusalem, which did not have enough foreign Jewish synagogues (6:9) for their distributors of charity to supply all the widows adequately. This urban social problem of Jerusalem spilled over into the church.  

Note that the position of Elder has not been created yet because the Apostles are functioning as the Elders of the church in Jerusalem - the only local church at this time. When local churches begin to appear away from Jerusalem, the Apostles immediately begin appointing Elders (not deacons) to oversee/govern those churches. In addition, at this stage in Acts, it is clear that Peter was the one among the Apostles who was leading the twelve as a first among equals. There was clear plurality of leadership with a clear leader. Later on, it would seem to become James.

Also, it should be noted that upon the realization of the problem in Acts 6 the Apostles gathered everyone together and did not ask them what to do, but rather they told the people what needed to be done. In giving them a plan to resolve the problem, they gave the people the customary responsibility to choose people to operate the system the Apostles created, but the Apostles formulated the parameters by which the people could choose. Again Keener writes,

Distributors of charity filled an office in later Palestinian Judaism. Reputation was important for the sake of public credibility; see comment on 1 Timothy 3:7. There was Old Testament precedent for having the people themselves choose these distributors and the leader ratify their choice (Deut 1:13), and the Essenes reportedly elected their officials.

Acts does not give us the process that took place to select these men but simply who they chose. The men were then presented to the Apostles for final approval. The Apostles created this system because serving food to widows was taking away too much of their time from prayer and the preaching and teaching of the Word of God to the people. These deacons were not given

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leadership authority; that was clearly the role of the Apostles in this passage. Instead, they were given the assignment to make sure the physical needs of the widows were being taken care of. Acts 6 does not limit what the Apostles could assign to these men, but clearly the spirit of their job was to take care of the things the Apostles chose to delegate to them. Doing this enabled the Apostles to delegate matters that kept them from the more vital matters they needed to be focused on to lead and equip the church.

Acts 14:21-23

21 When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. 23 And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. Acts 14:21-23

In this passage the handoff of leadership is clearly given from the apostles Paul and Barnabas to the Elders they were appointed in each church. The leadership authority, as well as the job of strengthening the faith of the believers, would now be left to the Elders. Utley writes,

The term “elders” (presbuteros) is synonymous with the terms “bishop” (episkopos) and “pastors” in the NT (cf. Acts 20:17, 28 and Titus 1:5, 7). The term “elder” has a Jewish background (cf. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, pp. 244–246 and Frank Stagg, *New Testament Theology*, pp. 262–264), while the term “bishop” or “overseer” has a Greek city-state background. There are only two church officers: pastors and deacons (cf. Phil. 1:1). The term “appoint” can mean “elect by the show of hands” (cf. II Cor. 8:19 and Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, pp. 363, 484). The term is later used of “ordination” by the early church fathers. The real issue is how does “elect by vote” fit this context? A vote by these new churches seems inappropriate (although the church in Jerusalem voted for the Seven in Acts 6 and the church votes to affirm Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles in Acts 15). F. F. Bruce, *Answers to Questions*, p. 79 says, “originally indicated appointment or election by a show of hands (literally by stretching out the hand), it had lost this specific force by new Testament times and had come to mean simply ‘appoint,’ no matter by what procedure.” One cannot advocate or reject an ecclesiastical polity by the use of this term in the NT. Notice that Paul instructs Titus to also appoint “elders” on Crete, but to Timothy in Ephesus Paul says let the church select persons with certain qualifications (cf. I Tim. 3). In new areas leaders were appointed, but in established areas leadership
traits had a chance to be manifested and be affirmed by the local church. Notice that Paul’s missionary strategy is to establish local churches who will continue the task of evangelism and discipleship in their area (cf. Matt. 28:19–20). This is God’s method for reaching the entire world (i.e. local churches).\(^\text{10}\)

### Acts 15:1-23

1 But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."  
2 And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.  
3 So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers.  
4 When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them.  
5 But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses."  
6 The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter.  
7 And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.  
8 And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us,  
9 and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.  
10 Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?  
11 But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."  
12 And all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.  
13 After they finished speaking, James replied, "Brothers, listen to me.  
14 Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name.  
15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written,  
16 "After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it,  
17 that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.'  
18 Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God,  
20 but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.  
21 For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues."  
22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers,  
23 with the following letter: "The brothers, both

the apostles and the elders, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. Acts 15:1-23

In this passage, the Apostles have now set up additional Elders in the church of Jerusalem, and James seems to now be functioning as the leader of the Apostles and Elders in Jerusalem.

*The New Bible Commentary* notes, “James’s reply seems to suggest that he was in a position of authority, although Luke gives no details.” The Apostles and Elders all assembled together to consider this very serious issue that Paul and Barnabas had brought to their attention. When they had reached a decision, they announced it to the entire congregation and got their feedback, which was positive. The entire congregation was pleased with their plan. Note, this was not a necessary vote of approval whereby the congregation exercised authority over the Apostles and Elders, but rather the Apostles and Elders leading the people so that the issue was first resolved among those who were divided over it in Jerusalem. Their solution was well received and restored unity to the extent that everyone felt good about sending out certain men to announce the recommendation of the Apostles and Elders to all the other churches. When the decision was delivered to the churches in other cities, it was clearly stated that it was one reached by the Apostles and Elders in Jerusalem. Note Acts 16:4-5,

4 As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily. Acts 16:4-5

*Acts 20:17-38*

17 Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. 18 And when they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from

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house to house, 21 testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. 24 But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. 26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, 27 for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. 28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears. 32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33 I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. 34 You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. 35 In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" 36 And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. 37 And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, 38 being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship. Acts 20:17-38

This is an incredibly emotional passage. In it Paul gathers together the Elders of the church in Ephesus. He expresses his deep love for them. Paul’s relationship with these men is extremely intimate. He has poured himself into them. Paul believes he will not see them again this side of eternity and wants to make sure they understand they are now in charge of the flock. He specifically states to these men with the title of “elder” that they are the overseers (literally, “rulers”) of the church. He gives them specific things to make sure they pay special attention to in their oversight/ruling, one of which is in their caring for the church (which belongs to Christ); they should be very attentive to watch out for false teachers who will attempt to preach false
doctrine to the body. He even warns the Elders to pay attention to themselves because these false teachers could very likely arise from within their own ranks. Wiersbe writes,

At Miletus he sent for the elders of the Ephesian church. Keep in mind that the NT teaches that churches should have a plurality of pastors, and this would be especially true for a large church such as the one at Ephesus. These leaders are called elders and overseers (v. 28). Paul’s address to the Ephesian pastors reveals the way he ministered to the local church. 12

Ephesians 4:11-16

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Ephesians 4:11-16

In this passage, Paul clearly identifies positions within the Body of Christ that have as their purpose to equip (teach, train and empower) the Body to be able to do grassroots ministry.

That the “pastors” here were the bishops and presbyters of the Church, is evident from Ac 20:28; 1Pe 5:1, 2, where the bishops’ and presbyters’ office is said to be “to feed” the flock. The term, “shepherd” or “pastor,” is used of guiding and governing and not merely instructing, whence it is applied to kings, rather than prophets or priests (Ez 34:23; Je 23:4). 13

They are to find ways to mature the Body in their faith in Christ and in their understanding of truth, in order for the Body to not get distracted or divided by the latest doctrinal fad or crafty and persuasive false teacher, and in response remain united in Christ, loving and caring for one another and positively impacting each other’s faith in Christ.


1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

12 We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

In this letter to the church in Thessalonica from Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, they challenge the church to respect and highly value those who lead them. They do not use the phrase “elder”, but they clearly identify a plurality of men who have authority in the church at Thessalonica as opposed to the idea of the church having authority over the men identified as pastors. T. Shenton writes the following on this passage,

Paul is probably referring to the church elders whom he appointed when he was in Thessalonica. It appears that some of the members were not keen to obey the rules of the leaders, and Paul is urging them to ‘respect’ these men for the following reasons: They ‘Work Hard Among You’. They are men who exert themselves for your benefit and edification amid great difficulty. They instruct, comfort and guide you in the things of God, sometimes to the point of weariness. They ‘Are Over You In The Lord’. God has appointed them to be your leaders, which is reason enough to respect them. They ‘Admonish You’. They urge you, both privately and publicly, to obey God by giving you much-needed encouragement, but also reproof and remonstrance when necessary. The Thessalonians are to value their office and highly esteem their person ‘because of their work’. The leaders of a church edify believers, build up the kingdom of God, save souls by God’s power, and prepare its members for the return of Christ. There is no greater work; therefore, they must be highly thought of, loved and honored by all who sit under their ministry. One of the best ways we can love our leaders is to ‘live in peace’ with them. Paul tells the Thessalonians to be affectionately loyal to their leaders. Instead of arguing with and criticizing those who admonish them, they must treat them with the respect they deserve.14

1 Timothy 3:1-6

1 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. 2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church? 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may

become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. (1
Timothy 3:1-6)

Paul gives Timothy specific qualifications for those who say they want to be an overseer
or ruler in a local church; thus, once again acknowledging that there are people set apart to
govern the church in a specific office in the church. In the same letter, Paul later presents a
distinctly different set of qualifications for deacons (which includes the deacon’s wife), so
obviously, he is not referring to deacons in 1 Timothy 3:1-6 when he speaks of the overseers of
the church. Furthermore, to be an elder is to certainly be consumed with the task of equipping
the church for ministry which includes caring for and growing it spiritually; however, Paul also
clearly uses an authoritative title in 1 Timothy 3:1-6 to describe their role. He specifically calls
them overseers.

Continuing his instructions on how the church should conduct itself, Paul turned
to the crucial matter of leadership qualifications. He wanted to encourage respect
for the congregation’s leaders, so he cited what was apparently a familiar maxim
and commended it as a sound one. Two implications emerge: (1) It is valid to
aspire to church leadership, and (2) church leadership is a noble task. The term
overseer (episkopos), sometimes translated “bishop,” is only one of several words
used in the New Testament to describe church leaders. “Elders” (presbyteroi) is
by far the most common. Other terms such as “rulers” (proistamenoi, Rom. 12:8;
1 Thes. 5:12), “leaders” (hēgoumenoi, Heb. 13:17) and “pastors” (poimenas, Eph.
4:11; cf. also Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2) are also used. Though each of these terms
may describe a different facet of leadership, they all seem to be used
 interchangeably in the New Testament to designate the same office. This office is
different from that of deacons (cf. comments on 1 Tim 3:8).15

This authority is seen both in the name of the office in verse one as well as in verse four
where Paul uses the comparative qualification of a man leading his home as the comparison to a
man leading the church. If in fact a man cannot lead his family, he is logically not going to be
able to lead the family which belongs to God – the church! In addition, among the list of things

15 A.D. Litfin, “1 Timothy” The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, eds. J. F.
Software.
Paul gives to Timothy, he also mentions that a person desiring the noble office of overseer should be able to teach. This matches a consistent element of the expectation or job description of an Elder throughout the New Testament.

**1 Timothy 5:17-19**

17 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages." 19 Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 1 Timothy 5:17-19

K. S. Wuest translates verses 17-18 this way,

Let the elders that are ruling well be deemed deserving of double honor, especially those who are laboring with wearisome effort in the Word and in the teaching; for the scripture says, You should not muzzle an ox while he is treading out the corn, The worker is worthy of his pay.16

This passage directly links overseeing or ruling with that of being an Elder. Paul gives Timothy specific things for him to do while he coaches the church in Ephesus. He is to make sure the Elders who rule well are truly honored but especially those elders who preach and teach well. Those who preach and teach well should be generously compensated for their labor. All in all, this passage exposes the respect and gratitude a church should give those oversees that labor hard to lead them exceptionally. It also establishes a system of addressing the personal failures of those who hold the office of Elder. That system is clearly not a personnel committee or group of deacons to oversee the overseers but rather a Matthew 18 type of approach that by obvious implications would be led out by the rest of the Elders, and even Timothy at this point.

**Titus 1:5-11**

5 This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you-- 6 if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge

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of debauchery or insubordination. 7 For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, 8 but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. 9 He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. 10 For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. 11 They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. Titus 1:5-11

This is, yet again, another passage that links together the title, “Elder” with the responsibility of being an overseer of the local church. Paul instructs Titus to appoint elders in the church in each town in Crete. Like he does with Timothy, he clarifies the qualifications a man must meet in order to be an elder. He also spells out that one of the job expectations is dealing with false teachers; therefore, the elder needs to be mature in his understanding of doctrine and able to communicate it in a relevant and comprehensible manner. The New Bible Commentary states the following on this passage,

The instructions given to Titus run parallel to those given to Timothy in 1 Tim. 3, but there are some significant variations, which arose from the different situation in which Titus was placed in Crete. His task was twofold—to straighten out what was left unfinished and to appoint elders (5). It is not clear what Paul had left incomplete, unless he means the appointment of elders. Paul gives no indication how many were to be appointed, but he had evidently already instructed Titus on this matter. He is more concerned about the qualifications required (6). What stands out is the need not only for moral blamelessness (mentioned twice) but for a stable home-life. Presumably if a person could not keep his own children in order, he would be regarded as inadequate for the leadership of the church. The word translated believe may carry the meaning of ‘faithful’ (AV). It is surely unlikely that Paul meant to disqualify church leaders whose children have yet to profess faith. The switch from elders in v 5 to an overseer in v 7 is important since there seems to be no essential difference between the two offices. The elder exercises the function of oversight. There is a mixture of wrong attitudes and wrong actions which would make a person ineligible for office (8—9). It is noticeable that Titus is not advised against the appointment of new converts as Timothy is at Ephesus, possibly because the community in Crete was established more recently. If v 7 gives the negative side, the positive is found in vs 8 and 9. The qualities mentioned are those which should be evident in a committed Christian. The emphasis on hospitality is worth noting since so much depended on it in the early church. V 9 makes clear how important a grasp of sound doctrine is
for those who exercise leadership over others in the church. It is only possible to refute false teachers if the true doctrine has been well understood. In Paul’s view there should be no blurring of the issues.\footnote{D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer & G. J. Wenham, \textit{New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition}, Titus 1:5-9. Accessed through Logos Bible Software.}

\textbf{Hebrews 13:17}

17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. Hebrews 13:17

Clearly, the writer of Hebrews acknowledges that there are people in charge of the local flock who will give an account to God for how they managed His Church. These men are charged with the responsibility of the spiritual care and oversight of the Body. People in the body should submit to these leaders in a way that enables the leaders to do their jobs with joy.

Again, Wuest provides some excellent commentary on this passage,

Expositor’s note on this verse is so illuminating, that we quote it in its entirety. “Having exhorted the Hebrews to keep in mind their former rulers and adhere to their teaching, the writer now admonishes them, probably in view of a certain mutinous and separatist spirit, (10:25) encouraged by their reception of strange doctrines, to obey their present leaders, and yield themselves trustfully (\textit{hupeikete}) to their teaching—an admonition which, as Weiss remarks, shows that these teachers held the same views as the writer. The reasonableness of this injunction is confirmed by the responsibility of the rulers and their anxious discharge of it. They watch, like wakeful shepherds (\textit{agrupnousin}), or those who are nursing a critical case, in the interest of your souls (\textit{huper ton psuchon humon}) to which they may sometimes seem to sacrifice your other interests. They do this under the constant pressure of a consciousness that they must one day render to the Chief Shepherd (v. 20) an account of the care they have taken of His sheep (\textit{hos logon apodosontes}). Obey them, then, that they may discharge their responsibility and perform these kindly offices for you (\textit{touto}) … but to \textit{agrupnousin} joyfully and not with groaning (\textit{stenazontes}), the groaning with which one resumes a thankless task, and with which he contemplates unappreciated and even opposed work). And even for your own sakes you should make the work of your rulers easy and joyful, for otherwise it cannot profit you. Your unwillingness to listen to them means that you are out of sympathy with
their teaching and that it can do you no good (alusiteles gar humin touto (ἀλυσιτελες γαρ ύμιν τουτο))."\(^{18}\)

**James 5:13-15**

13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. 14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. James 5:13-15

A wide arrange of interpretations of verses 14 and 15 exists. For the purpose of this thesis project, not matter how one interprets the details, the applicable point in this discussion is that Elders are entrusted with leadership in a serious matter. “In the case of serious illness, James counsels, the elders (a reference to definite officers) of the church should be called.”\(^{19}\) If the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer is true then the elders cannot have a more special connection with God than other believers; however, there is something significant about Elders being involved in serious matters in people’s lives that further testifies of their role as the leaders and shepherds of the flock.

**1 Peter 5:1-6**

1 So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 1 Peter 5:1-3

Peter challenges the Elders as a fellow Elder, thus linking elements of the office of Apostle to the elements of the office of Elder in the local church. He tells them to shepherd the flock they have been given oversight of, specifically implying they are to guard, feed, grow and

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care for the sheep that belong to God. Because they have such a high level of authority over the church, Peter warns them not to take advantage of it. He warns the elders not to treat their flock with meanness but rather with love, being examples to them in a way that directly reflects how those in the flock should treat others. This, logically, by no means diminishes the authority of the elders. It does, however, mean that in exercising their authority they should do so not as those who own the sheep (because they do not) but rather as lead sheep that have been assigned the responsibility of shepherding by the Chief Shepherd, who will, in turn, hold them accountable. One commentary notes,

In Hebrews 13:20, Jesus is called “that great Shepherd of the sheep.” This corresponds to the “chief Shepherd” in our text-verse. Where the flocks were numerous and a large number of shepherds were necessary, one was placed in charge of all the others. This was true of the herdsmen also. Pharaoh told Joseph to take the most active of his kinsmen and make them “rulers” over his cattle (Genesis 47:6, KJV). Doeg was the “chiefest of the herdsmen” of Saul (1 Samuel 21:7, KJV). Thus we have an illustration of the text. Christian ministers are pastors, or shepherds, but there is one over them all. Jesus is the “chief Shepherd.” He superintends them, cares for them, assigns them their several positions, and rewards or chastises them.20

In conclusion, one can see from these eleven passages that there is an office in the local church that carries authority over the church, and the New Testament goes to great lengths to make sure the men who fill it are truly committed to Christ, doctrinally, morally and ethically sound, and are able to teach and lead the people of God to grow up in their faith and work together to change the world. Though it makes some people in the modern western culture nervous, Biblically these men are given authority over the local church to truly lead it, and they will give an account to God on how well they obey Him in doing so. Interestingly, we have a tremendous amount of New Testament testimony on the Elders, but we have no prescription of how the flow chart should look or work under them beyond the specific examples of the people

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that were under them who focused on the physical needs of the body (the Deacons). Hence, it could be asserted that if this is what was expected of the men who would be delegated the task of caring for the needy, then it should also be the qualifications and expectations of others the Elders chose to delegated areas of significant leadership within the body.

How is Biblical Church Governance Practically Incorporated Into Hardin Baptist Church?

As he told the church he would do before they elected him as the Lead Pastor, the very first thing the author of this thesis project changed was the governance of the church. As stated earlier in the chapter, this had to be the first thing because the leadership system ultimately dictates the path the church is going travel. To transform the church’s ethos from a club to movement, a leadership system is needed that can lead, govern and equip a movement, as well as the transformation to be a movement in itself. In this case, the author’s opinion was that this system was logically needed but more importantly, as previously presented, Biblically mandated. Therefore, within the first year, the author changed the leadership system of Hardin Baptist Church from the Deacons functioning as the overseers of the church and the Pastor working under their authority (while teaching the church and serving as its chaplain), to the Biblically mandated system of Elders as previously described in this thesis project.

The process he followed in leading this change will be discussed next, but it first needs to be noted further what the leadership structure was changed to. Also, it is important to note that the changing dynamics of the church over the years has always resulted in the constant change of the flow chart of the church. As ministries and processes have been eliminated or changed, as paid staff has been hired, as different ministries and processes have been birthed, the flow chart
has been adjusted. However, what has not been adjusted has been the fundamental concept that a group of men called, “Elders” are called of God to lead the church. This means the general base positions and order within the flow chart of those positions has not changed. There were four basic positions created in Hardin Baptist Church, and as of the writing of this thesis project, these positions still exist in Venture. They are as follows:

**Elders**

These are men who meet the Biblical qualification and are charged to lead the church as pastors. The person who leads the Elders serves as the Lead Pastor of the church, and the other Elders function as Associate Pastors (paid or unpaid/volunteer). In 2012, the church created the position of Executive Pastor. This person serves as the 2nd in charge under the Lead Pastor on the internal flow chart of the Elders. All the other positions in the flow chart of the church come under the Elders.

**Trustees**

The men who fulfill this roll must meet the qualifications of a deacon in Timothy. Under the leadership of the Elders these men are tasked with handling the finances of the church. In the New Testament, the Elders certainly handled the finances; however, the creation of this position at Hardin Baptist was done in part to meet the 501C-3 requirements of the State of North Carolina as well as to address the cultural issues that have occurred from the widely publicized unethical financial behavior of some pastors. At Venture (formerly Hardin Baptist Church), Trustees are still the only ones who can sign checks, access the church’s bank accounts and sign legally binding documents (they can also choose to delegate the signing of documents to applicable people when necessary). This position also opened the door to place men in

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21 Refer to Appendix for the initial flow chart after the church first officially incorporated the new system of governance.
leadership who have keen business sense and skills in order to provide gifted leadership that results in the maximization of resources available to the Elders to lead the church.

**Ministry Team Directors**

These are people the Elders specifically delegate specific areas of the ministry to (i.e. Children’s Ministry, Student Ministry, etc.). Like the Trustees, they are accountable back to the Elders. They must meet specific qualifications. Some are paid, and some are not. This has been the area of greatest change since the author transitioned the church to a Biblical model of governance. Because the church is constantly changing, these positions are constantly changing as well. Sometimes they increase in number and sometimes, as is the case in the writing of this thesis project, they greatly decrease in number due to a different approach to accomplishing ministry. However, the philosophy behind using ministry teams has stayed the same. The reason the philosophy has stayed the same is clear, as Gene Mims puts it, “Ministry teams exist to build up the body of believers for service within the church and for missions throughout the world.”

It should also be noted that in the last five years of change the church has steadily put more and more of its “chips” in the basket of small group ministry. The actual leaders of groups (whether they be traditional Home Life groups, men’s accountability groups, affinity groups, etc.) are treated as ministry team leaders with a view towards eventually viewing them as pastors themselves. The end goal is that Venture will eventually be the fellowship of ever-multiplying little house churches that meet all over Gaston, Lincoln, and Cleveland Counties who gather weekly in different locations to worship together, hear and respond to a centralized teaching of the Scriptures and throughout the week network together to work on the necessary elements to

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change the region for Christ. It is likely that in the near future there will be a very clear position with distinctive qualifications and expectations that reflect this direction, but as of the writing of this thesis project, it is still too early in its evolution to justify documenting.

**Deacons**

This position obviously must meet the Biblical requirements set out in Timothy. In the spirit of Acts 6, the Deacons are given the task of caring for the needy in the body and do so under the leadership and authority of the Elders. They specifically work under the leadership of an Elder who focuses on what is traditionally known as, “pastoral care ministry.” Deacons have no governmental role in the church because they have no resemblance of any governmental role in the New Testament.

Finally, so as not to distract from the ultimate purpose of this thesis project, the explanation of the process in the church that takes place to identify people for each of the above positions, as well as every other area of service in the body, will not be presented. However, it is very appropriate in this thesis project to state that every position is filled by people that have been determined to have the spiritual gifts, passions and available time to be successful. It is a fundamental belief in the church that a person’s strengths present their greatest potential for success and joy in their laboring and that strengths are found at the intersection of a person’s gifts, passion and available time. When a person is working in their strengths, both the individual and the organization benefit. As Marcus Buckingham and Donald Clifton wrote,

> To excel in your chosen field and to find lasting satisfaction in doing so, you will need to understand your unique patterns. You will need to become an expert at finding and describing and applying and practicing and refining your strengths. … Suspend whatever interest you may have in weakness and instead explore the intricate detail of your strengths.\(^\text{23}\)

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What Was The Process To Transition Hardin Baptist Church To Biblical Governance?

For most churches, the document that spells out how the church is governed is known as the Bylaws. This was the case at Hardin Baptist Church. As a legally incorporated 501C-3 Non-Profit Organization in the State of North Carolina, the church is legally liable to follow the guidelines/Bylaws that it votes to govern itself with. Therefore, it was absolutely necessary to change the Bylaws of Hardin in order to change the system of governance at Hardin. This meant, at minimum, following the policies in the existing Bylaws on how Bylaws could be changed. With that in mind, the following is a summary of the account of how the Bylaws, hence the governance of the church, was transformed.

It should also be noted that those involved in the process expressed confidentiality as mandatory. This was not to keep a “secret” from the church but to protect the process. However, the document would be in constant change throughout the process, and having an uncontrolled church-wide discussion based on partial information flowing through the church about a document that is in a process of constant change could possibly be the pinnacle of stupidity. For the most part, those in the process maintained the confidentially needed, and the author considers this a key part of the process’s success.

27 October 2002 through Christmas 2002

On his first day as the Lead Pastor of Venture (Sunday, 27 October 2002), the author began a preaching a series of sermons that he called “Paul’s Philosophy of Ministry.” In this series only indirect mentions of church governance were mentioned, but the purpose by which the church needed to be governed/led was clearly communicated. Direct teachings on being a movement to make disciples of all people began on day one for the author (in actuality, they began with the first contact made to him by the search committee).
Christmas 2002

Because the new system of governance carried with it no identifiable similarity to anything in the existing system of governance, there was no need to even attempt to amend the Bylaws. The current Bylaws were going to need to simply be replaced. Therefore, while on an out of town visit with family for Christmas, the author wrote the first draft of the entirely new Bylaws. As previously stated in this thesis project, Jim Collins would argue for getting a team of leaders together to write the first draft; however, it would be illogical and foolish to ask leaders in a church, who had no historical reference or previous thought to a Biblical system of governance, to suddenly become so well versed that they could write a new set of Bylaws to implement the system practically into the life of the church. Instead, as is about to be presented, the author of this thesis project planned to use the first draft as the very teaching tool to both instill the Biblical principles into the mind of the church and bring the church together in the process.

January 2003 through June 2003

At this time, the Deacons were the governing board of the church. Therefore, before leaving on Christmas vacation, the author had already scheduled a meeting with the deacons for the first week of January to both present the first draft to the deacons, as well as to start a process of looking for changes and compromises that needed to be made so that the Deacons could fully support it. Although discussion would certainly be encouraged to better understand the role of elders, the issue of whether the church would be led by elders and that the Lead Pastor would be the leader of the Elders was considered settled when they elected the author as the Lead Pastor. The author frequently reminded everyone of this to make sure the process could not be hijacked, yet there were certainly those who never ceased to attempt to hijack the process. What was up
for debate and compromise was a plethora of other things that the author had written in the first draft as an attempt at demonstrating how things could function with elders leading the church, but he was not committed to the details; and therefore, a great deal of room was left for others to be a part of the development process.

The initial wave of meetings to officially form the 2nd Draft of the Bylaws took place in January 2003 and early February 2003. A handful of the meetings went late into the night, one of which went until 2:00AM. Everyone understood the gravity of what was taking place and was willing to put in the necessary time to truly flesh out, debate, pray through, and Biblically research what they were working on. The pastor and author of this thesis project also knew he would not successfully lead the church through a change of governance unless he had the current governing board (the active Deacons) unified and able to not just consciously defend it but also go on the offense and verbally present and argue for the new Bylaws and the system of governance they had created.

All the way until the official day the church began to operate under the new system, the author of this thesis project consistently met with the deacons and worked through any issue of confusion or concern they had. In addition, from January to June, the author preached through the book of Titus. This meant the author had the opportunity to directly address the subject of Elders to the entire church. The church knew the author and the Deacons were busy working on new bylaws that would change the church to an Elder-led church; however, in the sermons nothing was stated about the detailed conversations they were having on how all the church ministries and processes would work in an Elder-led model. The only thing the church received at that point was a thorough Biblical presentation of Elders and their general role in the church, qualifications, etc.
In January, the Lead Pastor and author of this thesis project also took every leader in the church on an overnight planning retreat to Boone, NC. Given that the church had different committees for almost everything imaginable, this opened the door to meet with a large number of people who, at least on paper, held positions of influence. The focus of this meeting was for the Lead Pastor to get a deeper understanding of all the ministries of the church, discuss the principles of an Elder-led church, plant the idea of OGAP (will be presented later in this this chapter), and start fleshing out with the leaders different ideas of how a flow chart should look and function in an Elder-led model. All of this was done to bring order and focus to the ministries, maximize communication, reduce duplication and increase effectiveness. The general concept was that instead of a garden variety of committees that had no identifiable system of coordination or accountability, there would instead be a more strategic approach where teams would be formed and led by a Ministry Team leader that was then “managed” by an Elder. This concept was discussed in detail, and those in attendance were able to put valuable input into how things should be done. This input was then carried back into the ongoing process the author was having with the deacons to develop the Bylaws.

**February 2003 to March 2003**

By mid-February, the Lead Pastor and active Deacons in the church had completed and unanimously endorsed the 2nd draft of the new Bylaws. Multiple meetings were then scheduled with different stakeholders in the church. The first group of people were all those involved in any leadership capacity in the church that had previously been invited to the leadership retreat in January. At this meeting, the latest draft the author and the deacons had produced was handed out and explained. A lengthy question and answer period followed where numerous suggestions
were made. The author and the Deacons met separately the next week to discuss the suggestions. This resulted in a 3\textsuperscript{rd} draft of the Bylaws.

Once the Leadership Retreat in January concluded, the author and the active Deacons were consistently making personal contact with as many of the other leaders as possible (especially the most influential ones). The purpose was to personally field questions, inquire and dialogue about any issues, concerns or confusion they had. This is why having the deacons on board first was key.

A follow up meeting was scheduled with the church leaders to present the 3\textsuperscript{rd} draft of the Bylaws which contained the new changes the Lead Pastor and Deacons had made based on some of their suggestions. Another significant discussion was allowed, yet this time, being there were no significant changes recommended, a vote was taken. The vote was unanimously in support of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} draft.

The final step was a meeting with all the Deacons, active and inactive, which amounted to approximately 30 men. A week prior to the meeting, the 3\textsuperscript{rd} draft was sent to all the inactive deacons so that they could read and pray over it in advance. None of the inactive deacons had seen the new Bylaws at this point. Once the bylaws were presented to the church, many people would likely read them before ever hearing an explanation from the Pastor or Deacons, so it was important to test run a reaction with people who had read them first. Given the reality of the influence in the church that many of the inactive deacons had, it made sense that they were the best test subjects. In addition, if we could garner their support prior to presenting them to the church then we would have even more momentum.

Going into the meeting, the plan was that if anything of substance was suggested then the author and the active deacons would meet one more time to discuss the suggestions and then
come back with all the leaders, active deacons and inactive deacons to make one more final presentation and take one more vote before presenting it to the church. Adding some drama to the meeting with all the deacons was the fact that over the previous ten to twenty years some of the most divisive people in all of the church were at that time inactive deacons. Within a few days of beginning his work as the Lead Pastor of the church, some of these men became very vocal about wanting the author fired. They brought this attitude to the meeting the night all the deacons met. A few walked out in the middle of the meeting protesting the entire idea and tried to cast an “absentee” vote in the process. Those who actually stayed for the official vote unanimously rejected this idea. The proposed Bylaws were reviewed page by page and questions, comments and discussion went on for a few hours after that. However, because nothing significant sustained itself as a suggestion for change, the author then asked for an official vote by all the active and inactive deacons on the document. It is not that suggestions were not made, but those that were made had previously been suggested and considered to such an extent that the Lead Pastor and the Deacons were able to satisfactorily explain to those in attendance why the suggestions were not in the 3rd draft. The vote was unanimous minus a few abstentions.

**March 2003 through April 2003**

By mid-March 2003, the process had produced an official proposal for new Bylaws that had the fingerprints of over 60 people on it. By this time, the church only had a max of 300 people who would be identified as active members, and there was an approximate weekly worship attendance of 200 people.

The existing Bylaws stated that the church had to have a month to review any changes being recommended to the Bylaws. Therefore, the Bylaws were officially handed out following
a Sunday morning worship gathering in mid-March. That evening an official presentation was made explaining them. In accordance with the current Bylaws, the date was announced in mid-April that the church would vote on the new Bylaws.

A meeting was held in the interim period for people who had questions to attend. Very few attended the meeting. In addition, the author, the active deacons and some of the other leaders who were already a part of the process had a tremendous amount of personal interaction with the people in the church to personally dialogue with them about their concerns and questions.

Also included with the vote was a transition process that had been ironed out in the previous month’s meetings with the Deacons and key leaders. The process actually made the enactment of the new Bylaws conditional on five elders being approved first by the Deacons then elected and ordained by the church. Voting on the new bylaws would then make the Deacons a transition committee. The Lead Pastor would be an elder by default, and he would be responsible for recommending four other men to the deacons to be as Elders.

The Sunday night in April that the Bylaws came up for an official vote went as smooth as one could imagine. The vote was not unanimous, but there were over ninety percent of those in attendance who voted for it. In the official church meeting there were those who voiced concerns and even disagreement; however, the spirit in the room was positive, and following the vote even those who voted against it left with smiles and were conversing with those who voted for it. It should be noted there was so much momentum going into the night of the vote that the most divisive and angry people at that time did not even bother to attend the meeting. The dialogue that night was healthy, objective and positive, and in the end, the success had to do with a lot of prayer and a tremendous amount of work.
April 2003 to June 2003

Throughout the process of writing the Bylaws, three deacons had clearly stood out as pastoral/elder type leaders in the church. They fit the qualifications and were aligned with the vision the author had put forward to transform the church into a movement that was completely committed to reaching the unchurched Gen X and Gen Y people in the region. Each of the three had different personalities and gifting. All were able to teach, yet one truly stood out as a good preacher, another stood out as a grass roots “make it happen” kind of leader, and the other stood out as a truly gifted critical thinker able to see potential conflicts and problems that others would never think about. All three were leaders, loved Jesus, loved the people, were passionate about people coming to Christ, were committed to growing people up in their faith, and were committed to the process of transforming the church from being a community organization for Christians to a true movement of the Gospel. These were the three “layman” the author recommended as Elders that would not be compensated. He also recommended a long time interim pastor in the region as a person to be hired as part time staff. He would serve as the Associate Pastor of Pastoral Care. This man had actually served as the interim Pastor before the author became the Lead Pastor, as well as serving almost 30 years prior as the interim Pastor before the author’s predecessor had become the Lead Pastor. He was a gifted preacher, was 110% in support of the of the vision of the Lead Pastor, and as the grand finale, he was a senior citizen that was loved and adored by the senior adults in the church that hated the vision of the author of this thesis project.

The Lead Pastor recommended all four of the men to the deacons at the same time. The Deacons unanimously and energetically approved each of them. All had long histories in the church. All four were approved by the church with the only “no” votes coming from some of
those who were already working hard to get the author fired as the Lead Pastor. The man who was elected to serve as the Associate Pastor of Pastoral Care began work immediately.

A few weeks later, the church ordained the three deacons who had been elected to become unpaid Elders/Pastors in the church. In accordance with the transition process the church approved, the ordination of these men and the hiring of the other officially consummated the new Bylaws and thus a Biblical system of governance in the church. The Elders now officially led the church, and the Deacons no longer carried any governmental role. Under the leadership of the Elders, they were to focus on caring for the sick and needy in the church.

This system was clearly a crucial and absolutely necessary vehicle in the transformation of the ethos of Venture. It was so crucial that the transformation of the church would likely not have happened without it. It was truly the ship that would carry every other system across the ocean of transformation. The night the first three unpaid Elders were ordained the new leadership system officially got let out of Dry Dock for the first time.24

In addition, it should be noted that the process of writing the Bylaws was itself intentionally designed to begin the transformation of the church’s ethos. At every step along the way, conversations arose about being a movement rather than being a community organization for Christians. Those who most energetically opposed the system of governance vocalized that they were doing so partly because they believed it would open the door to change the life and purpose of the church – and they were right! Furthermore, it brought a true test to the church on

24 Note: In the appendix is included the Bylaws as passed in 2003, as well as the new Bylaws that are getting ready to be approved by the church as of the writing of this thesis project. One will be able to easily see what was necessary to write before the churches ethos had been transformed and what is now necessary since it has. If nothing else, one will obviously notice that the Bylaws written for a church that has an ethos of being a movement of Christ are 90% shorter than ones written to lead a community organization for Christians to become a movement of Christ!
whether it was going to reject clear Biblical teaching in the name of church tradition or embrace it, and embracing it created momentum – see chapter 2.

Execution

There is no point in a system of governance if at the end of the day that system does not produce activities that achieve the purpose of the organization. Therefore, the next phase in leading the transformation of the ethos of Venture was to develop a system of execution for the newly created governance system to use to instill the core values of being a movement to change the world for Christ. Why is a system of execution important?

Without execution, the breakthrough thinking breaks down, learning adds no value, people don’t meet their stretch goals, and the revolution stops dead in its tracks. What you get is change for the worse … Execution has to be a part of a company’s strategy and its goals. It is the missing link between aspirations and results.25

The system of execution put in place to lead the transformation of the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church was called OGAP. The author created his version of OGAP from what he had learned from the OGAP system he was led in while on staff at the Florida Baptist Convention. The philosophy behind the author’s version of the OGAP system was that if the ministries and leaders began to consistently execute things that fit the core values/objectives of the new ethos, then the leaders themselves would truly begin to believe in the new ethos and eventually become or be transformed into the new ethos. It is based off the organizational leadership theory that,

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“We don’t think ourselves into a new way of acting, we act ourselves into a new way of thinking.”

Before explaining the OGAP system the author used, it is important to first further explain the guiding principles behind it.

The Terrain The System Must Function On Will Only Change If The System Is Successful

In the case of leading the transformation of the ethos of Hardin Baptist Church into becoming a movement, the million dollar question was how to get people executing the core values of being a movement while they themselves still valued being a community organization for Christians. Bossidy and Charan write, “One part of execution is knowing your own capability.” Execution is all about recognizing what can be done. If that be the case, a system had to be developed that understood and acknowledged the realities and limitations of the battlefield the transformation of the church was going to have to face but at the same time find a way to engage those realities and limitations, work them to the advantage of the vision, and win. As Stephen Crane once wrote, “You cannot choose your battlefield, God does that for you; But you can plant a standard where a standard never flew.”

A New Paradigm Must Be Birthed Within the Old

Successfully leading a church to be transformed begins with the understanding that the battlefield will not change until the ethos changes; therefore, the systems that lead the church to

26 Ibid., 89.

27 Ibid., 43.

be transformed must be able to create a new paradigm in the middle of the old one. In his book, *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God*, Greg Ogden does a great job of explaining the identity and function of a paradigm:

Joel Baker, in his book *Future Edge: Discovering the New Paradigms of Success*, has the best working definition of a paradigm that I have seen: “A paradigm is a set of rules and regulations (written or unwritten) that does two things: (1) It establishes or defines boundaries; and (2) it tells you how to behave inside the boundaries in order to be successful.” The word *paradigm* comes from the Greek *paradeigma*, meaning, “pattern.” The dictionary defines a paradigm as rules, models, or patterns, which in face interpret or set our view of reality. It is the set of glasses through which we view things. Paradigms give structure, meaning, and predictability to our actions. The concept of paradigm turns the scientific dictum “seeing is believing” on its head. It is equally true that “believing is seeing.” Our belief structure determines the parameters of what we see. Paradigms are like blinders on a horse. Your field of vision is established by the limitations of your paradigm.  

For Hardin Baptist, the things that could not be changed overnight were the people and existing ministries. If, however, those entities of the old paradigm could have planted within them a new paradigm that took the same people and the same ministries and set them up with new goals that pointed towards the new ethos, then there was a fighting chance the new would overcome the old.

Furthermore, this new paradigm was going to have to tightly focus the leadership and ministries around a small set of objectives. Again, in *Execution* the authors write, “Leaders who execute focus on a very few clear priorities that everyone can grasp,” and Jacobs suggests letting the leaders determine the objectives. He writes, “Rather than hand objectives to the employee, the managers should ask the employee to set them.” This is all well and good if the

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ethos of the organization matches the ethos that is intended. However, when the ethos is not the intended ethos, the objectives need to be presented. Why? Because the way to change the paradigm is to birth a new one within it - that is to create the blinders that lead people to make goals and action plans that achieve the vision one is trying to see become the actual ethos of the organization. As Jacobs later writes in his book, “The leader also must make sure that people stay focused on what’s critical for success.”32 That means creating a paradigm within a paradigm that sets new objectives that match the intended ethos, then allowing the leaders to connect the dots.

OGAP

OGAP stands for Objectives, Goals and Action Plans. It operates from the concept that everything functions best in a process when everything in that process is linked together. Don Waddell writes, “Process is as important as content. Each element of the process must be linked to the next.”33

The general paradigm OGAP creates is one where the Objectives are what make up the context for people to get with God and write goals. They then write action plans to achieve those goals and thus fulfill the objectives. More specifically, that meant establishing four basic objectives that everything the church did had to aim for. Those objectives were nothing more than the Core Values previously written about in Chapter One of this thesis project; they are as follows:

32 Ibid., 180.

33 Don Waddell, Making Your Church A Place To Serve: Involving Members the Southeast Way (Joplin, MO: College Press, 2001), 83.
1. Spiritual Community - Spiritual community is the environment that spiritual growth and the movement of Christ take place. It is not a clique for “Christians”, but an open door for all who dare to experience the platform of accountability, growth, and encouragement in which God designed. (Galatians 6:2, Colossians 3:9-15, Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 Peter 4:10)

2. Discipleship - It is this process that leads a believer to grow in their faith and therefore, “Trust in Him with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, but in all our ways acknowledge Him so that He will make your pathway straight.” (Proverbs 3:5-6) It is the process that leads us to be followers of Christ, and He, in turn, leads us to be fishers of men! (Mark 1:17) It is not teaching people religious rules but rather equipping them to Walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5) so that they will obey Christ and produce much spiritual fruit (John 15).

3. Evangelism – The primary platform for evangelism is genuine relationships. The only tool for evangelism is sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with those who have yet to repent and believe in Him. (Romans 1:16, 10:10-20)

4. Missions – Missions is a broad term used in many positive ways; however, in the context of this ministry, it is used to describe tangibly impacting our world in a way that testifies of the unconditional commitment of God to man through Jesus Christ. (Matthew 4:23, John 4:7-9, 8:7, 10, 11).

Beginning in the summer of 2003, the Lead Pastor and author of this thesis project began to heavily teach these Core Values to the leadership of the church. He did this by meeting one-on-one at least once a month with every non-paid ministry leader in the church and having a weekly one-on-one with every paid ministry leader in the church (staff). He would also speak individually with his Core Team throughout the week (the Elders, Chairman of the Deacons and
the Chairman of the Trustees), as well as formally meet with the Core Team once a week. There was also a once a week meeting with the paid staff. Finally, there was a monthly leadership meeting with all those involved in any level of leadership in the church. Someone might ask, “Why so many meetings with the leaders?” Bossidy and Charan have two significant thoughts that answer this question:

Execution is a systematic process of rigorously discussing how’s and what’s, questioning, tenaciously following through, and ensuring accountability.\textsuperscript{34}

They are intimately and intensely involved with their people and operations. They connect because they know the realities and talk about them. They’re knowledgeable about the details. They’re excited about what they’re doing. They’re passionate about getting results.\textsuperscript{35}

It is important to note that this level of intensity in meetings and communication was not just applied to the process of teaching the leaders the Objectives (Core Values), but it was a constant and dominant part of the life of the Lead Pastor for the successful execution of the entire OGAP system. This was the tactic used by the Lead Pastor to train his leaders, and without training there is always a strong likelihood of failure. Sue Mallory writes,

My experiences with those organizations led to a startling and disturbing realization. The church is one of the few, if not the only, non-profit organization that does not require training for service in leadership. Churches tend to assume that people of faith will automatically have the kind of commitment, skill, and experience to carry out whatever is asked of them. If the church gets someone to say yes to a role, there will more likely be a sigh of relief than some specific guidelines about what the job requires. The how-to's are often shockingly overlooked.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{34} Larry Bossidy & Ram Charan, \textit{Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done}, 22.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 29.

\textsuperscript{36} Sue Mallory, \textit{The Equipping Church: Serving Together to Transform Lives} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 150.
In addition, the Core Values were also presented to the entire church in sermons. Some sermons were specifically designed to teach them, and some sermons just incorporated them in some fashion.

By early fall 2003, the leaders had gained enough of a handle on the Objectives of Spiritual Community, Discipleship, Evangelism and Missions that it was time to turn them loose to write the one-year Goals. The Lead Pastor challenged them to write Goals that were certainly beyond where they currently were but at the same time achievable within the next twelve months. Long term goals were not even discussed because the lead pastor was trying to achieve momentum, and as previously discussed in this thesis project, momentum is better achieved through constant achievement of small victories than the rare achievement of big ones. In his book, *Prevailing Church*, Randy Pope gives very valuable input to the writing of goals.

Perhaps of all the components that make up a ministry plan, goal setting is the one most in dispute. Many faithful followers of Christ have argued that goals are inappropriate tools. “Goals,” they have said, “presume upon God and seek to make man’s ways, God’s ways. Goals attempt to control and perhaps quench the Holy Spirit. Goals limit God.” To the contrary, it would be fairer to say that a lack of goals actually limits God’s work more than goal setting. Even the simplest goals get a life or a group in motion. Lack of goals leaves a life’s and group’s transmission in Park. Even if goals are not appropriate, they serve in such a way to validate the saying, “It’s easier to steer a vehicle in motion than it is to steer a parked car.” 37

Goals help set the stage for action. … Goals will ultimately be decided by answering the question, “How will we know if we are making progress toward accomplishing our vision and mission?” Goals represent the mile markers and signposts that tell us how we are doing. Using the familiar acronym SMART to describe goals is a good way to make sure that the goals being set are helpful. The must be Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic and Time Bound.38

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38 Ibid., 209.
In all the previously mentioned meetings the author was regularly having with his leaders (both the one-on-ones and the group meetings), the conversation was now all about goals. In writing goals, some struggled simply because they had never performed such an exercise. Others struggled because in writing the Goals it was discovered that although they said they understood the Objectives the Goals demonstrated, in actuality they did not. This resulted in a lot of long conversations with some of the leaders; each leader was strongly encouraged to not write the Goals on their own but do so with the rest of their team. They could not lead their team until they understood things themselves.

Once each ministry team wrote the goals, they were all compiled and presented to the Elders, and once they approved them, they were given to the church. The author did this again as a teaching tool to continue infusing the ethos of being a movement into the entire church and also as an accountability tool yet not in the manner that one might traditionally think. The church voted to approve the Goals, thus officially stating that the Goals as presented to the church were the official Goals for the ministries of the church over the next year. At that point, if someone complained about what the ministries were doing or not doing, it could at least be responded with, “They are only doing what is needed to fulfill the Goals the church is expecting them to do.” The next step of the process built even more accountability.

Once the Goals process was completed, it was time to form Action Plans. Pope writes, “In addition to being SMART, goals must be supported by a plan, owned by those required to accomplish them, and supported by the necessary resources.”\[^{39}\] It should be noted that the Lead Pastor used the same intense process of meetings and communication with leaders to begin coaching them through this process as he did with coaching them through the development of

\[^{39}\] Randy Pope, *The Prevailing Church: An Alternative Approach To Ministry*, 211.
goals. Charles Jacobs highlights why there must be so much time invested in this process, “For this kind of management to work, the manager must have patience and spend a good deal of time giving the employees the information required for them to self-manage.”

To initiate the Action Plan process, the ministry team leaders were challenged to meet with their teams and plan out what they were going to do over the next year to attempt to fulfill the goals they wrote and that had been approved by the church. The Pastor spent a tremendous amount of time coaching them through this process, significantly more than the time it took to help the Leaders develop appropriate goals. He found he especially had to meet with the Team Leaders to help them critically analyze their Action Plans and make sure they were truly thought out, planned and doable, as well as if they actually stood a chance at achieving their Goals and the Objectives that created the Goals.

These Action Plans frequently equated to events and/or other programs that would need money and/or other resources (church vans, classroom space, additional volunteers, etc.). This then is why the OGAP system was the official process that created the church budget and the church calendar. Because everything in the budget, as well the calendar (minus the operational expenses like power, insurance, etc.), was required to be determined by the OGAP process, it was insured that (at least on paper) everything the church did, although coming out of many of the ministries that were originally designed to meet the needs of a community organization for Christians, would now be activities and programs that reflected that of a movement of believers to change the world. The Action Plans were presented to the church in the form of a Budget. The Church Calendar was presented as well. Both were voted on by the church and thus created an organic accountability process to the things that reflected the vision of the new ethos. If

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anybody complained about what was being done or not done, the reply was simple, “Everything being done or not done was approved by the church.” Bossidy and Charan describe the principle at work this way,

> An operations process that runs on the social software of execution solves this problem, because the people themselves help set realistic targets. And since those targets are the ones their rewards are linked to, the operating plan is where they take full ownership of them. This is the bedrock of accountability. 41

Under no circumstance was this successful overnight; even some of the best “movement” plans still got wrapped up into events and programs that still looked and felt like they were meant to form a community organization for Christians. But, because there was a system in place to evaluate everything back to specific goals that were designed to meet the specific objectives of being a movement to change the world, that meant there was a constant, well-framed, targeted and measurable conversation about the very thing the author was trying to lead the church to become. OGAP not only created a system of execution that could be evaluated at every turn, but it created a functional grass roots platform to constantly teach, challenge and equip the church to be a movement to change the world. In each evaluation, everything was being compared back to the Core Values (the Objectives) that equated to being a movement and not a community organization for Christians. This system of execution became one the most significant transformational tools in the church. The Biblical system of Governance previously discussed made it possible, but without this system, the system of Governance would have only been a system of Governance for the old ethos.

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41 Larry Bossidy & Ram Charan, Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done, 260.
In conclusion to this chapter, it should be noted that the glue that holds together the system of governance and execution is communication.

Lt. Gen. Harold G. Moore and Joseph Galloway give an account of a story in their book, *We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young: Ia Drang – The Battle That Changed the War in Vietnam*, that truly illustrates the value of good communication. In one of the most intense battles in the Vietnam War, a captain gave a sergeant orders to take his team out at night to rescue a lieutenant and those with him. The Lieutenant and his men were totally surrounded by the enemy and severely injured. The Lieutenant, himself, had been severely wounded but had managed to continue to call in artillery that saved an untold amount of American lives. Nonetheless, the Captain felt it was time to get the Lieutenant and whoever else could be saved out of there. The biggest concern of the Sergeant about the mission was, ironically, not the very real and very active danger of being killed by the enemy but being shot by their own people when they returned. American soldiers were scattered everywhere; people were dying everywhere, and the enemy was all over them and in their midst. The American soldiers were in desperation fighting for mere survival. However, in giving the orders to the Sergeant, the Captain assured the Sergeant that he and his men would be able to return safely without the threat of friendly fire.

The Sergeant and his team took a strategic route through the almost pitch black jungle to get to the Lieutenant and his men. Once they arrived, they quickly and quietly gathered together everyone that could be carried and/or make the hike back with them through the dark jungle. Once they got back to the American perimeter, this is what happened:

I knew we were real close, less than two hundred yards out from our lines. I was talking to Captain Forrest on the radio, and telling him we were afraid to come in; we were afraid they were gonna shoot us. Forrest came out to the line and shined a flashlight on his face. He was telling me: “We got everyone alerted – everyone
has got the word – nobody’s going to shoot.” I kept saying we are afraid to move. So Forrest came out another fifty yards toward us, still shining that light on his face. Finally, I said, ‘Ok we’re coming in.’ We got everyone on their feet and we started in. We had got within a few feet of where Forrest was standing and, sure enough, somebody opened up on us from Bravo Company 1/5 lines. It was a private in a foxhole and he fired a whole magazine at us. He was firing low, got one guy in the hip and two others in the legs. When he finally emptied his magazine we screamed at him and got it stopped, and we came on in. Turned out that guy had been asleep in his hole when they put the word out and nobody woke him up to tell him. When he woke up and saw the column approaching he figured we were NVA and he opened fire. There’s always the one guy who doesn’t get the word and that’s the guy who shoots you up coming home. Always.42

In an interview with J. D. Greear, he stated that, “When I’m sick of saying it, the staff just heard it. When they’re sick of hearing it, the church has just become aware of it.”43 A Harvard Business School publication puts it this way,

Effective communication can set the tone for a change program and is critical to implementation from the very start. But don’t rely on a single Bing Bang announcement to keep employees in line with the effort. Communication must be ongoing.44

The author of this thesis project has learned to never believe a person, no matter how much they say they understand something. For Venture, until a leader was correctly verbalizing it to others, correctly answering critical questions and engaging in constructive criticism to make it better, the author assumed they still did not understand.

In at least some small way, no matter if the church needs to be transformed or just led forward to the next level (which includes every church), a Lead Pastor needs to weave the vision into every conversation and every sermon. The core values need to be repeated over and over


43 J. D. Greear, interview by author through the phone, Raleigh, NC, 24 May 2012.

again, and every meeting should review the execution of the strategies in light of the Core Values and the vision.

Like clockwork, throughout the transition of Hardin the author of this thesis project held a two-hour meeting with the Elders, the Chairman of the Trustees and the Chairman of the deacons every Sunday afternoon. Every Tuesday, he met with his paid staff individually and then as a group. He held a one-on-one meeting with all the ministry team directors every month as well as joint meetings every month with all the leadership of the church. When the author was not studying to preach, he was most likely personally communicating with a leader in the church on some issue that directly impacted the transformation of the ethos of the church. Communication is the glue, and without it everything else falls apart. In speaking of the priority of communicating to his staff, Jonathan Falwell writes,

Finally, it’s my observation that clear and effective communication by the senior pastor with the staff is critical to their growth. Jesus plainly spoke with His disciples. And while they may not have fully understood all that He was saying at the time, they were prepared to carry about His will after His resurrection and departure to heaven. When communication is ineffective in our families, they suffer. Likewise, when communication is ineffective with our staff members, they suffer in their ability to minister. As senior leaders, we must communicate our love for our team, our affirmation of their accomplishments, and our support for their effort. When we accomplish this, we will see positive staff development that carries into every area of our churches.45

In addition, good communication is fundamentally not just what is said, but also what is heard and/or given the opportunity to be heard.

Make communication a two-way proposition. Remember, this is a shred enterprise. So, if you are a change leader, spend at least as much time listening as telling. Your attention to this point will help keep others involved and motivated. Leaders need feedback, and the hardworking implementers need opportunities to share their learning and their concerns with leaders who listen.46


Listening and appropriately and wisely responding to what is being said throughout the organization is critical. At every level of the transformation, the author and his leadership team had to be constantly listening. Listening for those trying to divide the body, listening for those who were confused, listening for ways that would either inspire ideas or be ideas themselves on how to better lead the body through the transformation, and most importantly listening to the leadership of The Holy Spirit. Because the Core Leadership was made up of paid and nonpaid people from different walks of life and different circles of friends and ministry within the church, there were, naturally, microphones all over the body listening for anything of positive or negative concern. The Core Team constantly objectively analyzed everything it heard but did so with the uncompromising goal to lead the church to be a movement that could reach the unchurched Gen X and Gen Y people in the region.

It should also be noted that despite the irritation, one must even listen to those who accuse a person of not listening. In the experience of this author with the transformation of the ethos of Hardin, typically (but not always), those people who accused the leaders of not listening did not accept the differences between listening and considering and listening and obeying. They most often wanted listening and obeying. The author of this thesis project and everything he stood for was attacked from every angle at a rate that almost seemed 24 hours day and 365 days a year. Those who opposed him the most accused him of not caring about them and their desires; however, that was not the case. The author of this thesis project and the other leaders spent untold hours, and some might suggest far too many hours, working through every criticism that surfaced. He and the other leaders continued to listen for and dialogue with criticism no matter where it came from or with what attitude it came because to them this was a key to successful leadership. Good leadership is not insular. For example, one author commented on
the insular practices of President Bill Clinton that truly enabled 800,000 people to be slaughtered in Rwanda. She writes,

The calamity in Rwanda took place during the first half of President Bill Clinton’s first term. Although the Clinton White House was known initially for its youthful exuberance and hard work at all hours, neither it nor the president distinguished himself in leadership and management. Rather, the administration was an ‘adhocrazy’ that minimized reliance on systematic decision making, depending instead on the president to micromanage. Debate, and dissent were discouraged, inconsistently was endemic, and critical data was lost in translation – or merely lost.47

Another author did a case study on the tragic explosion of the Space Shuttle Challenger. Phillip Tompkins found that all the information was available to NASA that the incident was going to happen, but because the information failed to be properly communicated through the organization, it was never acted upon. Tompkins writes,

It thus seems conclusive that the communication system was a factor in the Challenger accident. Rebuilding the Marshal Center also meant rebuilding its system of organizational communication.48

In an effort to not be insular, there is no telling how many times an Elder’s meeting went on for hours and hours, mulling over critical statements and/or evaluations by leaders or people within the body. Ironically, despite the incredible amount of time spent constantly working through criticism, throughout the entire process those who most despised the vision continued to say that the author of this thesis project and the other Elders were not listening to them. This thesis project is in no way suggesting the author nor the leaders around him mastered listening, but it can certainly be suggested that they placed a tremendous priority and effort on it. In the end, it needs to be remembered that, “Most squeaky wheels keep right on squeaking, for one


simple reason: they don’t squeak for a lack of oil; they squeak because it’s their nature to squeak.\footnote{49}
CONCLUSION

In concluding this thesis project, it should be repeated that this is not a proposal for a specific process or method for leading the transformation of a local church’s ethos but rather the essential leadership elements involved in a successful process. The conclusions of the reader should not be that the author is recommending an order of events, specific methods or a specific strategy. The logic of a detailed prescriptive process defies the very concept of leadership itself. Leadership is not a mathematical equation where a promise can be made that: If “a” and “b” are added together, one will get “c.” As Larry Stout writes,

Leadership is a mystery. Although anyone can recognize a leader when he sees one, the identification of the leadership process itself remains an elusive enigma. Rabbi Daniel Lapin said it best when he asked, “Why does everyone agree on how to produce top-rate doctors, car mechanics, and physicists, but nobody seems to agree on how to produce top-rate leaders? Medical education in Bombay does not differ substantially from medical training in Boston; but every single leadership training program claims to have its own unique system.” After decades of research and writing, there is still no clear picture anywhere of how to understand leadership. With over 2,000 books written per year on the subject of leadership, each with a different perspective, it is fair to ask the question, “Who is right?”

It is the position of this author that Stout is right in his assertion that there is no exact prescription for successful leadership. Instead of a prescription or formula, there does, however, seem to be principles and elements that if thoroughly considered can lead a person to be and do what is uniquely necessary in their unique situation. This is why Stout proposes a model for understanding and discovery rather than a prescription for being and doing. Stout writes, “The ideal Leadership Model explains the concept of leadership.”


\[2\] Ibid., 57.
look at leadership through the frames, showing that each frame generates its own distinctive image of what leadership is and how it works."

Just as there is no universal prescription for successful leadership, there also does not seem to be a universal prescription on how to lead change. In the author’s research, various proposals were researched on the appropriate process to lead change. Of the ones researched, there were two that stood out as the most helpful to the author. The first is found in Managing Change and Transition and has been in existence since 1990. The process is as follows:

1. Mobilize energy and commitment through joint identification of business problems and their solutions.
2. Develop a shared vision of how to organize and manage for competitiveness.
3. Identify the leadership.
4. Focus on results, not on activities.
5. Start change at the periphery, then let it spread to other units without pushing it from the top.
6. Institutionalize success through formal policies, systems, and structures.
7. Monitor and adjust strategies in response to problems in the change process.

In 1996 John Kotter developed that the second process. Kotter’s process is as follows:

1. Establishing a sense of urgency.
   - Examining the market and competitive realities
   - Identifying and discussing crises, potential crises, or major opportunities.
2. Creating the guiding coalition.
   - Putting together a group with enough power to lead the change
   - Getting the group to work together like a team
3. Developing a vision and strategy.
   - Creating a vision to help direct the change effort
   - Developing strategies for achieving that vision
4. Communicating the change vision.

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5 Ibid., 49.

Using every vehicle possible to constantly communicate the new vision and strategies
Having the guiding coalition role model the behavior expected of the employees

5. Empowering broad-based action.
- Getting rid of obstacles
- Changing systems or structures that undermine the change vision
- Encouraging risk taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions

- Planning for visible improvements in performance, or “wins”
- Creating those wins
- Visibly recognizing and rewarding people who made the wins possible

7. Consolidating gains and producing more change.
- Using increased credibility to change all systems, structures, and policies that don’t fit together and don’t fit the transformation vision
- Hiring, promoting, and developing people who can implement the change vision
- Reinvigorating the process with new projects, themes, and change agents

8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture.
- Creating better performance through customer – and productivity – oriented behavior, more and better leadership, and more effective change management
- Articulating the connection between new behaviors and organizational success
- Developing means to ensure leadership development and succession

Just as Harvard Business Essentials embraces a seven step process in *Managing Change and Transition*, leadership experts like Michael Beitler embrace Kotter. Lee Bolman and Terrance Deal also embrace Kotter’s process. However, a careful look at both reveals obvious similarities, and perhaps more similarities than differences. This seems to be the case throughout all the leadership books in the bibliography of this thesis project; that is, that although there seems to be many ways to lead and many ideas of processes that can be used as a guide while

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leading, there are in all of them elements that seem to be fundamentally constant. This is why, from the highest vantage point, the conclusion of this thesis project on the essential leadership elements for leading the transformation of a local church ethos begins with the overarching statement by Farrell Lemmings to, “Get with God, get a vision, get people on board and lead people in it.”\textsuperscript{10} However, as one zooms in closer to the essential elements, one must both accept and figure out how to thrive in the realities involved in leading the transformation in a local church, that catalysts to create momentum must be intentionally and strategically used, and specific systems have to be developed to ensure the implementation of the Core Values that will define a successful transformation.

Finally, based on the essential leadership elements for transforming the ethos of a local church, the author recommends the following questions to be asked, grasped, prayed through and resolved by any local church leader preparing to lead a transformation process:

\textbf{What is your understanding of the price you are about to pay, and how equipped are you to pay it?}

Psychologists know that some people are limited, even crippled, by emotional blockages that prevent them from doing things that leadership requires. Such blockages may lead them to avoid unpleasant situations by ducking conflicts, procrastinating on decisions, or delegating with no follow-through. On the darker side, they may drive the leader to humiliate others, draining energy and sowing distrust.\textsuperscript{11}

\textbf{What is your plan to consistently grow as a leader?}

Change the leader, change the organization. Everything rises and falls on leadership! However, I have found that it’s not easy to change leaders. In fact,

\textsuperscript{10} Farrell Lemmings, interview by author, Cornelius, NC, 7 May 2012.

\textsuperscript{11} Larry Bossidy & Ram Charan, \textit{Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done}, 79.
I’ve discovered that leaders resist change as much as followers do. The result? Unchanged leaders equal unchanged organizations. People do what people see.  

**What are the core values of your vision that if removed fundamentally alter your vision?**

As you review what the Bible says about the church, watch for the answers to the questions below. As you formulate your answer, focus on both the nature and the tasks of the church. Why does the church exist? What are we to be as a church? (Who and what are we?) What are we to do as a church? (What does God want done in the world?) How are we to do it?  

**What is the commitment level and leadership capability of your core team?**

A leadership team is quite different. It is a small group of leaders who possess complementary gifts and skills. They are committed to one another’s growth and success and hold themselves mutually accountable. Together they lead a larger group of people toward a common vision, specific performance goals, and a plan of action.  

**What is your plan for creating catalysts that will create the needed momentum?**

Huge accomplishments start with small steps.

The first step, and I’m talking generically, is that he or she has got to do something that’s dramatic, that’s visible, and that has resonance throughout the whole organization – something that signifies direction.  

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12 John C. Maxwell, *Developing The Leader Within You*, 49.


What needs to change in the structure of your church so that you can make decisions and lead?

An inappropriate organizational structure could make successful implementation of the strategic plan difficult, if not impossible.\textsuperscript{17}

**What is your strategy to execute and manage the process?**

And that leads us again to the 200,000 person study by HealthStream Research, which confirms that managers who achieved enhanced business results are significantly more likely to be seen by their employees as strong in what we call the Basic Four areas of leadership: Goal setting, Communication, Trust, Accountability.\textsuperscript{18}

Here’s what I’ve learned: We can be filled with love for lost people and can have a lot of good intentions. We can also have the most powerful mission statement in the world. We can be very clear on what we’re trying to do and make certain that all of our members know our church exists to fulfill the Great Commission in our own little corner of the world. But unless this mission and these values and good intentions get translated into a sound step-by-step strategy specifically geared to reaching the people in the subculture we’re working in, we probably won’t make a very big impact.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17} Michael Beitler, *Strategic Organizational Change: A Practitioner’s Guide For Managers and Consultants*, 107.


\textsuperscript{19} Mark Mittelberg, *Building A Contagious Church: Revolutionizing the Way We View and Do Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 65.
APPENDIX

OFFICIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION TO COMEBACK CHURCHES

June 12, 2007

Pastor Austin Rammell
Hardin Baptist Church
P. O. Box 591
Dallas, NC 28034-0591

Dear Pastor,

Thank you so much for opening your church and your heart to us as part of the Comeback Churches project. We surveyed 324 churches like yours—those that had experienced substantial growth after a protracted period of decline. We are grateful for the time that you invested in this project.

Please consider this book a gift from the authors and B&H Publishers. We appreciate you and consider it a privilege to help tell your story. Our prayer is that telling the story of Comeback Churches will encourage thousands of church leaders and help them see revitalization take place in their churches.

We have also enclosed a pre-stamped, pre-addressed postcard. We have often been asked if we would share the names of the churches involved in the Comeback study. Because some of the churches in the study gave permission, we are sharing the names of those churches that participated in follow-up interviews and provided further insights. However, if you would be willing, we would like to share the names and locations of all churches that participated in the study. (No other specific details will be shared.)

We would appreciate your sending back the card either way.

Thanks for your partnership in the gospel!

God bless,
Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson
COMPARITIVE INTERVIEW

NAME OF PERSON INTERVIEWED: Dr. David Chadwick, Senior Pastor

CHURCH: Forest Hill Church

DATE: April 19, 2012

CHURCH ADDRESS:
7224 Park Road
Charlotte, NC 28210

PHONE NUMBER:
(704) 716-8700

(1) What was the mission/purpose of your church? – It was an internal mission of discipleship and therefore not true discipleship. The purpose was to feed them spiritually, help them grow in the knowledge of the Word, worship together and love one another. Evangelism was not a part of the outcome or process of discipleship.

(2) What is the mission/purpose of your church? – “Know, Go, Grow. - Make disciples who Know Christ, Grow in Christ, and Go in Christ.” “The tip of the arrow must point to the ‘least’ and the ‘lost.’”

(3) What were the core values of your church? - Faithful Bible teaching, Authentic Community and openness to the Holy Spirit in worship. It was more of a deli or buffet to try and keep everybody happy.

(4) What are the core values of your church? – “Collaboration, Unity and Trust.” These things drive their mission statement. Collaboration, unity and trust are achieved in being lazar focused. “We are going to do a few things really well, life groups, and a couple

(5) How was your church structured? – It was a traditional Presbyterian structure of an Elder-led church and attached to the Presbyterian Denominational system and structure.

(6) How is your church structured? – About 7 years ago they became an independent church. They have maintained the same Elder structure but have broken ties with their Presbyterian Denomination. The issue was forced by the denomination when Forrest shifted its doctrine to baptism as a profession of faith by a person who has chosen to give his/her life to Christ. They still baptize infants but communicate no spiritual transformation as a result of it. The Presbyterian denomination would not agree with their position and were going to force them to change it.

(7) What was the general ministry history of the church prior to the transformation? - Dr. Chadwick came in 1980, and there were 150 people as a part of the church. Some Elders
told him his job was to basically come and bury the church with grace. They were in a transitional neighborhood that they had been unable/unwilling to reach, and the church was dying. About five years after Dr. Chadwick came, the church started to grow. They decided to relocate and when they did they went with about approximately 800 people. Around 1991 he felt the church was very enclosed in its focus and wanted to lead them to a mission and purpose that truly was rooted in the Great Commission and do so to the “least” and the “lost.” As he started to lead that change, he felt that mission was “hamstrung by some people pleasing.” He had moved to a Blended Worship Gathering to try and accommodate everybody but there was still a lot of complaining and a resistance. He realized that what was driving him was keeping people instead of a vision of leading people. He decided he needed to choose which burden he was going to bear – either the burden of being led by vision and the loss that would come with that or the burden of trying to please people and keep them happy and the loss that would come with that. They soon started trying to transition to an evangelistic/attractional style worship gatherings and church. He took his leaders on a retreat and laid out his vision for what the church needed to do but gave them an ultimatum. He told them if they didn’t agree to it he would leave. He got a vote of support, but he didn’t get any visionary ascent into it. Leaders began to talk to one another instead of him and this continued for about a year until an Elder came to him personally and confronted him. He went away on a vacation and read a book called In The Name Of Jesus: Reflections on Leadership In the 21st Century, by Henri Nowen. While reading it, he came under serious conviction about the way he was leading. He felt convicted that he had to serve the people and not use them for his glory. He came back and confessed it to the elders and actually told the Elders he would joyfully lead whatever vision for Forrest that they wanted. They then came back to him and said we want to go wherever God is telling you we need to go. He restarted everything by taking the next year to craft a new vision with them. Over time, he still lost a few Elders who just couldn’t make the change; however, the transition of Forrest Hills followed suite with he and the rest of the Elders, and now there are over 5,000 people worshiping together as Forrest Hill Church. The church continues to grow and impact the region with the Gospel.

(8) **What is the current focus of ministry since the transformation?** – They have both an attractional and missional model that is also committed to teaching the Bible even if it is offensive. He felt many attractional models encouraged politically correct preaching. He had aligned with that for a while but eventually felt convicted over it and recommitted to teaching the whole counsel of God regardless of its popularity in culture.

(9) **What were five to ten of the most impactful and/or noticeable leadership elements in the transformation?**

   a. The issue was not method but contextualization
   b. Emphasis on Compassion on the poor was something he got right.
   c. Understanding that evangelism has to be the drive everything.
   d. Life Groups.
   e. Prayer. “If you can do it without prayer then you don’t need it.” “If you stop praying and it keeps going then its dead.” They now do monthly prayer and healing services,
have intentional prayer ministry in Life Groups, intentional processes to unite the personal prayer life of people in the body, etc.

(10) What were the five to ten least impactful and/or least noticeable leadership elements in the transformation? – In the beginning, they felt like things like drama, particular styles of ministry and worship were essential, but he now no longer feels that way. He said, “I wouldn’t have made that the issue as much as he did.”
COMPARITIVE INTERVIEW

NAME OF PERSON INTERVIEWED: Dickie Spargo

CHURCH: Bethlehem Church

DATE: June 4, 2012

CHURCH ADDRESS:
3100 Bethlehem Church Street
Gastonia, NC 28056

PHONE NUMBER:
(704) 823-1600

(1) What was the mission/purpose of your church? – Missions through giving to the
denominational missions offering. It was a traditional church with a very inward focus and
lacked a purpose or mission beyond the fellowship of its members.

(2) What is the mission/purpose of your church? – Lead people to a personal relationship
with Christ in every way possible.

(3) What were the core values of your church? – Survive and maintain the church culture and
fellowship.

(4) What are the core values of your church? – “Be the best church for the community not
just the best church in the community.” There is a core value to not just change attendance
at church but change the spiritual climate in the community. Local hands on missions are a
major part of the core value of the church, along with any other outreach that can be done to
proclaim the Gospel.

(5) How was your church structured? – In reality, it was micro-managed by a few people
because at the end of the day there was no true structure. Those few people helped to keep it
that way as well. There was not even a budget. The only thing that resembled “structure”
was the fact that there were official Deacons in the church, and they essentially acted like a
finance committee.

(6) How is your church structured? - It is basically a staff-led church with Elders and a
Finance team and some of the staff are Elders. However, it still lacks a healthy and clearly
defined leadership system.

(7) What was the general ministry history of the church prior to the transformation? –
When Dickie came, the church was about to die. They wanted a “chaplain” for a pastor and
not a “missionary.” The church was on the brink of having to sell its proper to Wendy’s or
Burger King. The church is now the largest church in Gaston County with 2,500 in
attendance each Sunday.
(8) **What is the current focus of ministry since the transformation?** – Major emphasis on evangelistic outreach, and within the last 3 to 4 years local missions has become a major focus.

(9) **What were five to ten of the most impactful and/or noticeable leadership elements in the transformation?** – Dickie only named two. First were the intentional relationships with a key group of leaders and second was longevity (he has stayed the course with Bethlehem for over 22 years).

(10) **What were the five to ten least impactful and/or least noticeable leadership elements in the transformation?** – He only named one. He felt they put too much emphasis on what happened on Sunday. He said when it was all about the weekend people eventually just go find one they think is cooler.
COMPARITIVE INTERVIEW

NAME OF PERSON INTERVIEWED: Farrell Lemings

TITLE OF PERSON INTERVIEWS: Lead Pastor

CHURCH: Grace Covenant Church

DATE: May 7, 2012

CHURCH ADDRESS: 17301 Statesville Road
Cornelius, NC 28031

PHONE NUMBER: (704) 892-8005

(1) What was the mission/purpose of your church? – He said they really had no definable mission or purpose.


(3) What were the core values of your church? - Worship and Preaching.

(4) What are the core values of your church? – Aggressive, intentional evangelism equipped and led through aggressive discipleship and the spiritual leadership development of the Body. They highly value attracting people to the Gospel and to the body, but they are increasingly becoming missional as a core value.

(5) How was your church structured? – Very pastor centered.

(6) How is your church structured? - The have what is called a Church Council which are the group that are the legal representatives of the church (Trustees). Elders are the ministry and vision leaders. They serve unlimited terms. Pastors on staff are Elders but then they have other Elders that are layman. They have deacons that are simply intentional servants in the church with no governance. They have an Operations Team (The Lead Pastor, the Pastor of Worship/Community, Pastor of Administration/Campus Pastor of East Lincolnton Campus and the Pastor of Facilities and Strategic Planning). They have a management team that includes the operations team plus two others (the pastor over discipleship and the pastor over outreach and care).

(7) What was the general ministry history of the church prior to the transformation? – The church had been led by a pastor prior to Farrell coming that had led the church into a very difficult period. Farrell had actually served under this pastor but left when he realized he and the previous pastor could not agree on the basic vision and philosophy of the church. When Farrell was asked to come back in 1995 and be the Lead Pastor of the church, it was in
a very difficult place and spiritually unhealthy. When he arrived, there were fewer than 300 members and now there are over 3,000.

(8) **What is the current focus of ministry since the transformation?** – Heavy evangelistic church. In 2006, they set a five year goal to see 20,000 come to Christ. After five years, they had led 29,000 people to Christ through all their ministries. They plant churches and have recently begun a satellite campus and plan to continue moving forward in this.

(9) **What were five to ten of the most impactful and/or noticeable leadership elements in the transformation?** - He spent the first two years just building relationships. He would frequently have two-breakfast appointment and two lunch appointments on any given day. After that he has been entirely focused on leadership development primarily through relationships. They have a huge emphasis on prayer and fasting that always precedes intentional planning sessions for ministry. They narrow their focus on 5 priorities and build their management team around it. They have an intentional simple leadership model - Get with God, get a vision, get people on board and lead people in it. To do this, they believe it boils down to love God and love people. Lemings reminds me of Jim Collins’s description of the kind of leader that leads organizations from being good to being great. He didn’t attribute his leadership to the transition and growth but it is undeniable.

(10) **What were the five to ten least impactful and/or least noticeable leadership elements in the transformation?** - Lemings did not address this when asked. He said, “He’s gifted to forget the negative things!” He said this sarcastically, but there was some sincerity as well.
COMPARITIVE INTERVIEW

NAME OF PERSON INTERVIEWED: J. D. Greear

CHURCH: Summit Church

DATE: May 24, 2012

CHURCH ADDRESS:
2335-114 PRESIDENTIAL DR.
DURHAM, NC 27703

PHONE NUMBER:
(919) 383-7100

(1) What was the mission/purpose of your church? – Prior to be elected as pastor, the church was split. 100 people felt the purpose was overwhelmingly internal and missions were minor; 100 people felt the purpose was external and 200 people didn’t have an opinion.


(3) What were the core values of your church? - Internal fellowship and growing the size of the church in hopes that it will bless the city. They called it “A Place of Grace”

(4) What are the core values of your church? – Our guiding value is what it takes to reach people. Major on the Gospel and major on those who are not plugged in to church. “Let’s bless and reach the city, and if we grow a great big church in the process then that’s great.” We judge our success not by our seating capacity but by our sending capacity. They highly value church planting and missions both in and out of the U.S. He referred me to his blog for more info (http://www.jdgreear.com/my_weblog/2011/11/plumblines-36-values-i-wish-i-had-possessed-when-i-started-pastoring-10-years-ago.html)

(5) How was your church structured? – Deacon and Congregational Led.

(6) How is your church structured? - “Jesus ruled, Elder led, Congregationally Accountable.”

(7) What was the general ministry history of the church prior to the transformation? – The day J.D. was elected 150 people left the church. The reason was the buildup to his election was a debate over the mission/purpose of the church and the core value of the church. UP to that point they were so focused on mission

(8) What is the current focus of ministry since the transformation? – Being a church of life groups, loving the city, aggressive multi-campus strategy, not a one size fits all church (every multi-site is unique) and deeply missional.
(9) **What were five to ten of the most impactful and/or noticeable leadership elements in the transformation?** – Momentum - Only fight the battles that create momentum. A preacher that is a leader. Changes that flowed out of the values preached from the stage. Leading in concentric circles – not just preaching it but a disciplined effort of mobilizing, communicating and equipping the leadership elements of the church. “When I’m sick of saying it, the staff just heard it. When they’re sick of hearing it, the church has just become aware of it.” Getting a high level leader plugged in as the Executive Pastor was key. The percentage of implementation went from 40%-60% of the time to 100%.

(10) **What were the five to ten least impactful and/or least noticeable leadership elements in the transformation?** – There were some things they changed that really were not that big of a deal in the end, either in actually changing it or the effect when it changed. Changing to an Elder Board was not that big of deal. For example, they started functioning like an Elder Board, so changing it was fairly easy. Their music was out of date but ended up being the last thing they changed.
COMPARITIVE INTERVIEW

NAME OF PERSON INTERVIEWED: Ralph W. Neighbour III, Campus Pastor of Mosaic Inland in Chino, California (A satellite of Mosaic).

CHURCH: Mosaic

DATE: March 13, 2012

CHURCH ADDRESS: 7107 Hollywood Blvd Los Angeles, CA 90046

PHONE NUMBER: (909) 519 - 4308

(1) What was the mission/purpose of your church? – The previous pastor to the current pastor (Erwin McManus) was Tom Wolfe. He had, on paper, the same mission/purpose as McManus – “missions is why the church exists.” For Mosaic, that translates to being a spiritual reference point for east Los Angeles, CA and a sending base to the ends of the earth. However, under Wolfe, the church had been plateaued between 400 and 500 for a number of years. In reality, their mission was raising up and sending out missionaries through the SBC. This resulted in sending tons of people overseas but not truly impacting the spiritual landscape of Los Angeles, CA. The church just couldn’t get “off of itself.”

(2) What is the mission/purpose of your church? – Be a spiritual reference point for Los Angeles by finding the person who is furthest away from Christ and bring him/her to Christ. There is still a heartbeat to send people around the world, but now the flow begins with evangelizing and discipling Los Angeles. Mosaic targets the entrepreneur, early adapters of Los Angeles with a vision of reaching those who will truly lead and therefore change culture.

(3) What were the core values of your church? - To be an overseas training center for future missionaries. Kept the church stagnant because it was more about training Christians to go overseas than it was to teach them to win the people where they lived - Los Angeles, CA.

(4) What are the core values of your church? – Los Angeles is the mission field. The heart for the world begins in L.A. where the world already lives.

(5) How was your church structured? – On paper, the church was led by the Elder Board, which consisted of some Lay Pastors, Senior Pastor and the Administrative Pastor. The paid Staff was a major part of the leadership structure as well. However, in reality, there was a culture of high control at the top. The Sr. Pastor and Admin Pastor held tight control over everything.

(6) How is your church structured? – Mosaic struggles with organization, and it is always changing. In some sense, the Elder Board is still the structural head. It consists of Erwin
McManus and some of the other Assoc. Pastors and three other Lay Pastors. The struggle exists because there is an intentional culture to try and release “power” to new leaders which creates confusion and inconsistency at times.

(7) **What was the general ministry history of the church prior to the transformation?** – Tom Wolfe took over the leadership of the church in 1969 and led it to become a major mission sending church of young adults. They were one of the top churches for rising up and sending international missionaries in the Southern Baptist Convention, but they were not being effective at evangelizing Los Angeles and therefore not being true to the Great Commission. McManus was asked to become the lead pastor in 1994, and he initiated a radical new vision for the church to become a movement that focused on reaching the young non-believing cultural leaders of L.A. This required a radical transition of values, methods, etc. in the church, and it was a very difficult transition. To begin the transition, Erwin created a new church within the church. He started a new gathering on Sunday evenings. He only invited a small group of people to actually be a part of it. He was always changing the look and feel of the room and did something different every week. The gathering was in the facility at Church on Brady until what was happening on Sunday evenings was larger than what was happening on Sunday mornings. He then moved that gathering to a Night Club in L.A. During all this, a war was erupting in the church. There was huge resistance against everything that was happening. Adding to the difficulty was the fact that Tom Wolfe, who had handed the reigns over to Erwin McManus to be the Lead Pastor, was still an Elder in the church and was increasingly doing things that conflicted with the vision McManus was trying to instill in the church. Finally, Erwin came to elders and submitted his resignation asserting the church couldn’t have two lead pastors wanting to go two different directions. The Elders rejected his resignation and affirmed Erwin as the Lead Pastor. They encouraged him that if they were all that was left in the church they would stick by him. They then asked Tom Wolfe to step down and take a leave of absence. Wolfe left but it wasn’t pretty. There was a fairly healthy exodus of people who left the church that were committed to Wolfe and the old ways of the church. Soon afterwards, they sold the property and created a very different movement where there was no centralized gathering point at a property they owned. They took a multi-campus strategy and sought to utilize existing spaces that they could quickly relocate in and out of if needed (leased rather than own.). Everything about the church was set to be changed whenever necessary so that the movement could continue to grow. The ethos became one of change for the purpose of the mission.

(8) **What is the current focus of ministry since the transformation?** – Mosaic now has numerous campuses in leased space and is reaching large numbers of young filmmakers, actors, artist, musicians, etc. They still send missionaries around the world, but they are now trying to impact the people groups of the world by reaching the pockets of those groups living in Los Angeles.

(9) **What were five to ten of the most impactful and/or noticeable leadership elements in the transformation?** – This ethos was breathed into the church community by the lead pastor. It was driven by what the lead pastor did and did not do. If he was there to be the custodian then that would have dictated the ethos, but if he was there to lead a movement
then that would create it. It was, therefore, essential that Erwin was clear on his vision (where they were going and how), that he exemplified perseverance (unwillingness to let go of the core vision), that he constantly verbalized the vision, and found new ways to reinforce it. McManus has a bulldog level of tenacity when it comes to their Core Values and Vision, that is “I will die before I let go.” He had a willingness to sacrifice greatly and take huge risks to advance the vision. Through the transformation, the leadership culture changed to tightly control values rather than tightly controlled program. In Mosaic, leaders are raised up and released to create programs and methods that are in the confines of a tightly held system of core values. They are always examining where they are tight and where they are loose to make sure it fits their mantra. Finally, selling the church building was key. McManus believes one of the biggest roadblocks to change is the church building. He believes it drives the budget, programs, and vision. He also believes that it’s the extremely rare church that is able to get beyond the walls of the physical church building. This leadership element continues to be true for some of the Mosaic satellite campuses. For example, Neighbour was the pastor of a church in Chino, California that merged with Mosaic LA. As a part of the merger, Mosaic made him the campus pastor of the new satellite campus. A year ago they chose to sell the building the church had been meeting in for years and move into an urban community. Because of the move, within a month they lost 30% of their offerings and leaders, but a year later they have gained a brand new group that is committed to the ethos and they are once again moving forward.

(10) What were the five to ten least impactful and/or least noticeable leadership elements in the transformation? – Organizational clarity didn’t seem to help or hinder the process in a major way.
HARDIN BAPTIST CHURCH
BYLAWS
April 2003

PREAMBLE

For the purpose of unity, order and declaring what Hardin Baptist Church has prayerfully considered to be the proper Biblical understanding of what the fellowship of Hardin Baptist Church is called to be and do the following topics have been addressed as Bylaws. It is understood that God’s Holy Church was purchased by His son Jesus Christ through His death on a cross and resurrection from the dead. Christ is the Head of the Church, The Holy Spirit is the guide, and the Bible is the inspired, infallible and inerrant Word of God, which demonstrates all the Truth that God has intended to be known about Himself and His Church. God’s written Word to humanity is contained only in the Bible, which is the sixty-six books of Holy Scripture found in the protestant Bible translations such as the New King James Version, the King James Version and the New American Standard Version. Therefore, the bylaws of Hardin Baptist Church, its members, and/or its human leadership shall not be the ultimate authority, but rather the Word of God which exists in completely inspired, infallible and inerrant written form only in the Bible, taught to us by the power of the Holy Spirit and through the authority and leadership of Christ.

I. NAME

The name of this fellowship of the Body of Christ is Hardin Baptist Church of Dallas, North Carolina.

II. FAITH

The 2000 Baptist Faith and Message best represents the doctrinal position of this church. Understanding that the term Baptist has become ambiguous we use the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message not as a guide to our doctrine but as a general representation of what we believe to be true.

III. ORDINANCES

The Ordinances of the church are Baptism by immersion of a person who professes Christ as their Lord and Savior and the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Baptisms will be conducted as needed and the Lord’s Supper will be served at least four times a year.

IV. MISSION STATEMENT

On Mission with Christ to Make Disciples of All People

The purpose of the local church as established in Scripture is best summarized by the words of Christ as recorded in Matthew 28:19 and 20: “Go therefore 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.” (New King James Version) Therefore, the purpose of the Church is to go to work with
Christ constantly and strategically, reaching out to every people group in the world to guide them into a personal, spiritual, reproductive relationship with Christ.

V. POLITY AND RELATIONSHIPS

The government of this church is vested in the body of believers who compose it meaning it is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical or political body or bodies but rather Christ Himself.

In addition, we recognize the importance of fellowship and cooperation with the Body of Christ and therefore other local assemblies of believers in order to more effectively fulfill the commission of Christ for the Church as outlined in Matthew 28:19 and 20. Hardin Baptist will have a primary financial and ministerial cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention. It will also financially cooperate with the Gaston Baptist Association and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. The cooperation with these associations and conventions should only continue as long as the church is convinced that the priority of these associations and conventions is evangelism and they represent the doctrinal positions of Hardin Baptist Church. The Church is not limited to its affiliations or partnerships but recognizes that these will serve as the primary commitments as long as they are productive for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

VI. MEMBERSHIP

1. Requirements

The membership of Hardin Baptist church will be those who have committed their lives to Christ, been Baptized by immersion, feel called of God to participate in the ministries and direction of Hardin Baptist Church, agree with the fundamental doctrines of the church and have been confirmed by a majority vote of confirmation by the church.

2. Means of Reception

   a. Public Profession of Faith and Baptism. If a person makes a public statement of their faith in Christ through presenting themselves in an invitation to the church testifying of their personal surrender to Christ and then if they are Baptized by immersion following their profession of faith they can become a member of the church by a majority vote. This vote can be taken when they make their public statement of faith in Christ to the Church and will be effective upon their Baptism.

   b. Letter. A member of a church of like faith with the same membership requirements as Hardin may be received by a majority vote of the church and will be effective upon the receipt of their letter of dismissal from that church.

   c. Statement. Anyone who has been a member of a church of like faith with the same membership requirements as Hardin, and in consequence of peculiar circumstances has no regular letter of dismissal, may be received into our fellowship upon a
statement satisfactory to the church. Upon their membership a letter will be sent to their previous church informing them of their decision.

3. Procedure

All candidates for membership shall be presented to the church and voted for membership at a regular worship service after the candidate has been presented. At the discretion of the Senior Pastor or an Elder acting in his absence, the vote on reception of an applicant for membership may take place immediately upon presenting themselves or may be deferred to allow for personal counsel.

4. Termination of Membership

a. By death. The church officer in charge of membership records should remove the name of any member from the church roll upon the death of the member.

b. By letter. Letters of dismission may be granted to any church of like faith and order for members in good standing upon the majority vote of the church. When letters are granted, membership in this church will be terminated.

c. By exclusion. The church, after due notice and opportunity for hearing and kindly efforts to make such action unnecessary, may terminate the membership of persons whose conduct is of such a nature that it hinders the work of the church and Christ’s Kingdom. This should be done in a manner to attempt to restore the person to a fruitful relationship with Christ, therefore abiding by the principles laid out in Matthew 18:15-17, Galatians 6:1, and Titus 1:10-16. To be terminated by exclusion the recommendation must come to the church through the Elders and receive a two-thirds (two-thirds (2/3)) vote of confirmation by the church.

d. By erasure. Upon receipt and confirmation that a member has joined another church, the officer in charge of membership records shall remove the person from the membership rolls. This should be done only after confirming the information with the Elders and a majority vote by the church.

e. By resignation. A member may request that their membership be terminated, and such termination shall be effective as of the date the request is received.

5. Updating Membership Role

A study of the membership role should be done periodically at the discretion of the Elders to determine its accuracy. The study should be presented to the church for approval and action.

VII. MEETINGS

1. Weekly Meetings
There will be weekly scheduled meetings for corporate worship, teaching, preaching, training, and fellowship. The normal regular corporate times will be, but, not limited to, Sunday morning and evening and Wednesday evening unless otherwise recommended by the Elders and confirmed by a majority vote of the church.

2. Business Meetings

   a. Annual Meeting. The annual meeting of the church for the purpose of confirming a budget and presenting an annual report of the previous year’s ministries and budget will be the last Sunday night of October. The proposed budget should be distributed to all members no later than 28 days prior to the meeting.

   b. Quarterly Meetings. The last Sunday night of January, April, July and October (which also serves as the Annual Meeting) will be a quarterly business meeting of the church. Any matter of business to be presented to the church should be submitted to the Elders in writing one week prior to the meeting.

   c. Special Called Meetings.

      i. At any weekly meeting of the Church, the Senior Pastor may call for an immediate business conference to act upon matters of business that are in need of an immediate response by the church.

      ii. The Elders may call any meeting recommending considerable changes to the church by announcing the meeting date, time and subject matter in a weekly meeting of the church at least one week prior to its occurrence or by mailing the information to the membership at least 10 days prior to the meeting. The meeting should only address the subject that was announced.

      iii. If there is a need to address an issue through a business meeting in the absence of the Senior Pastor, then the Elders may elect to call a meeting. If the matter demands immediate attention then they may call for an immediate meeting, however, they should attempt to give one week’s notice. If the unforeseen occurs and there are no Elders physically alive or they are completely incapable of being contacted, the Deacon Board may elect to call the church into a business meeting.

   d. Moderator.

      The Senior Pastor will serve as moderator, or in his absence, or upon his request, or on any motion concerning his compensation or tenure, an Elder; or in the absence of an Elder the Chairman of the Deacons; or in the absence of the Senior Pastor, the Elders and the Chairman of the Deacons the Deacon Board may elect a person to serve as Moderator Pro Tem.

   e. Quorum
A quorum shall consist of the members present at a properly called business meeting. Only members may vote on matters presented in business meetings.

f. Procedure

Once the proper moderator has begun a meeting it should be run in a manner that gives ample opportunity for questions, comments, discussion, motions and amendments to each matter of business being presented to the church. The guide to a meeting is the Biblical principles of love, fellowship, and church leadership. The leader of the meeting should always be the Holy Spirit. The moderator should therefore keep the business meeting well-mannered and in order by first being sensitive to the Holy Spirit and using the principles of Roberts Rules of Order as a guide to maintain logical order and fairness.

g. Minutes

Minutes should be recorded of each business meeting. These minutes are church property and therefore, stored at the church and available to all members for inspection.

VIII. OFFICERS

1. Local Church Leadership

Biblically the Church belongs to Christ and is completely subject to Him: “For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.” (Ephesians 5:23) Therefore, the leadership of the church is not the church but Christ. Because Christ is in charge, it is eternally important for a local Church to completely follow all of Christ’s commands including the Biblical organization of the Church under Christ. Therefore, for the sake of obeying the Word of God, logical order, and for equipping the Body to do the Work of the ministry, Hardin Baptist Church will be led by a Board of Elders consisting of the Senior Pastor, Compensated Associate Pastors and Non-Compensated Associate Pastors (Lay Pastors). In this Board of Elders the Senior Pastor will be the “head” Elder. The Deacons, Trustees, and Ministry Directors will all come under the leadership of the Elders.

2. General Description of Biblical Church Officers

a. Elder

As with all organizations there are managers who work under the owner to organize its members to accomplish the purpose of the organization as given by the owner. Scripture most commonly calls these managers Elders. The terms
Elder, Pastor, Overseer, and Bishop are used interchangeably in Scripture. These offices are one in the same.

“For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking and appoint Elders in every city as I commanded you.” (Titus 1:5) Paul instructed Titus to appoint Elders in every city in Crete. In the early church there was only one church in each city but in each city there was to be a plurality of Elders. Therefore it is understood that as Paul commanded Titus to appoint Elders in each city to lead the church we must now have Elders in each local congregation. Even though Scripture never dictates how many Elders each church should have, it is clear that there should be a plurality of Elders in each local congregation. In this team of Elders there is always one who is ultimately going to stand before God and give an account for the people…there is a head Elder or a senior Elder (i.e. James became the “head” Elder for the Church in Jerusalem.) In the modern church we most frequently call the head Elder the Senior Pastor. The other Elders are normally described as Associate Pastors. It is also possible to have Elders who are not financially supported by the church, i.e. Lay Pastors.

In Titus 1:7 Paul states that the Elders are stewards of the household of God. It is a metaphor drawn from contemporary life and pictures the manager of a household or estate. This phrase demonstrates that it is the Elders who are to manage the local church under the direction of Christ through His Spirit and His Word. It is these managers who will stand before Christ and give an account for how they equipped Christ’s church to carry out Christ’s commands for the church: “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.” (Hebrews 13:17)

The purpose of the Elder is to equip the body for the work of the ministry: “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.” (Ephesians 4:12) The Elders or Pastors are to accomplish this through numerous methods but majoring on teaching and preaching the Word of God: “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” (2 Timothy 4:1, 2) It is the Elders who are responsible for leading the Church to follow Christ. They are the shepherds whom must guide the flock to the green pastures where they can feast on a relationship with Christ and fulfill the purpose God has given His church. No other office in the church is given this task.

Therefore, Hardin Baptist Church will be led by a group of Elders. These Elders will be the Senior Pastor, any Associate Pastors and the men that the Senior Pastor will recommend to the church to be confirmed as Non-Compensated Associate Pastors/Lay Pastors. The Senior Pastor will lead this group of Elders as
a team to manage the ministries and spiritual direction of the church. The Senior Pastor will also recommend to the church the number of Elders/Pastors needed throughout the life of the Church. Each time an Elder is added the church will be required to have a vote of confirmation affirming that it is the will of God and that they agree the person being recommended is both qualified and called to the position.

Because Scripture is clear that the Elders are the overseers of the local church, all the ministries of the church including the Deacons, Trustees, and Committees will work under the leadership, direction and supervision of the Elders. Because the Senior Pastor will be the one who ultimately stands before God to answer for the Spiritual life and ministries of Hardin Baptist Church, he will have the ultimate authority among the Elders. Each Elder should be willing to come under the leadership, direction and supervision of the Senior Pastor.

The Senior Pastor should see himself as a team player, as a head coach with a group of assistant coaches. The head coach is ultimately responsible for the direction of the team but a wise head coach chooses talented assistant coaches who respect his leadership and have the ability to do their jobs without being micro managed. A good head coach hires assistant coaches who are experts at what they do. He trusts their opinions and weighs heavily on their wisdom when making decisions. Therefore, even though the Senior Pastor is ultimately responsible he is most successful in leading the body when he is able to assemble a team of Elders to do the task with Him. The Elders will technically work under the Senior Pastor but the Senior Pastor will operate as the Head Coach of a local team of believers known as Hardin Baptist Church, owned by Christ, with a mission to make disciples of all people. “The Elders who are among you I exhort…Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.” (I Peter 5:1-4)

b. Deacons

The position of Deacon is a very special position in the New Testament. However, even though the qualifications are similar to that of an Elder, the office of Deacon is completely different. To better understand the purpose of this office it is important to see how it began. In Acts chapter 6 a group of people known as Hellenist were complaining that they were being neglected during the daily distribution of food and money.

“No in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the
word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” And the saying pleased the whole multitude.” (Acts 6:1-4)

To be a part of the church in Jerusalem one had to accept Christ as their Lord, be baptized, sell all their worldly possessions and give all the profit to the church. The money would then be distributed among all the members of the church and used for purchasing food and other supplies for living. The Apostles were so overwhelmed with the quickly growing church that they could no longer handle the day-to-day duties of distributing the items necessary for the people’s physical survival and still focus on preaching and teaching. The key to this position is the meaning of the word Deacon. The literal definition is a servant. The Deacons were selected by the Body to be official Servants to the Apostles. All Christians should serve God and one another but this is an official position in the church as Servants to the Apostles. Later, Deacons were selected by the Body to be servants of the Elders. At no point in Scripture are Deacons ever given leadership “authority” in the church. They are to be leaders by their testimony (men full of the Holy Spirit) because they are front-line ministers for the Elders to the community. However, they have no leadership authority or governing position in the church. It was understood that the Deacon’s primary job was to come under the leadership of the Elders and assist them in whatever ministry the Elders needed to them to do. In Acts chapter 6 we see them being used for the daily distributions; however, their ministries could vary from day to day.

In the modern church it is not necessary to follow the financial system used in the Church in Jerusalem; however, the office of Deacon still remains as a Biblical office. The duties are still the same: to come under the leadership of the Elders/Pastors of the church, leading in the benevolence and family care ministries of the church. Even though the Church in Jerusalem was one of the few churches that required everyone to sell all their belongings, every Church in the New Testament still had Deacons. The Deacons serve as a ministry arm for the Elders. This is why the Deacons must be as qualified as the Elders. They must be able to counsel and disciple others into a fruitful relationship with Christ while helping to meet their tangible needs. In addition, they go about their ministries as an ambassador of the Elders; therefore they should represent the above-reproach character that the Elders are called to have.

Acts 6 makes it clear that Deacons should be model Christians and servants. In addition, Paul spells out the qualification of the Deacons in I Timothy 3:8-13. As Stephen and Phillip, they should be men full of the Holy Spirit who see their ministries not as the actual serving of food but the proclamation of the Gospel that should take place as they serve! Stephen was not stoned for serving food, but rather for serving the Gospel in the process! When a Deacon fulfills his proper role in ministry under the leadership of the Elders as an ambassador for the Elders he is an incredible tool for Christ to use in His work of making disciples.
c. Believers

The final position in the church is the position of every believer. As outlined in I Corinthians 12 every believer is given Spiritual gifts for the purpose of edifying the Body to know Christ and fulfill the Great Commission. No gift is more important than any other because they are all necessary for the Body to function properly. Therefore, the Leaders of a local church should help each member in the body, including himself or herself, to discover what God has gifted them to do, then equip them to freely exercise that gift under the purposes of God and His church. When the Body is functioning properly it stays focused on the tasks God has given the Church and does not become side tracked with foolish disputes and empty chatter. When the Body functions properly believers are given the greatest opportunity to have a radical relationship with Christ and lead others to the same place.

3. Senior Pastor (Elder)

a. Qualifications

i. Faithful in tithing 10% of his income to the general budget of the local church as well as making offerings over and above his tithe to the special offerings of the Church for missions and other needs.


1. A man (Titus 1:6) – It is clear that the Elder should not be a woman but a man.

2. Blameless (1Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6, 7) - No valid provable accusations should be against him.

3. A good testimony among those outside the church (1Timothy 3:7)

4. Husband of one wife (1Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6) – The Elder should not only have never been divorced but in addition, in his relationship with his wife (if he has one), he should be a one-woman man in every sense of the term.

5. Temperate (1Timothy 3:2)

6. Well behaved (1Timothy 3:2)

7. Leads his household well (1 Timothy 3:4&5, Titus 1:6)
8. Gentle (1 Timothy 3:3) – To be gentle should not be considered to never be angry but rather should be seen as one who is sensitive to others. There is a place for assertiveness and confrontation (Titus 1:13) but it should not be the ongoing characteristic of an Elder’s personality.

9. Not quarrelsome (1 Timothy 3:3)

10. Not covetous (1 Timothy 3:3)

11. Not a new convert (1 Timothy 3:6)

12. Not self-willed (Titus 1:7)

13. Not quick-tempered (Titus 1:7) Once again there is room for assertiveness but anger should not be immediate responses to situations. The Elder should be mature enough to not jump to conclusions and respond out of emotions.

14. Not given to wine (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)

15. Not violent (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7) – Is not described as a man who can be characterized by violence.

16. Not greedy for money (Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)

17. Hospitable (Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8)

18. A lover of what is good (Titus 1:8)

19. Sober-minded (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8)

20. Just (Titus 1:8)

21. Holy (Titus 1:8)

22. Self-controlled (Titus 1:8)

23. Holds fast the faithful word (Titus 1:9)

24. Able by sound doctrine to exhort and convict (Titus 1:9)

25. Able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2)

iii. Active in sharing his faith and making disciples.
iv. Gifted to Preach.

v. Gifted to lead the body (including the other Elders) ministerially, spiritually and theologically.

vi. Called to be a Senior Pastor.

vii. Loving and compassionate toward people.

viii. Ordained.

b. Duties

i. Be a positive example of a sincere relationship with Christ.

ii. Be active in praying for lost souls and personally attempting to lead them to be Disciples of Christ.

iii. Lead the Elders in the task of teaching the body to know Christ and equipping the Body to be “On Mission with Christ to Make Disciples of All People.” This will be done through using numerous Elders to manage and equip the ministries of numerous ministry teams.

iv. Choose fellow Elders to be confirmed by the church to help him manage the ministries and spiritual direction of the local church.

v. Preach the Word.

i. Have on file a current record of every official position in the church, the people filling them, job descriptions, and an organizational chart showing how each position is managed.

c. Authority

i. The Word of God is the final authority. It is the job of the Senior Pastor to make sure everything in the church is in line with Scripture.

ii. Be the ultimate overseer of the spiritual direction, ministries, and staff of the Church as the leader of the Elders and as the one who must stand before God and give an account.

iii. Nothing is to be lorded over the Church or the Elders except Christ Himself; therefore, the Senior Pastor understands that his Biblical authority is to be exercised the way Christ led his disciples. He is to be the head coach among assistant coaches that fully understand that they work under the leadership of The Owner – Christ!
d. Process of selection

This process begins by understanding God has already chosen the person and the task is simply to discover whom it is that God has selected. The Church does not hire a Senior Pastor but rather financially supports the man that God has called to shepherd that particular local church. If a man has been ordained as an Elder and is called to be a Senior Pastor then he does not answer to the church but to God. He is called to lead the local church, not work for the local church.

The church will submit written recommendations to the Elders for people to serve on a search committee. They will review the recommendations giving consideration to those names recommended most frequently by the church. The Elders will pray through all the recommendations, review them to make sure they are qualified and then select an appropriate number to submit to the church for confirmation. The people on this team should meet the qualifications of a Ministry Team Leader and update the Elders on their progress. This team will then fast, pray and seek out a man to whom they will recommend to the church as the one they believe God has called to be the Senior Pastor. Prior to a vote by the church he will need a unanimous vote by the search committee. The church will then need to confirm this recommendation with a minimum of a two-thirds (2/3) vote to extend the call.

e. Process of termination

i. Criteria to be terminated.

1. The Senior Pastor has violated the Biblical qualifications of a pastor as outlined in this document.

2. The Senior Pastor has demonstrated clearly that God has not called him or gifted him to be a Senior Pastor and therefore the church is acknowledging that both he and the church missed the will of God when they extended the call. They are stating they extended the call to a man they now believe has never been called to be a Senior Pastor.

3. Voluntary Termination

ii. Method of termination.

1. Two-thirds (2/3) of the Elders of the church must agree that the Senior Pastor needs to be terminated and must make the recommendation to the church.
2. Following one week after the recommendation a vote will take place that will require a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the church to remove him from his position.

3. If a two-thirds (2/3) vote is achieved an appropriate severance package should be given recognizing that it is not the goal of the church to punish the man of God but to help restore him to a fruitful relationship with Christ. High consideration should be made of the testimony that will be stated to the community by the way they handled the situation, therefore the package should demonstrate God’s desire for the person’s spiritual restoration and healing and not condemnation.

4. If a two-thirds (2/3) vote is achieved the termination will be effective immediately.

iii. Voluntary termination.

1. A two-week notice should be given by the Senior Pastor prior to a voluntary termination due to God calling him to a different ministry.

2. If the voluntary termination is because he has disqualified himself from the ministry, the church should offer a reasonable severance package to enable him to find a form of employment other than the ministry to take care of his family. It is out of a spirit of restoration and healing, not condemnation, that the situation should be handled.

4. Compensated Associate Pastors (Elders)

a. Qualifications

i. Faithful in tithing 10% of their income to the general budget of the local church as well as making offerings over and above their tithe to the special offerings of the Church for missions and other needs.


1. A man (Titus 1:6) – It is clear that the Elder should not be a woman but a man.

2. Blameless (1Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6, 7) - No valid provable accusations should be against him.
3. A good testimony among those outside the church (1 Timothy 3:7)

4. Husband of one wife (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6) – The Elder should not only have never been divorced but in addition, in his relationship with his wife (if he has one), he should be a one-woman man in every sense of the term.

5. Temperate (1 Timothy 3:2)

6. Well behaved (1 Timothy 3:2)

7. Leads his household well (1 Timothy 3:4&5, Titus 1:6)

8. Gentle (1 Timothy 3:3) – To be gentle should not be considered to never be angry but rather should be seen as one who is sensitive to others. There is a place for assertiveness and confrontation (Titus 1:13) but it should not be the ongoing characteristic of an Elder’s personality.

9. Not quarrelsome (1 Timothy 3:3)

10. Not covetous (1 Timothy 3:3)

11. Not a new convert (1 Timothy 3:6)

12. Not self-willed (Titus 1:7)

13. Not quick-tempered (Titus 1:7) Once again there is room for assertiveness but anger should not be immediate responses to situations. The Elder should be mature enough to not jump to conclusions and respond out of emotions.

14. Not given to wine (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)

15. Not violent (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7) – Is not described as a man who can be characterized by violence.

16. Not greedy for money (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)

17. Hospitable (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8)

18. A lover of what is good (Titus 1:8)

19. Sober-minded (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8)

20. Just (Titus 1:8)
21. Holy (Titus 1:8)

22. Self-controlled (Titus 1:8)

23. Holds fast the faithful word (Titus 1:9)

24. Able by sound doctrine to exhort and convict (Titus 1:9)

25. Able to teach (1Timothy 3:2)

iii. Active in sharing his faith and making disciples.

iv. Gifted to lead the body ministerially, spiritually and theologically.

v. Called to be an Elder/Pastor.

vi. Ordained.

vii. Loving and compassionate toward people.

b. Duties

i. Be a positive example of a sincere relationship with Christ.

ii. Be active in praying for lost souls and personally attempting to lead them to be Disciples of Christ.

iii. Under the leadership of the Senior Pastor serve as an Elder in the church who is charged with teaching the body to know Christ and equipping the Body to be “On Mission with Christ to Make Disciples of All People.”

iv. Oversee and manage whatever ministries the Senior Pastor assigns him.

c. Authority

i. Will operate under the leadership, direction and supervision of the Senior Pastor.

ii. Will serve as an Elder who must work as a team with the other Elders to equip the body to know Christ and make disciples of all people.

iii. Will serve as a team member with the other Elders in leading the ministries and spiritual affairs of the church.
d. Process of Selection – recommended by the Senior Pastor with a majority vote by the Elders and confirmed by the Church.

e. Process of Termination

i. Criteria to be terminated

1. Violated the Biblical qualifications of a pastor as outlined in this document.

2. Refused to operate under the leadership of the Senior Pastor.

3. Has demonstrated an inability to carry out the duties assigned by the Senior Pastor. All help and patience should be given to an Associate Pastor by the Senior Pastor and other Elders before it is concluded that they are incapable of performing the tasks they are given at the level the tasks are expected to be accomplished.

4. Voluntary Termination

ii. Method of termination

1. The Senior Pastor may request the voluntary termination of an Associate Pastor when he feels the person has met the criteria and that God no longer wants them to serve as an Elder at Hardin Baptist Church. The Senior Pastor should keep it as private as possible and allow an Associate Pastor a fair amount of time to locate a new ministry or job (whichever is applicable).

2. If the request for an Associate Pastor to voluntarily resign is refused then the Senior Pastor has the right to terminate his position upon the confirmation of the majority of the Elders. An appropriate severance package should be offered effective immediately upon the official termination.

iii. Voluntary termination

1. A two-week notice should be given by the Associate Pastor to the Senior Pastor prior to a voluntary termination due to God calling him to a different ministry.

2. If the voluntary termination is because he has disqualified himself from the ministry the church should offer a reasonable severance package to enable him to find a form of employment other than the ministry to take care of his family.
5. Non-Compensated Associate Pastors/Lay Pastors (Elders)

a. Qualifications

i. Faithful in tithing 10% of their income to the general budget of the local church as well as making offerings over and above their tithe to the special offerings of the Church for missions and other needs.


1. A man (Titus 1:6) – It is clear that the Elder should not be a woman but a man.

2. Blameless (1Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6, 7) - No valid provable accusations should be against him.

3. A good testimony among those outside the church (1Timothy 3:7)

4. Husband of one wife (1Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6) – The Elder should not only have never been divorced but in addition, in his relationship with his wife (if he has one), he should be a one-woman man in every sense of the term.

5. Temperate (1Timothy 3:2)

6. Well behaved (1Timothy 3:2)

7. Leads his household well (1 Timothy 3:4&5, Titus 1:6)

8. Gentle (1Timothy 3:3) – To be gentle should not be considered to never be angry but rather should be seen as one who is sensitive to others. There is a place for assertiveness and confrontation (Titus 1:13) but it should not be the ongoing characteristic of an Elder’s personality.

9. Not quarrelsome (1Timothy 3:3)

10. Not covetous (1Timothy 3:3)

11. Not a new convert (1Timothy 3:6)

12. Not self-willed (Titus 1:7)

13. Not quick-tempered (Titus 1:7) Once again there is room for assertiveness but anger should not be immediate responses to
situations. The Elder should be mature enough to not jump to conclusions and respond out of emotions.

14. Not given to wine (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)

15. Not violent (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7) – Is not described as a man who can be characterized by violence.

16. Not greedy for money (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)

17. Hospitable (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8)

18. A lover of what is good (Titus 1:8)

19. Sober-minded (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8)

20. Just (Titus 1:8)

21. Holy (Titus 1:8)

22. Self-controlled (Titus 1:8)

23. Holds fast the faithful word (Titus 1:9)

24. Able by sound doctrine to exhort and convict (Titus 1:9)

25. Able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2)

iii. Active in sharing his faith and making disciples.

iv. Gifted to lead the body ministerially, spiritually and theologically.

v. Called to be an Elder/Pastor.

vi. Ordained.

vii. Loving and compassionate toward people.

b. Duties

i. Be a positive example of a sincere relationship with Christ.

ii. Be active in praying for lost souls and personally attempting to lead them to be Disciples of Christ.
iii. Under the leadership of the Senior Pastor serve as an Elder in the church who is charged with task of teaching the body to know Christ and equipping the Body to be “On Mission with Christ to Make Disciples of All People.”

iv. Oversee and manage whatever ministries the Senior Pastor assigns him.

c. Authority

i. Will operate under the leadership, direction and supervision of the Senior Pastor.

ii. Will serve as an Elder who must work as a team player with the other Elders to equip the body to know Christ and make disciples of all people.

iii. Will serve as a team member with the other Elders in leading the ministries and spiritual affairs of the church.

d. Process of Selection – recommended by the Senior Pastor with a majority vote by the Elders and confirmed by the Church.

e. Process of Termination

i. Criteria to be terminated

1. Violated the Biblical qualifications of a pastor as outlined in this document.

2. Refused to operate under the leadership of the Senior Pastor.

3. Has demonstrated an inability to carry out the duties assigned by the Senior Pastor. All help and patience should be given to a Non-Compensated Associate Pastor by the Senior Pastor and other Elders before it is concluded that they are incapable of performing the tasks they are given at the level the tasks are expected to be accomplished.

ii. Method of termination

1. The Senior Pastor may request the voluntary termination of an Associate Pastor when he feels the person has met the criteria and that God no longer wants them to serve as an Elder at Hardin Baptist Church. The Senior Pastor should keep it as private as possible and allow them an opportunity to grow through the experience both in their relationship with the Lord and in their ability to make disciples.
2. If the request for a non-compensated Associate Pastor to voluntarily resign is refused then the Senior Pastor has the right to terminate his position upon the confirmation of the majority of the Elders. A great deal of sensitivity should be displayed towards a non-compensated Elder understanding that Dallas and Hardin are most likely the place they consider to be their permanent residence. If it is a spiritual issue that has led to their termination as an Elder then the Elders should pray and assist that person in being restored. If it is a matter of not being gifted to perform the job then the Elders should help him find a ministry more appropriate for him to serve.

iii. Voluntary termination – A non-compensated Elder can step down by simply submitting a written statement to Senior Pastor explaining why he feels he should step down from the position. It can be made effective immediately by the one resigning if he feels it is necessary.

6. Deacons

a. Qualifications

i. Faithful in tithing 10% of their income to the general budget of the local church as well as making offerings over and above their tithe to the special offerings of the Church for missions and other needs.

ii. Gifted with talents to fulfill the role of a Deacon.

iii. Qualifications in 1Timothy 3:8-12

1. The Deacon

   a. A Man – understood because he must be the husband of one wife and has a wife who is reverent. The term Deaconess does not apply to the Office of Deacon but rather to the definition of the term Deacon – serve. There are numerous areas for woman to be servants in the church just not in the position/office of Deacon.

   b. Reverent (1Timothy 3:8)

   c. Not double-tongued (1Timothy 3:8) - Not saying one thing to one man, and another thing to others.

   d. Not given to wine (1Timothy 3:8)
e. Not greedy for money (1Timothy 3:8) - Men who are covetous and unscrupulous as to modes of getting money are not to be chosen.

f. Holding fast the mystery of the faith with a clean conscience (1Timothy 3:9) – He should be secure in his faith knowing what he believes and in addition to being secure in his conscience so that he has freedom to share his faith without hindrance.

g. Tested (1Timothy 3:10) – The Deacon should have already demonstrated an ability to perform the ministry of a Deacon prior to becoming one.

h. Blameless (1Timothy 3:10) No valid provable accusations should be against him.

i. Husband of one wife (1Timothy 3:12) - The Deacon should not only have never been divorced but in addition, in his relationship with his wife (if he has one), he should be a one-woman man in every sense of the term.

j. Ruling their children and own houses well (1Timothy 3:12) – As with the Elder the general ongoing description of his household should not be one of rebellion against Christ. He should have a Christian household.

2. The Deacon’s Wife

a. Reverent (1Timothy 3:11)

b. Not slanderers (1Timothy 3:11) – The Deacon will be exposed to many things in families that the Deacon’s wife must be able to keep secret. In addition she must not be one who attacks people’s character as a malicious gossip.

c. Temperate (1Timothy 3:11)

d. Faithful in all things (1Timothy 3:11) - A woman of her word who can be trusted and demonstrates commitment. Has nothing to do with past relationships but rather her present testimony of Christ in the community. In recent days and for the foreseeable future this qualification asks if the wife of a Deacon is presently described as a faithful woman of Christ in all that she is and does.

iv. Called by God to be a Deacon.
b. Duties

i. Be a positive example of a sincere relationship with Christ.

ii. Be active in praying for lost souls and personally attempting to lead them to be Disciples of Christ.

iii. Direct the Family Care ministries of the church. The Deacons are the Ambassadors of the Elders to minister to those people or families who are in need of prayer and counseling. When a person or family is in need of additional counseling or prayer the Deacons should refer them to the Elders or to professional counseling services that have been adopted or endorsed by the church.

iv. Manage the Benevolence Ministries of the church.

v. Administer the Lord’s Supper.

vi. Oversee a Baptismal Committee.

vii. Serve as Ambassadors for the Elders.

c. Authority

i. Deacons have the authority to organize committees and teams of people to accomplish any of the ministries given to them by the Elders and the By-laws.

ii. Deacons have no governmental authority in the church but rather serve as Ambassadors for the Elders.

iii. Deacons have the authority to elect their own Deacon Board, which must only consist of qualified Deacons, having at least three members consisting of a Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary. Any other policies governing the length of terms, total number of Board members and how and when to elect Deacons to serve on the Deacon Board will be at the discretion of the Deacons.

d. Process of Selection – The church members will submit written recommendations to the Elders who will partner with the Deacon Board to pray through each recommendation giving high consideration to those names that are most frequently recommended by church members to make sure they qualify for the office. Out of these recommendations the Deacon Board and the Elders will ask God who they should recommend to the church to be ordained as Deacons. The church must confirm these recommendations by a majority vote.
e. Termination – If the Deacon Board feels a Deacon has become disqualified based on the qualifications in this document they may recommend to the Elders that the Deacon be removed. If the majority of the Elders agree then the Deacon will be removed. This should be done with a Christ-like attitude and a purpose to restore the person to a productive fruitful relationship with Christ.

7. Ministry Team Directors

a. Qualifications

i. A positive example of a relationship with Christ.

ii. Above reproach in their actions and attitudes and family life.

iii. Active in praying for lost souls and personally attempting to lead them to be Disciples of Christ.

iv. Able in practice, vision, methodology, theology and attitude to come under the leadership of the Senior Pastor and other Elders.

v. Spiritually gifted in ways that are similar to the ministry they are asked to lead.

vi. Gifted and called to lead.

vii. Faithful in tithing 10% of their income to the general budget of the local church as well as making offerings over and above their tithe to the special offerings of the Church for missions and other needs.

b. Duties

i. Edify those in their area of ministry to have a fruitful personal relationship with Christ.

ii. Equip those involved in their area of ministry to go into a lost world and make disciples.

iii. Be active in praying for lost souls and personally attempting to lead them to be Disciples of Christ.

iv. Passionately pursue the goals and direction of the specific area of ministry that they and the Elders have sought God to give them for that particular ministry.
v. Develop the necessary leadership team needed to achieve the goals and
direction of their specific ministry.

vi. Stay accountable to and under the leadership of the Elders, therefore,
attending whatever meetings the Elders deem necessary in order to
coordinate and manage the ministries of the church, including theirs.

c. Process of Selection

i. The Positions – The Elders will determine what Ministry Teams are
needed and request that the church confirm this need through a majority
vote. They will also recommend if the position should be a paid position
and what the salary package should be for that position. This also needs a
majority vote of confirmation by the church.

ii. The Personnel – The Elders will recommend leaders to fill the position of
Director for each ministry team. The church will need to confirm these
recommendations by a majority vote.

d. Process of Termination

i. Paid Directors

1. Involuntary Termination - The Senior Pastor with the agreement of
the majority of the Elders may terminate a paid Ministry Team
Director for violating the qualifications of the position or because
of a failure to lead at the expected level for their specific ministry.
A reasonable severance package should be offered in order to
demonstrate the spirit of restoration and grace needed for them to
continue to grow in Christ and make disciples.

2. Voluntary Termination – Must give two weeks’ notice to the
Elders of the church prior to stepping down. If the person is
stepping down because they have become disqualified from the
ministry an appropriate severance package should be offered to
help them find new employment and be restored to grow in Christ
and make disciples.

ii. Volunteer Directors

1. Involuntary Termination – The Senior Pastor with the agreement
of the majority of the Elders may terminate a volunteer Ministry
Team Director for violating the qualifications of the position or
because of a failure to lead at the expected level for their specific
ministry.
2. Voluntary Termination – Directors must give two weeks’ notice to the Elders prior to stepping down.

8. Ministry Leadership Team Members

a. Qualifications

   i. Church Member
   
   ii. Above reproach in their actions and attitudes and family life.
   
   iii. Committed to the direction of the Church.
   
   iv. Faithful participant in corporate worship.
   
   v. Faithful in tithing.
   
   vi. Gifted to help with the ministry.
   
   vii. Willing to be under the leadership and vision of the Team Director and the Elders.

b. Duties

   i. Follow the leadership of the team director.
   
   ii. Carry out the tasks given by the director.
   
   iii. Contribute to the thought, prayer, and work of the team.

b. Process of selection

   i. General Principle - The ministry team director along with the Elder assigned to that team should prayerfully consider those who would like to volunteer to be on the leadership team of that particular ministry. Consideration should be given to make sure they are not overly committed with other ministries in the church. The Elders should organize meetings as needed with all the ministry directors to discuss filling needed positions on leadership teams. There should be cooperation among ministry teams to both find and develop leaders to assist them in their respective ministries.
   
   ii. Policy for Compensated Members – First, the position and the compensation package will need a vote of confirmation by the church. Next, the person chosen by the Ministry Director and approved by the Elders will be presented to the church for a vote of confirmation.
9. Interns – If it is a paid position and it was not already budgeted the staff member seeking an intern should go through the proper process of amending the budget. If it is a paid position the person filling it will simply need to be approved by the Elders.

10. Support Staff - This would include positions such as secretary, administrative assistant, facilities management, etc. Each of the positions must be included in the budget or, if needed, the proper process of amending the budget must be followed. The Elders must approve the person filling the position. The Elders should work with the Trustees and the Human Resource team of the Trustees in the hiring and training of personnel for these positions.

11. Trustees

   a. Purpose – To stay in compliance with the Federal 501(C) (3) requirement. They will be accountable for the finances of the church. The board of Trustees will function under the leadership of the Elders, but for the purpose of accountability and being above reproach in the area of finances the Trustees will be a separate group of people who have the responsibility of managing and accounting for the financial aspects of the church.

   b. Authority – There is no governmental authority in this body, however, they are given the authority to form whatever teams of people they need to accomplish the responsibilities given to them. Any changes proposed to the budget will be made through this body. If the proposed change exceeds .5% of the annual budget and the Trustees and Elders approve the change, the Trustees will then request a business meeting in order to present the proposal to the church for final approval.

   c. Qualifications

      i. A positive example of a relationship with Christ.

      ii. Above reproach in their actions, attitudes and family life.

      iii. Active in praying for lost souls and personally attempting to lead them to be Disciples of Christ.

      iv. Able in practice, vision, methodology, theology and attitude to come under the leadership of the Senior Pastor and other Elders.

      v. Able to comprehend the overall purpose, vision and life of the church.

vii. Faithful in tithing 10% of their income to the general budget of the local church as well as making offerings over and above their tithe to the special offerings of the Church for missions and other needs.

viii. Member of Hardin Baptist church for at least five years and at least 21 years of age.

d. Selection – The church members will submit written recommendations to the Elders who will pray through each recommendation giving high consideration to those names that are most frequently recommended by church members to make sure they qualify for the office. Out of these recommendations the Elders will ask God who they should recommend to the church to be called as Trustees. The church must confirm these recommendations by a majority vote.

e. Term – The term for a trustee will be 10 years.

f. Officers

i. Chairman

1. Will be elected by the trustees to serve a term determined by the trustees.

2. Duties – manage the day-to-day financial business of the church and act as the treasurer of the church.

3. Instruments – A financial secretary that will assist the Chairman and the Trustees in managing the day-to-day business of the church. This secretary will work directly for the Chairman.

4. Authority – Only the chairman and the financial secretary will have the authority to sign checks.

ii. Vice Chairman – will fulfill the duties of the Chairman when the Chairman is either physically unable to serve or the Chairman has elected to temporarily give him the duties of Chairman.

iii. Secretary – Record minutes of all Trustee meetings and keep them filed in the office of the financial secretary.

g. Termination – If the majority of the Elders agree that a Trustee has become disqualified according to the qualifications listed in this document then the Trustee will be dismissed from the office immediately. This should be done with a Christ-like attitude and a purpose to restore the person to a productive, fruitful relationship with Christ.
h. Duties

i. Manage the finances of the church.

ii. Review an annual evaluation of all paid employees from the Elders to insure proper accountability in their compensation and fulfillment of their job description. The Elders will administer the review of all staff including a review of the Elders by the Elders (Senior Pastor, Compensated and Non-Compensated Associate Pastors). All the information obtained during the annual reviews will be submitted to the Trustees.

iii. Manage the payment of all personnel in the church. The Trustees will analyze the payment and benefits of all employees and each year recommend to the church through the budget process what should be done. A Pay Scale should be developed and updated as necessary. They should also manage the benefits of all employees by providing choices for whatever benefits the pay package includes and making sure those benefits are paid appropriately.

iv. Create and manage a Human Resource Team to assist the Elders in hiring and training support staff (see Section VII item 10 for explanation of support staff)

v. Give bonuses privately in the amounts they feel are appropriate but not to exceed the total amount of money in the budget given for bonus checks. There will be no specific people designated in the budget for bonus checks, only a budget line for the Trustees to use for bonuses at their discretion.

vi. Work with the Elders to form and finalize a budget to be recommended to the church annually.

vii. Keep on file a copy of the job description of each paid employee of the church.

viii. At the direction of the Corporate Body maintain and sign all official legal documents of the church

ix. At the direction of the Corporate Body manage the sale and purchase of all property.

x. The minimum number of Trustees will be five, however the Trustees may recommend to the Elders to increase the total number of Trustees. The Elders will then follow the procedures written in these by-laws for electing a Trustee in order to fill the request.
IX. BUDGETING

1. General Principles

   a. The Budget should be estimated at no more than 5% higher than the previous year’s receipts.

   b. The Trustees and Elders should form recommendations for overages.

   c. The Elders and the Trustees will work together to establish how much money should be given to each major area of the budget (i.e. programs, personnel, maintenance, ministry teams, etc.). The figures should represent the objectives and goals of the church.

   d. The Trustees and the Elders will establish a financial goal for dollars to be spent by the ministry teams. However, if the teams’ budget, as assembled by the Elders, determines that more money be spent than first thought the Trustees and Elders should work to make adjustments in the overall budget and/or the Elders should make adjustments in the ministry team budgets. Likewise, if the need is much lower than the Elders and Trustees anticipated, then they should work together to make adjustments. In general, the Spirit through prayer and cooperation should guide the Elders and Trustees at all times.

   e. The Trustees should form whatever teams they feel necessary to assist them in compiling the budget.

   f. The Trustees and Elders will work together to finalize the budget before presenting it to the Church with the approval of each.

   g. Budget approval requires a majority by the church.

2. Ministry Team Participation

   a. The Elders and the Ministry Team Directors will establish Objectives and Goals for their respective ministries.

   b. The Ministry Team Directors will then develop action plans to fulfill the objectives and goals of that team.

   c. The Ministry Team Directors will then request funds in an appropriate amount for each action plan they submit.

   d. The Ministry Team Director will then organize each action plan by priority by assigning each action plan a number for the priority they are giving it in their ministry (1 being the highest priority, 2 being the second highest, etc.)
e. All the Action Plans will then be turned in to the Elders who will review them in conjunction with the priorities of the church. They will be prioritized according to the objectives and goals of the church. Funding of actions plans can then be accepted, rejected, increased or decreased as the Elders pray through and compare the request of the ministry teams with the overall objectives and goals of the church.

f. The Elders will then submit a complete ministry budget to the Trustees to be incorporated into the overall church budget following the principles of finalization outlined in this document.

3. Establishing Church-Wide Objectives and Goals

Elders will meet with the Ministry Directors, the Deacons, and the Trustees to formulate the Objectives and Goals of the Church. Objectives are defined as the purposes the church is trying to accomplish and the goals are defined as the measurable results we are trying to accomplish. A document should be formulated projecting objectives and goals for a 3-year period. This plan should be presented to the church for approval by a majority vote.

X. LICENSE AND ORDINATION

1. License

When a member announces to the church that he feels the call to the ministry, the church, upon recommendation of the Elders and by majority vote, may license him as an acknowledgement of his call to the ministry and encouragement to make preparation for it. A certificate of license as his credential will be presented. It is understood that North Carolina state law shall govern the performance of civil duties by the member.

2. Ordination

In the event this church has been requested to ordain a member or former member who has been called to the office of Pastor the following procedure shall be followed:

a. The Elders will form a review council to examine the candidate to see if he is qualified to be a Pastor.

b. Upon recommendation from the review council to the church, there must be a two-thirds (2/3) vote to finalize the recommendation, understanding that the church is endorsing and recommending to other local bodies that this person is both qualified and encouraged by Hardin Baptist to be a Pastor.
XI. AMENDMENTS

1. These bylaws may be amended, altered or repealed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote, provided that such amendment, alteration, or repeal shall have been given to the Elders in writing. The church will vote on the proposal 28 days after the Elders have presented the proposal to the church.

2. At all times, the Senior Pastor, Chairman of the Trustees and the church office shall keep a copy of these By-laws. All amendments to or revisions thereof shall, after passage by the church, be prepared by the Trustees and made available to the church members generally upon request.
VENTURE CHURCH, INC.
BYLAWS
2013

PREAMBLE

For the purpose of unity and order, these Bylaws present the basic structure and governance of the local body of believers incorporated in the State of North Carolina as an official non-profit organization and known as Venture (legally Venture Church, Inc.). The Bylaws are never to be viewed as equal to or greater than the Holy Scriptures and the exercise of the Holy Spirit to lead Christ’s Church in them.

I. DOCTRINE

Ultimately a local church is defined by its doctrinal beliefs. Venture has five fundamental doctrines that must never be compromised and must always be alive and active in every aspect of the church. These beliefs are as follows:

(1) The Bible - “The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation. (Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16f.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-2)” (Quoted from The Baptist Faith and Message of 2000 by the Southern Baptist Convention.)

(2) God - God has always been the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (The Trinity). They are three and one simultaneously. God is the creator of all things including space time and matter. There is no other God but the Trinitarian God of the Bible. (Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 13:14).


(4) Spiritual Growth - Spiritual growth (Sanctification) is a transformation that is only accomplished by the Holy Spirit through a person’s genuine intimate relationship with Christ. As a believer walks in the Spirit, which is to walk in submission to Christ and His leadership in our life, the Spirit matures the believer and produces fruit through the believer
that testifies of the Holy Spirit’s work. This is a lifelong process that isn’t completed until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6). This process is fueled by a person’s personal commitment to learn and apply the Word of God, prayer (both talking and listening to God) and genuine spiritual community with other believers (the local church). The result of this process affects every aspect of life. (Galatians 5, John 15, Romans 6:19; 12:2, Ephesians 2:10; 3:14-19; 4:11-16; 5:17-21; 6:10-18)

(5) The Church - The Church is not a community organization for Christians but a radical movement of Christ followers who are united together to connect each other and the world to the person and cause of Christ! The Church consists of all who follow Christ but The Church is called to organize itself into localized fellowships that demonstrate the love of Christ towards one another in a practical and real way to equip one another to do the same in a world that doesn’t know Christ. (Matthew 16:18; 28:18-20, Acts 4:32-37; 5:17-33, Ephesians 2:20-21; 3:10; 4:1-16; Philippians 2:14-15, 1 Peter 2:9-10)

II. MEMBERSHIP (PARTNERSHIP)

(1) A member of Venture will be defined as a partner in the cause of Christ who specifically has (a) testified of their personal commitment to Christ, (b) in obedience to Matthew 28:19 been baptized as a testimony of their personal commitment to Christ, (c) agree with the fundamental doctrines of Venture as reflected in these Bylaws, (d) are committed to the vision of Venture and (e) state that they are willing to be presented to Venture as one meeting these qualifications and therefore wanting to partner with Venture.

(2) Termination of membership will be as follows:

A. By death.

B. By exclusion. The church, after due notice and opportunity for hearing and kindly efforts to make such action unnecessary, may terminate the membership of persons whose conduct is of such a nature that it hinders the work of the church and Christ’s Kingdom. This should be done in a manner to attempt to restore the person to a fruitful relationship with Christ, therefore abiding by the principles laid out in Matthew 18:15-17, Galatians 6:1, and Titus 1:10-16. To be terminated by exclusion the recommendation must come to the church through the Elders and receive a two-thirds (two-thirds (2/3)) vote of confirmation by the church.

C. By erasure. Upon the confirmation that a member has joined another church, the officer in charge of membership records shall remove the person form the membership rolls. This should be done only after confirming the information with the Elders. Minimally, an annual study will be done to determine the accuracy of the church membership rolls and apply the erasure procedure where necessary.

D. By resignation. A member may request that their membership be terminated, and such termination shall be effective as of the date the request is received.
III. GOVERNANCE

Understanding that Christ is the head of The Church, Venture is an officially incorporated 501-C3 Non-Profit Organization in the State of North Carolina and therefore must have rules defining its human governance. The following are those rules and are based on clear New Testament Biblical principles and examples:

(1) Core Team - The Core Team will function as the Board of Directors of the church and therefore have the responsibility to develop, lead and manage the execution of Venture’s vision, strategy, operations, ministries, staff, etc.

A. General

1. All Core Team members must meet the Biblical qualifications of an Elder.

2. Only those receiving a unanimous vote by the Core Team can be recommended to the Church to serve on the Core Team. The church must approve the recommendation with a minimum of a 2/3rd majority vote.

3. Any member of the Core Team can be terminated at any time by a 3/4th vote of the Core Team. This can be done if the person no longer meets the Biblical qualifications of an Elder or does not fulfill the leadership expectations for those who commit to serve on the Core Team.

B. Structure

1. Elders

   a. General - The position of Elder is a Biblically mandated position for the governance of a local Church. In the New Testament they are also referred to as Pastors, Bishops and Overseers. Biblically, Elders are called to oversee all the issues involved in equipping and leading the church to fulfill the Great Commission of Christ.

   b. Specific

      i. Lead Pastor (Elder) – The Lead Pastor, being the first among equals, is the leader of the Core Team and therefore in the legal sense functions as the Chairman of the Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer of Venture.

      Note: In the event the person serving as the Lead Pastor is no longer able to serve the Core Team will lead the church in a selection of a new candidate to present to the church.
ii. Associate Pastors (Elders) – The Associate Pastors (Elders) will be the Executive Pastor (who in the legal sense will function as the Chief Operating Officer) and all others elected to serve as Elders in Venture.

2. Trustees – Although there is no position called “Trustee” in the Bible there is certainly the Biblical flexibility to create positions within the church as needed (e.g. Acts 6). Unfortunately due to the cultural climate created by the lack of integrity in the area of finances by some non-profit organizations and churches, Venture feels it is necessary to set apart a group of people to specifically oversee this area of the church. The position of “Trustee” is also a legally required position by the State of North Carolina for an organization to maintain its official non-profit status. Therefore, in Venture’s governance The Trustees are those elected to serve on the Core Team who are specifically elected by the church as a Trustee. They have the responsibility of overseeing the finances of Venture. The following are other important details related to this position:

a. The Chairman of the Trustees will function as the official Treasurer of Venture. The Chairman will be determined by a majority vote of The Core Team.

b. Only the Trustees and those they deem necessary (i.e. the Financial Secretary) may sign official legal documents of the church as well as authorize the expenditure of any money (i.e. the signing of checks.) All checks require at least two signatures.

c. The Trustees are responsible for assigning a person to serve as Secretary in official church business meetings. Minutes from those meetings will be stored under their direction in the church offices.

(2) Congregational Participation: The following items must be approved by a 2/3rd vote of the church membership present in an official church business meeting:

A. An annual budget that will be presented to them by the Core Team.

   Note: Reports on accounts receivable, accounts payable, church assets, and/or church liabilities will be given to any member of Venture who requests it.

B. Any significant purchase of land or buildings that causes a significant increase in financial liability to the church and is not already approved in the annual budget.

C. Any significant non-budgeted sale of land or buildings.

D. Any significant non-budgeted financial liability or improvement to property, etc. (i.e. the construction of a new building).
E. Any significant change to the annual budget.

F. Any person who will serve on the Core Team of Venture.

(3) Church Business Meeting – An official Church Business Meeting will be a meeting of the church membership that has been publically announced in a reasonable time for the majority of the members to be aware of it and access the meeting. A quorum will be the amount of members present at the meeting. An “official church business meeting” can only happen by a majority vote of the Core Team and must be moderated by the Lead Pastor or in the absence of the Lead Pastor another person elected by the Core Team to do so.

IV. AMENDMENTS

(1) These bylaws may be amended, altered or repealed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote in an official business meeting of the church, provided that such amendment, alteration, or repeal shall have been given to the Elders in writing prior to the meeting and/or previously announced to the church prior to the meeting.

(2) At all times, the Lead Pastor (CEO), Executive Pastor (COO) Chairman of the Trustees (Treasure) and the church Financial Secretary shall keep a copy of these By-laws. All amendments to or revisions thereof shall, after passage by the church, be prepared by the Trustees and made available to the church members generally upon request.
Hardin Baptist Church Ministry Structure
September 2004 (15 Months after transitioning to an Elder Led Church)

**ELDERS**

- Mackey
  - Pastoral Care
- Mark Hovis
- Austin Rammel
- Scott Pasour
- Marty Clary

**DEACONS**

- Foy Goad (Chairman)
- Welcome Team Dir. Kenny McClure
- Benevolence
- Family Care
- Beneavement Committee Almalee Goad

**TRUSTEES**

- Roger Self (Chairman)
- Claude Hovis
- Personnel
- Budget/Finance
- Building & Grounds
- Food Service Dir
- Transportation
- Counting
- Cemetery

**CORE MINISTRY TEAMS**

- Austin Rammell
- Scott Pasour
- Mark Hovis

**SPECIALIZED MINISTRY TEAMS**

- Austin Rammell
- Scott Pasour
- Marty Clary

- Student Dir.
  - David Keen
- Collegiate Dir.
  - Roger Self
- Sr. Adult Dir.
  - Debbie Clark
- Singles Dir**
  - Maxine Propst
- Deaf Dir
  - Lisa Howard
- Nursery Dir**
  - Jill Payne
- Pres-School Dir.
  - Mark Hovis
- Children Dir
  - Bruce Fenters
- Couples Dir
  - Brenda White
- Worship Dir
  - Gary Rhyme
- H.S.E. Dir
  - Scott Pasour
- S.G. Dir
  - Walt Goins
- Men’s Dir
  - Tammy Hovis
- Women’s Dir
  - Howard Siders
- Rec. Dir
  - Howard Siders

* Brenda is being recommended to the church for this position as well as a new job description.
** These positions are vacant and we are currently searching for a director.
Diagram of the Venture Core Values/Philosophy of Movement

- Missions
- Spiritual Community
- Evangelism
- Discipleship
I. THE FOUNDATION OF HARDIN

A. What do we believe? Doctrine – This is a short summary of the doctrines we believe to be the fundamentals of the faith.

⇒ The Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God.

⇒ The Trinity – God is three persons but still one person all at the same time.
   1. God the Father
   2. God the Son (Jesus Christ)
   3. God the Holy Spirit

⇒ Salvation is granted by God’s Grace to those who believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate and are therefore willing to give Him total leadership of their life.

⇒ Spiritual maturity is a continual process that is only achieved through a genuine intimate relationship with Christ.

⇒ Salvation is an eternal work in the life of a believer that can never be undone.


C. What are the priorities of HBC? HBC Objectives – These are the activities that we believe the Spirit of God has locked our eyes for Him to grow us as a Body and fulfill the mission of HBC. Every ministry of HBC is restricted to these objectives.

⇒ COMMUNITY – The fellowship between believers that genuinely demonstrates the love and open invitation of Christ for all to be accepted.

⇒ DISCIPLESHIP – Being used by God to help people live abundantly in the LIFE Christ provides!

⇒ EVANGELISM - Being used by God to point people in our lives to the Salvation of Jesus Christ.
MISSIONS – Doing things a non-churched world understands as love being poured out to them! This is the Bridge of the Gospel, and we are called to participate in this globally!

D. How is HBC structured? (Take a look at the Flow Chart for a more detailed diagram of personnel and ministry).

⇒ Elders - Group of Ordained Pastors elected by the church who are seen as the men God called to lead and equip HBC. The “senior” Elder is the Senior Pastor and the other Elders are the Associate Pastors of HBC.

⇒ Deacons – Group of men who are the ambassadors of the Elders into the community for the purpose of benevolence and caring for those physically and emotionally struggling. They are not a “governing body” and therefore are not a part of the process of formal leadership in the church. They are, however, to lead the church in caring for people by personal example and through the Care ministry of the church.

⇒ Trustees – A group of men and woman elected by the Church who manage all the finances and property of the church. They come under the leadership of the Elders but also function independently to bring accountability with administrative budget, salaries and handling of all money.

⇒ Ministry Teams – Each ministry team is led by a team director. Each team director is accountable to a specific Elder.

II. WHAT ARE THE QUALIFICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

A. Believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate and therefore you have willingly given Him total leadership of your life.

B. Baptized after coming to a place of agreement with the above statement.

III. WHAT IS EXPECTED OF HBC MEMBERS

A. Plug into ministry!

⇒ God has gifted you with the Gospel to be able to plug into the lives in your life that don’t know Christ and point them to Christ!

⇒ Plug into the ministry God has gifted for you to serve the body. When we are serving one another, according to God’s design, the body grows in spiritual maturity and is held together in unbreakable bonds of unity.

B. Plug into the Body!
HSE Instructional Classes are offered every Sunday morning. You will meet other believers in these classes and receive extremely valuable information concerning God’s Word and how it affects our everyday life in Christ.

Worship Gatherings! Every Sunday AM we gather together as a body to worship Christ. The music, preaching, skits, media, etc. are all designed to create an environment that the Body of Christ can freely express themselves to Christ and be open for Him to freely express Himself to us!

SMALL GROUPS! In March, we will transition from our once a month home small groups to a full fledge weekly home small group ministry. This is going to be the primary place for you to experience community, participate in missions, be discipled and disciple others. This is also going to be our primary platform for connecting with people who don’t know Christ.

C. Plug into giving!

Scripture calls us all to contribute 10% of what He has given us to the ministry of our local church. Practically, when we don’t tithe we are absorbing financial resources from our local church and not put anything back! However, according to the Bible, we are literally stealing from God when we don’t tithe 10%. Malachi 3:8-10.

Scripture calls us to abandon our allegiance to this world; therefore, we should make available ALL of our time, money, and talent for His leadership in our lives to be used in other people’s lives.

D. Plug into unity! At Hardin, we are serious about protecting church unity. John 17 is the true Lord’s Prayer. Read it and you will see why we are committed to it! Those who cause division or attack other believers are confronted with a process of church discipline until there is clear change.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


VITA

Austin W. Rammell

PERSONAL
Born: October 24, 1973

EDUCATIONAL
B.S., Liberty University, 1996.

MINISTERIAL

PROFESSIONAL
Graduate Assistant, Founder and President of Shepherd Ministries, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 1995 - 1998.
State Wide High School/Middle School Campus Evangelism Director, Florida Baptist Convention, 1999 – 2001.
Director, Personal and Student Evangelism Department, Florida Baptist Convention, 2001 – 2002.
Lead Pastor, Venture (formerly Hardin Baptist Church), 2002 – present.