

Liberty University School of Divinity

Leadership Dynamics and Factors of Fast-Growing Church Plants and Revitalized Established Churches in the Christian and Missionary Alliance

A Thesis Project Submitted to
the Faculty of Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the Degree of

Doctor of Ministry

by

Kedrick L. Hirschy

Lynchburg, Virginia

April 2020

Copyright © 2019 by Kedrick Hirschy
All Rights Reserved

Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity

Thesis Project Approval Sheet

Mentor Name & Title

Dr. Donald Q. Hicks,
Assistant Professor Practical Studies

THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT

Kedrick Hirschy
Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity, 2020
Mentor: Dr. Michael Sanders

Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction	1
Ministry Context	2
Purpose Presented	9
Problem Presented	9
Basic Assumptions	11
Definitions	12
Limitations	14
Delimitations	14
Thesis Statement	15

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework	16
Literature Review	16
Healthy Biblical Leadership.....	17
Characteristics of the Christian Leader.....	20
Leadership Methods.....	23
Fast-Growing Churches.....	26
Theological Framework	28
Theoretical Framework	37

Chapter 3

Methodology	44
Intervention Design	44
Implementation of the Intervention Design	46
Questionnaire.....	50
Strategic Timeline.....	55

Chapter 4

Results	59
Five Alliance Established Church Snapshot Profiles	60
Five Alliance Church Planting Snapshot Profiles	74
Planting Healthy Impact Churches	81
Growing Healthy Established Churches	86
Birthing the Vision.....	90

Casting the Vision.....	94
Creating Healthy Change.....	97
Church Culture and Values.....	103
Goals and Strategic Planning.....	106
Making Disciples.....	109
Outreach into the Community.....	111
Chapter 5	
Conclusion.....	115
Bibliography.....	125
Appendix I.....	129
Appendix II.....	134
Appendix III.....	138
Appendix IV.....	139
Appendix V.....	141
Appendix VI.....	142
Appendix VII.....	143
IRB Approval.....	145

Chapter 1

Introduction

Today's church is on the brink of an exciting new transition. More people are being reached through church plants, multi-sites, and renovated established churches than ever before. Church leaders are learning what changes need to be made to reach maximum potential for partnering with the Holy Spirit in reaching the lost and making disciples. However, the problem is that the local church is still struggling in many ways, seeing a decline in attendance, and more importantly, a decline in influence in their communities. What factors, strategies, or methods are causing growth in some churches, but a major decline in others? While the US population has increased, church attendance has not increased, resulting in a net loss of church attendees. "Between 2007 and 2014, the Christian share of the population fell from 78.4% to 70.6%, driven mainly by declines among mainline Protestants and Catholics. The unaffiliated experienced the most growth, and the share of Americans who belong to non-Christian faiths also increased."¹ Today the local church has more innovation, technology, resources, and better facilities than ever before. Why are more people not being reached? Every denomination and movement for Christ started with a passion for reaching people for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Over time many become inward-focused and ultimately close their doors. "The American church needs to be forever building. The building is the church's response to God's missional promptings. But the greatest need of the church is being restored, which is a spiritual and supernatural act of God."²

1. Pew Research Center, "America's Changing Religious Landscape," accessed August 25, 2019, <https://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>.

2. David T. Olsen, *The American Church in Crisis – Groundbreaking Research Based On A National Database of Over 200,000 Churches* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2008), 221.

The Alliance began with one church plant – the Gospel Tabernacle in New York City. It grew into a healthy congregation reaching the surrounding community and training and sending workers and leaders to reach the world. From this one church, today – over 130 years later – more than 25,000 fellowships and nearly 6 million believers have emerged. While the Alliance started with a great vision and a mission based on fulfilling the Great Commission, like many denominations’ churches, they have grown older and inward-focused. Almost all churches have a vision and mission statement about reaching the lost and making disciples for Jesus Christ. The problem is not in the intention, but rather in the follow-through and leadership. How does a God-ordained church that once passionately reached people lose their impact in the community so much that they have to close the doors? Why do leaders plant churches and not build a structure, a culture, and a model that will thrive for the long haul? These are tough questions pastors and leaders need to be able to define with solid research and not round table opinions.

Ministry Context

“Leaders move people in one direction or another. Spiritual leaders move people on to God’s agenda.”³ Loving others is the foundation and agenda upon which Christian leaders should lead. 1 John 4:19 says “We love because he first loved us.”⁴ Christ-like leaders are to be image-bearers of Jesus Christ, our Savior. To do that, Christ-followers must love God and love others well. Mathew 22 makes it very clear in the Great Commandment what Christian leaders should strive to embody: loving God and loving others. Leadership in the Kingdom of God can be presented in putting a towel over one’s shoulder and serving a fellow brother or sister.

3. Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership – Moving People on to God’s Agenda* (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2011), 22.

4. All Scripture New International Version unless otherwise noted.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance is a Christ-Centered Acts 1:8 movement. Its roots are based on loving God and loving people well. Its missional emphasis in the local church and global missions around the world lives out the Great Commandment found in Mathew 22. The Christian and Missionary Alliance, founded by A. B. Simpson in the 1870s, shared a message to prostitutes, longshoremen, and the homeless that all people are eligible for Christ's amazing grace. He established the New York Gospel Tabernacle to bring likeminded people together into an organization that could facilitate outreach ministries. Simpson later set up the Missionary Training Institute (MTI) to provide training and resources for men and women God called to take the gospel to the world. During that time, Simpson's group sent out the first team of missionaries to the Congo in 1884. Since then, thousands of people have followed God's call to serve through The Alliance in the United States and abroad.

In 1974, The Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) officially became a denomination with a heart for overseas missions. Past Alliance president Dr. L. L. King said of the CMA that it "was not established as a mission divorced from the normal activity of a church, but a church which had within it the life and function of a mission.... The mission came first, and the church grew out of a mission."⁵ Today, the Alliance focuses on planting churches in the United States and overseas. More than 2,000 churches in the U.S. minister Christ's love to more than 500,000 strong in the United States and to over 3 million worldwide. Over 700 international workers are being sent to share the love of Christ to the least-reached people groups in the world. Many churches in the Alliance are doing well, but God has more for the movement. The ministry context of the Alliance movement will allow critical research from pastors and leaders of all types of ethnic backgrounds. On any given Sunday in America, 48% of the Alliance worshippers

5. Christian & Missionary Alliance, "History: Then and Now," accessed August 31, 2019, <https://www.cmalliance.org/about/history/>.

are non-white, non-caucasian. The diversity of this movement and its Christ-centered emphasis has positioned it to have a great influence around the world for decades to come.

The Alliance could be separated into four eras of leadership in its history: The Founding Years (1887-1919), Sacrifice and Expansion (1919-1946), The Evangelical Era (1947-1974), and The Missionary Church Era (1975-present).⁶ Each era brought new life into the Alliance movement. Its mission-oriented focus has created a movement that is passionate about reaching people for Jesus, and planting churches in the United States and overseas. Currently, the international workers minister among the least reached peoples, planting churches, training national church leaders, providing relief and development assistance, supplying medical and dental care, and working on microenterprise projects.

The founding years from (1887-1919) grew out of a vision of Rev. A. B. Simpson, a Presbyterian pastor from Canada. Simpson taught that Christ was not only his Savior, but also his Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King. Known as the Fourfold Gospel in the Alliance movement, Simpson used it to share the story of who Jesus is through his personal life, hardships, and journey. To reflect CMA's missionary society roots, early Alliance congregations were known as "branches" and were made up of members from most major denominations.

A new era, known as the Sacrifice and Expansion era, began after Simpson's death in 1919. Dr. Paul Rader, an evangelist and pastor, was chosen to lead the CMA. During this era, the "tabernacle strategy" became popular. CMA tabernacles sprung up in many U.S. cities and Canada. While the Great Depression and World War II had an impact on The Christian and Missionary Alliance, it did not completely hold back its expansion to new mission fields.

Following World War II, many people began moving to cities, and the CMA continued progressing forward. The tabernacles were exchanged for traditional church buildings, and many CMA churches moved to the suburbs. In 1974, the CMA officially declared itself to be a denomination after a major restructuring of the organization. During this time, well-known names such as Dr. A.W. Tozer and

6. Christian & Missionary Alliance, "History: Then and Now."

Dr. Louis L. King greatly influenced The Alliance. Dr. King, as head of the missionary effort, had a vision that each national church of the CMA should be a self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing entity. The CMA in the U.S. and Canada became increasingly multicultural with the influx of refugees from Southeast Asia in the mid-1970s and continued to add immigrants from many parts of the world. As ethnic churches were planted, the awareness of a need for mission-sending congregations only grew.

Today, this diverse movement in the United States populates over 2,000 churches with members that speak 37 different languages and are nearly 50% people of color. God is working through the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and it is poised for great growth in the coming decades.

The heart of the Alliance movement is not just to bring the public into the visible physical church. It wants to take the church to the people. This mission of being an Acts 1:8 Christ-Centered movement is woven into the DNA of the Alliance. Author Paul Nixon writes, “For a church to make a difference in the life of a community, it has to plant itself squarely in the center of community life.”⁷ Tim Stafford writes:

Church-planting insights learned on the mission field have penetrated American church leaders, partly because they know how churches in the developing world have grown. Success-oriented Americans love to hear stories from Africa and China. Developing-world churches, once treated with patriarchal condensation, have a new status. Missionary thinking has a new status too. Church planting is a missionary approach, typical of the apostle Paul and most of the missionaries since. Where there is no church, you have to plant a church. You have to find ways to penetrate the culture with the gospel and then you have to provide a secure place for disciples to grow and to explore their new identity. A short while ago we didn't think this way in North America. Now we do.⁸

The church planting movement and the revitalized local church have united to reach thousands for Christ in recent years; however, there is still a long way to go. Today, only 42%-

7. Paul Nixon, *Fling Open The Doors: Giving the Church Away to the Community* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 31.

8. Tim Stafford, “North American Mission Board,” NAMB, last modified 2007, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/september/36.68.html>.

45% of Americans say they go to church on Sunday according to George Barna.⁹ Between the years of 1991 to 2006, this number increased from 36% to 47%. These statistics show the rate of those church attendance is declining. Nationwide, to just to keep up with population growth, the church would need to plant 51,826 more churches.¹⁰ We know there is a definite need for church planting. However, there is also a definite need for revitalizing the established church.

Fifty years ago, if a Christian leader said evangelism, the average church-attendeer would probably think of Billy Graham crusades or big tent revivals. Crusades and city-wide revivals were the American way for evangelism and reaching out to the community. When members of churches wanted to share the gospel with their neighbors, they looked to see which evangelist was coming to town. Author Richard Mouw writes about the negatives and positives of the early big tent meetings in his book, *The Smell of Sawdust*.¹¹ He shares how we need to remember our heritage while still understanding we are reaching a new generation. Thirty years ago, crusades began to fall off and personal evangelism came to dominate the thoughts and actions of church leaders. A church that wanted to reach out would typically offer a class on how to use the Four Spiritual Laws or utilize a ministry like Evangelism Explosion to teach their congregations how to witness to friends and strangers. Though crusades and revivals have not gone away, church planting has become the default mode for evangelism. Most evangelical denominations and church leaders would argue church planting is the fastest way to reach people for Jesus Christ today.

9. George Barna, *The Power of Vision* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books Publishing, 2003), 41.

10. Barna, *The Power of Vision*, 44.

11. Richard J. Mouw, *The Smell of Sawdust – What Evangelicals Can Learn from Their Fundamentalist Heritage* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2000).

Today, there are many motivations for church planting: frustration with current programming and ministries, lack of vision/mission at current church, denominational red tape, and overall holy discontent with how the church is done. Eric Ramsey of the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board says, "North America is the only continent in the world where the church is not growing."¹² Is there a difference in church growth between church plants and the established church? George Hunter of Asbury Theological Seminary writes, "Churches after 15 years typically plateau. After 35 years, they typically can't even replace the members they lose. New congregations reach a lot more pre-Christian people."¹³ It is no secret that the majority of established churches tend to turn inward-focused. It is non-negotiable for new churches and established churches to look outward to survive.

So, does this mean denominations and church leaders should do away with established churches? It is no doubt that churches throughout America are dying. Some are dead and buried, while others barely survive on life support. Also, there are churches alive and struggling, but showing signs of decline every year. "The more congregations that choose to die slowly, the more resources are being squandered that could be used for revitalization and transformation. The congregation has to want to change if they are going to ever truly invest in transformation. That may be the biggest challenge pastors face."¹⁴ Many local churches are in critical times not just financially, but because they are not willing to change direction. However, some churches are willing to change but lack motivation and courage in their leadership to take the first step.

12. Stafford, "North American Mission Board."

13. George Hunter and Donald McGraven, *Church Growth: Strategies That Work* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 61.

14. Michael Baughman, *Flipping Church – How Successful Church Planters Are Turning Conventional Wisdom Upside-Down* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources Publishing, 2016), 88.

Can God restore a church? Christians, pastors, and denominational leaders need to cling to the truth that we serve a God that is constantly renewing and restoring, and He can restore His church. It is important to understand that a new life will not come without struggle, change, and challenges. A local church can have the right vision, the right ideas, and even have the right result, but if the process is wrong, it can be a disaster.

Church planting today is a missionary approach looking much like the apostle Paul's ministry. Where there is no church, you have to plant a church. Leaders have to find ways to penetrate the culture with the gospel, and then provide a place for disciples to grow and take their next steps. "The culture is shaping the values and faith of most people around us."¹⁵ Author Tim Stevens, shares how the church fails to embrace the culture and as a result finds itself irrelevant to it.¹⁶ This mindset shift is taking place in the church today. Missionaries become very educated on the social barriers that keep the gospel from reaching their area – barriers of religion, language, rituals, and socioeconomic status can all provide a stumbling block to Christian growth. A church may thrive among one group and miss a neighboring group entirely.

Missionaries know they have to target each ethnic-group separately, or they will never reach anyone. Also, missionaries that go overseas learn to think sociologically very quickly because they are outsiders looking in. This same perspective is starting to penetrate the American church. "The secret of effectiveness is to know what really counts, then do what really counts, and not worry about the rest."¹⁷ The church of America today is at a crossroads, and she must tap

15. Tim Stevens, *Pop Goes the Church – Should the Church Engage Culture?* (Indianapolis: Power Publishing, 2008), 14.

16. Stevens, *Pop Goes the Church*, 14.

17. Matt Perman, *What's Best Next – How the Gospel Transforms the Way You Get Things Done* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2016), 133.

into leadership factors and ultimately the Spirit of God if she wants to experience real, authentic, sustainable growth over an extended period. “To reach people you have never reached before, you must do things no one else has ever done before.”¹⁸

Purpose Presented

The purpose of this project is to identify and describe leadership factors required to stimulate and sustain church growth in an existing church and in new church plants within the Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination. This thesis project will examine key leadership factors, methods, and characteristics based on 10 churches that have experienced 3% growth over 5 years at an existing Alliance church. The project will develop a theory from data, identifying leadership traits, characteristics, aptitudes, and spiritual giftings found in Alliance pastors and church planters that promote growth in the local church and overall Alliance movement. Data will be developed through personal interviews, intentional questionnaires, and personal study of church numbers and data. The ultimate goal for this thesis project is to allow churches, pastors, district leaders in the Alliance movement experiencing a decline to glean insight and learn key leadership characteristics that have the potential to spur on growth and sustainability.

Problem Presented

“Biblical leadership is taking the initiative to influence people to grow in holiness and to passionately promote the extension of God’s kingdom in the world.”¹⁹ The problem this project

18. Craig Groeschel, *It – How Church Leaders Can Get “It” and Keep “It”* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2008), 88.

19. Don N. Howell Jr., *Servants of the Servant – A Biblical Theology of Leadership* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2003), 3.

will address is declining and ineffective leadership models in the CMAs established churches and new church plants so that the change might be lead to vibrant and healthy local churches. Many authors, leaders, and theorists believe leadership is the key factor as to whether an organization will fail or succeed. Leadership in the local church is not only desperately needed, but it is essential to carry out the Missio Dei the Body of Christ is called too. "In a broad, functional sense, what seems to be central to every level and context of true leadership are initiative and influence. One sees a need and, based on one's governing convictions, exercises initiative to address that concern; influence is then brought to bear on others to join and contribute to the accomplishment of a stated objective.²⁰

One's initiative and influence must be rooted in Scripture as they lead the local church through a re-development phase or new church plant. Because of this, it is important to look at Scripture to find out how to grow, develop, and conduct oneself as a leader. The Bible is not a self-help book on leadership, but a love story focused on a Holy God who raised leaders to move the Mission of God forward. Don Howell writes:

Leadership involves taking the initiative to influence others. Since it is impacted for the kingdom that is at the core of the definition of biblical leadership, the godly leader looks for, pursues and follows up opportunities to positively move others toward the holiness of character and obedience to the divine agenda. The godly leader aspires to decisively influence the character and life-direction of others.²¹

If leadership is influence, it should be the desire of every leader to look at the authority influencer on leadership, God himself.²² Healthy leadership is the key to experiencing healthy church plants and healthy established churches. Someone's ability to lead and their leadership

20. Howell Jr., 1.

21. Howell Jr., 3.

22. Howell Jr., 8.

style greatly affect the health, functionality, and impact of a local church. Every church's goal should be to experience the fullness of what God has for them through salvations, baptisms, developing disciples, and sending them out into the world.

Church growth both spiritually and numerically is a key focus of pastors in the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Donald McGavran, a pioneer of church growth, preferred the image of a mosaic, stating that "church growth ardently maintains that we must continue to recognize that humanity is a mosaic. The growth of the church will not meld green, white, black, yellow, purple, and red pieces of the mosaic into one dark grey piece. The church is not a drab unappealing mixture, but it is a rich and multihued blend of personalities and preferences."²³

This research is being conducted knowing there is not a one size fits all approach to experiencing sustained growth over an extended period of time, but rather this research is seeking to find common methods and factors that lead to sustained growth in the CMA.

Basic Assumptions

The scope of this thesis project is to determine the common leadership factors and methods that have positive implications for sustainable church growth in new church plants and may revitalize established churches in the CMA movement. Project research will be restricted to lead pastors in the CMA throughout the United States. It is hoped that this focus could help the movement define leadership factors for viable sustainable local churches and to develop a substantive theory from grounded data. With this in mind, the project includes questionnaires and collected quantitative data from senior pastors who reported significant growth that was

23. Bob Whitesel, *Staying Power – Why People Leave the Church Over Change – And What You Can Do About It!* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 14.

sustained over five years. Limiting data to churches experiencing reported growth may allow the research to pinpoint factors that led to that growth.

Definitions

Several terms used in this thesis project need to be defined for clarification.

Alliance movement. The National Christian and Missionary Alliance movement in the United States as a whole or speaking in general about the movement itself. ²⁴

Alliance pastor (CMA pastor). An individual that is either licensed, consecrated, or ordained by the Christian and Missionary Alliance for any period. ²⁵

Church growth stats. For this research project, church growth data is provided by the National Office of Church Ministries for the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Colorado Springs, CO.

CMA church. An existing local church or new church plant of Christian believers affiliated with the Christian and Missionary Alliance and adheres to its doctrine, polity, and structure.

Declining churches. For the purpose of this project, these are local churches reporting an average yearly decrease in worship attendance of 1% or greater from September 1, 2014 to September 1, 2019.

Existing local church. A local church that has been in existence for over 10 years. They do not need to be in the same location, but they must be the same church for 10 consecutive years.

Churches over 10 years can change names, philosophies or add campuses.

24. Christian & Missionary Alliance, "About," accessed August 31, 2019, <https://www.cmalliance.org/about/>.

25. Christian & Missionary Alliance, "Finance Manual," [cmalliance.org](https://www.cmalliance.org/resources/publications/finance-manual.pdf), accessed August 31, 2019, <https://www.cmalliance.org/resources/publications/finance-manual.pdf>.

Growing churches. For the purpose of this project, these are local churches reporting an average yearly increase in worship attendance of 1% or greater from September 1, 2014 through September 1, 2019.

IW (International Worker). An international missionary in the Christian and Missionary Alliance. ²⁶

National average. The national average is based on national research platforms such as Pew Research and Barna that compare the Christian and Missionary Alliance average to the national average at various data points.

New church plant. This is a new local church planted before September 1, 2014. This will allow the evaluation of five years of data.

Plateaued church. Local churches reporting an average yearly increase in worship attendance of zero from September 1, 2014 through September 1, 2019.

Senior pastor. The person who is primarily responsible for the general organization, administration, and spiritual formation of a local church. The role of this individual is to equip the local body of Christian believers for works of service by teaching and preaching the doctrines outlined in the Bible.

Successful pastor. A senior pastor of a local Christian and Missionary Alliance Church reporting 1% or greater church growth from September 1, 2014 through September 1, 2019.

Sustainable church growth. A local church in the Christian and Missionary Alliance that has experience at least 5% plus of growth over 5 years.

Viable healthy numerical growth. Existing local churches or new church plants reporting an average yearly increase in worship attendance of 10% or greater from September 1, 2014

26. Christian & Missionary Alliance, "Missions," [cmalliance.org](https://www.cmalliance.org/ministries/missions), accessed August 31, 2019, <https://www.cmalliance.org/ministries/missions>.

through September 1, 2019. This is considered viable healthy numerical growth in the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Limitations

The purpose of this project is to examine and report on leadership dynamics, models, and methods that are proven successful in church planting and church revitalization that will help minimize church decline and closure in the Christian and Missionary Alliance movement. A mixed-method quantitative and qualitative DMIN research study will target 10 Alliance clergy, 25 to 65 years old, that have planted a church or attempted to revitalize a church. The research will also survey 10 churches (5 church plants and 5 existing local churches) that have experienced 10% growth sustained over 5 years. The survey will see if there is a direct correlation between high impact church plants and sustainable revitalized churches through which church leaders participated in one or more of the following: church planting training, greenhouse initiatives, seminary education, and through a mother church or denomination supporting them in various ways.

Delimitations

To stay within the timeframe and scope of the project, the number of surveys sent out will be limited to 5 church plants, 5 existing churches, and 10 members of the Alliance clergy positioned throughout the United States. Each leader and church will share demographics, measuring tools, and sound leadership principles learned from the 10 different church congregations in the CMA. This research will include large churches, small rural churches, established churches, church plants, and multi-site churches. Also, this project will focus solely

on the effects of sound leadership training and development for church planters and church revitalization.

The study will share defensible positive activities, as well as areas for growth and land mines to avoid when church planting or undertaking a revitalization of an established church. The goal is to learn how to develop a sustainable church, stay on mission, reach the lost, and make disciples for Jesus Christ. Data analysis will be key through book research, scholarly journals, and leaders that have been practitioners of church planting and revitalization. "Put simply, data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the complicated mass of qualitative data that the researcher generates during the research process. It concerns how interviews, text, reflexive diaries and all of the other data are collected and collated by the research."²⁷ Christ-followers believe the local church is the hope of the world and this study will help leaders develop high impact, reproducible, God-honoring churches. Jesus told Peter in Matthew 16:18, "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."

Thesis Statement

The pursuit of this action research project is to construct a leadership growth plan for Christian and Missionary Alliance churches experiencing a decline in their local church or slow church plant growth for the sustainability of the local church in the Alliance movement.

27. John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed. (Norfolk, UK: SCM Press, 2016), 54.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework:

Literature Review

The local church is the hope of the world, founded by Christ, sustained by Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Throughout history, scholars from a variety of theological backgrounds have written on topics related to the church, including identifying best practices, structures, and leadership. With regards to leadership, the number of books and journal articles are substantial. The researcher is focusing clearly on leadership dynamics and factors of fast-growing church plants and revitalized established churches in the Christian and Missionary Alliance. While much has been researched and studied on the local church as a whole, this focused criteria of learning from 10 CMA churches that have experienced 5% growth over a sustained five-year period has not been reviewed, researched, or written on to date. Churches are closing their doors for good. This is true regardless of where they are found geographically and on the theological spectrum.

The closing of churches is happening at such an alarming rate that many theories and much research on how to change this epidemic have been published. While the works give generic, one size fits all approaches, the researcher for this thesis is specifically looking for leadership factors and dynamics of fast-growing churches in the Christian and Missionary Alliance. The CMA is a unique movement that is very diverse. On any given Sunday in the more than 2,000 Alliance churches in America, 37 different languages are spoken. This diversity has positioned the CMA to reach all people groups and have influence with those of many backgrounds. The diagnosis and remedy for declining CMA churches may be different than other denominations. While the literature reviewed will tremendously help the researcher identify key

leadership factors and dynamics, it will be imperative to follow the qualitative and quantitative data specific to CMA churches.

Healthy Biblical Leadership

Healthy leadership is the key to the church experiencing sustained, healthy growth and moving forward into positive new territory. Henry and Richard Blackaby write about spiritual leadership and moving people on to God's agenda as Christian leaders. This is a key factor in developing healthy biblical leadership in the church. Their contribution helps the reader to understand and compare true biblical spiritual leadership. Blackaby writes, "Leaders move people in one direction or another. Spiritual leaders move people on to God's agenda."²⁸

Loving others is the foundation upon which Christian leaders should lead. 1 John 4:19 says, "We love because he first loved us." We are to embody and be image bearers of Jesus Christ, our Savior. To do that, we must love God and love others well. Mathew 22 makes it very clear in the Great Commandment as Jesus is speaking with the Sadducees and Pharisees what is most important. This work is helpful for church revitalization and spiritual understanding of growing a strong church planting movement. Healthy spiritual leadership is key to rallying a group of people onto God's agenda for the Kingdom of God.

The need for understanding healthy leadership dynamics and factors is important to denominational success. This will be key for the Christian and Missionary Alliance to experience sustained success over many years. Therefore, the ability to discern and recognize various lessons and stages of leadership development is key to this research project. Like, Blackaby, Dr. Robert Clinton writes about the true implications of leadership in the church and what it takes to make the Christian leader a man or woman of character. Clinton writes, "God does not stop

28. Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 22.

working on character after moving someone into leadership. God continues to form character throughout the ministry of a leader. This development does not focus on testing to enter the ministry but on the relationship with God. The qualities of love, compassion, empathy, discernment, and others are deepened."²⁹

Mature and effective ministry as it relates to the relational aspect of leadership flows from a mature character. A mature leader's character is formed through growth, isolation, conflict, and crisis. Often, leaders experience and process each of them without realizing what is happening. Clinton moves beyond theory to practice and shares wisdom, "Quality leadership does not come easily. It requires time, experience, and repeated instances of the maturity process."³⁰

Redefining traditional leadership and understanding biblical leadership starts with looking at the life of Jesus. According to Joseph Stowell, at first glance, it is hard to see Jesus as a maximum leader. He was an outsider, either ignored or rejected by those who made things happen. Those in his closest inner circle were less than highly distinguished, and in the end, he was crucified as a criminal. Three days later, the story was flipped, and he went from what seemed to be a failure to the champion over sin. As leaders, we must understand from God's perspective, there are only two kingdoms: the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of heaven. Stowell writes, "The kingdom of this world is ruled by Satan, who is, as Jesus described him, 'a

29. Dr. J. Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader – Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development* (Colorado Springs: NavPress Publishing, 2012), 13.

30. Clinton, 29.

murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”³¹

Stowell believes that leaders need to come to the crossroads of their understanding of leadership. This crossroads leads Christian leaders to ask the ultimate question: which kingdom they will serve; the kingdom of this world or the kingdom of heaven? Albert Mohler's contribution to this subject is found in his book, *The Conviction to Lead*, where he shares 25 principles for leadership that matter in a Christian leader's life. Mohler's book is a leader's handbook for how to make your convictions clear, change the way you think and make decisions, and ultimately change the way you lead those God has entrusted to you.

Mohler writes that leadership is all about character. Who we are when no one is looking is vital to our true character. "Christ-followers should exemplify the moral commitments to which we are called by God's Word."³² Proverbs 23:7 says, "As he thinks in his heart, so he is." The effective leader knows that the expectation of character begins at the top. Those entrusted to the local pastor to lead will expect the pastor to live and to lead in alignment with their biblical convictions. Living a life of integrity is about everyday choosing to live in such a way that honors Christ. As Paul says in Romans 12, we must be on guard and be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

The lack of health in leadership can be the root cause of spiritual deficit. "The emotionally unhealthy leader is someone who operates in a continuous state of emotional spiritual deficit, lacking emotional maturity and a "being with God" sufficient to sustain their

31. Joseph M. Stowell, *Redefining Leadership – Character-Driven Habits of Effective Leaders* (Nashville: Zondervan Publishing, 2014), 57.

32. Albert Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead – 25 Principles For Leadership that Matters* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2012), 83.

“doing for God.”³³ This type of emotional deficit, as defined by Peter Scazzero, manifests itself primarily by a pervasive lack of awareness. “Unhealthy leaders lack, for example, awareness of their feelings, their weaknesses, and limits, how their past impacts their present, and how others experience them.”³⁴ The result is the leader carrying these immaturities with them into their teams, churches, and everything they do. Scazzero shares practical tools that every leader can utilize to measure the health of their leadership. One key area in the overall health of a spiritual leader rises and falls on Scazzero’s statement: “Your being with God (or lack of being with God) will trump eventually, you're doing for God every time.”³⁵ Leaders cannot give what they don’t possess, and emotionally healthy leadership starts with a healthy relationship with your creator.

Characteristics of the Christian Leader

Another practitioner who offers helpful insight into the characteristics of the Christian leader is Bill Hull. Bill challenges his readers to evaluate their assumptions and secular leadership addiction and pursue the way of Jesus as they lead. Hull writes, “Most contemporary Christians believe that being noticed in both the secular and Christian press is critical to success. It’s not that people would state such a belief, but one only has to listen to the excitement generated when some Christian effort is promoted in the press.”³⁶ Jesus' leadership was modeled with a towel over his shoulder, and Scripture makes clear in Mathew 20:28, “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

33. Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader – How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2015), 25.

34. Scazzero, 25.

35. Scazzero, 38.

36. Bill Hull, *The Christian Leader – Rehabilitating Our Addiction to our Secular Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2016), 56.

Christian leadership today has taken a path of doing what works and getting rewarded. This leadership mindset serves the leader rather than those he or she leads. Ultimately, Christian leaders need a renewal in the way they think. In Romans 12:1-2, Paul says, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Hull makes it very clear that the more Christian leaders conform their leadership style to the world, the more they will not look like Jesus.

Hull argues that true biblical leadership starts with transforming and renewing our minds on why the pastor is leading in the first place. Only then will the Christian leader be able to walk the way of Jesus, and test and discern his good, pleasing, and perfect will. While others taught the importance of doing good; Jesus taught how to be good. He did not teach behavior modification alone; he taught how to change the sources of behavior. Jesus was the greatest leader to ever walk this earth, and his ability to lead with grace and truth should be the image of a leader we pursue to be.

Leaders with unchecked power can lead to train wrecks. The mighty can fall when character is compromised. The ability to effectively self-manage is heavily dependent upon good self-awareness and awareness of other. Self-awareness in pastoral leadership is a clear factor in the success of a new church plant or an established local church. A lack of awareness of both self and others is a common denominator among those who derail. Tim Irwin writes, "The ability to manage ourselves and to manage our relationships is heavily dependent upon our perceptiveness of what's going on within us and with others. Self and other's awareness employs the ability to

discern our thoughts and feelings as well as the thoughts and feelings of others. Those who derail seem to lack this ability to discern."³⁷ Tim's five lessons learned from catastrophic failures of leadership will be a key work to study.

John MacArthur would sum up effective leadership as someone free from the taint of scandal, someone who is upright, sound in character, and without any serious moral blemish. "The leader who values projects over people, accomplishment at the expense of the relationship, may achieve success, but at a prohibitive cost."³⁸ Jesus was our ultimate example humbling himself to serve those around him. MacArthur believes to obey Jesus' call to servanthood would involve a radical surrender of one's natural pursuit of comfort, wealth, and recognition. The path to promotion, then, is the way of the servant both for Jesus and for his followers." For MacArthur, the ultimate goal of leadership is promoting the Kingdom of God and influencing lives for Christ. The call to pastoral leadership is a dangerous calling and one that needs to be examined before pursuing leadership in an established local church or new church plant. Paul David Tripp opens the reader's eye's to unique challenges of everyday pastoral ministry in his book, *Dangerous Calling – Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry*. In the fourth chapter, Tripp shared some powerful thoughts, reflecting that ministry is more than knowledge and skill. He shares true leadership factors that are key to a pastor's success and call. Tripp writes:

The pastor must be enthralled by, in awe of — can I say it: in love with — his Redeemer so that everything he thinks, desires, chooses, decides, says, and does is propelled by love for Christ and the security of rest in the love of Christ. He must be regularly exposed, humbled, assured, and given rest by the grace of his Redeemer. His heart needs to be

37. Tim Irwin, *Derailed – Five Lessons Learned from Catastrophic Failures of Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 2009), 61.

38. John MacArthur, *The Book on Leadership* (Nashville: Nelson Publishing, 2004), 18.

tenderized day after day by his communion with Christ so that he becomes a tender, loving, patient, forgiving, encouraging, and a giving servant leader.³⁹

Pastoral ministry is not a position, title, rank, or career, but it is a calling from the Most High God. "The more you know about leadership, the faster you grow as a leader and the further you are able to go as a leader. Learning from the experiences of others enables you to go further, faster."⁴⁰ Andy Stanley shares five concepts that serve as the irreducible minimum, the essentials for next-generation leaders: competence, courage, clarity, coaching, and character. "You can lead without character, but you won't be a leader worth following. Character provides next-generation leaders with the moral authority necessary to bring together the people and resources needed to further an enterprise."⁴¹

Leadership Methods

Every successful ministry and local church must consider strategic planning as part of their overall key to success. Aubrey Malphurs writes, "the Savior makes it very clear through the pen of Luke that the church is to be so much more than a holy huddle, or an inward-focused family that cares for its own and no one else. Instead, the church has a God-driven Christ-given directive to be outward focused on a lost and dying world that desperately needs the Savior."⁴² The more you get to know and understand the heart of God, the more you begin to understand that God is love, and he does not want anyone to perish. Healthy leaders, empowered by the

39. Paul David Tripp, *Dangerous Calling – Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Crossway, 2012), 62.

40. Andy Stanley, *Next Generation Leader – Five Essentials For Those Who Will Shape The Future* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2003), 9.

41. Stanley, 12.

42. Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning – A 21st Century Model for Church Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 2013), 48.

Holy Spirit, produce a healthy ministry. A healthy ministry produces and reproduces healthy churches. For CMA churches to see and sustain at least 5% growth over an extended period, they must be Kingdom-minded and maintain a focus for “the lost sheep” in their community.

Malphurs goes on to write in his work, *Being Leaders*, “A Christian leader is a servant. No single biblical image fully embraces the totality of biblical leaders and their leadership. Thus, to get the full picture of a New Testament leader, we would need to combine and embrace all the biblical metaphors used for leaders and leadership. The biblical image that is the most common and dominant for leaders is that of a servant.”⁴³ Malphurs talks about Christian leaders as servants with credibility and capabilities who can influence people in a particular context to pursue their God-given direction. Leadership is influence and local pastors are called to influence people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many leaders in the Old and New Testaments could be identified and studied as servant leaders, such as Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Nehemiah, David, Christ, Paul, and Peter.

The Church, founded by Jesus Christ, is the hope of the world. Every pastor that senses a call into ministry experiences the passion to reach the lost and change the world. Leaders often look around at other churches and have a passion ignited in them to make a difference within their community. However, certain ideas can hinder the pastor from moving forward.

Tim Suttle explains in his book, *Shrink*, that one roadblock which can stalemate the local church is when a leader puts more importance on size than faithfulness. 2 Timothy 2:11-13 tells us, “It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. Even in our worst moments, our God is still

43. Aubrey Malphurs, *Being Leaders – The Nature of Authentic Christian Community* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 58.

faithful to us.” This alone should cause all Christian leaders to value faithfulness to God as more important than numeric size. “The church’s job is not to grow. The church’s job is not to thrive. The church’s job is not even to survive. The church’s job is to be faithful.”⁴⁴ We have allowed the American way of leadership and modern leadership philosophy to trump Jesus’ vision of the Kingdom. While we need great leadership in the local church, we need to be careful that it is not built on anything less than the foundation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Suttle challenges leaders to have confidence and reliance on God that will lead them to pursue faithfulness without having to manufacture growth. He believes in this so much that he says, "When church leaders focus on faithfulness (fidelity, virtue, and an active, living, breathing allegiance to the way of Christ), they have done all they are meant to do regardless of their ministry's results. Faithfulness is our part; growth is God's part."⁴⁵ Numbers and facts tell a story of where a church is, but they are not the end-all of determining if a church is effectively ministering to their community.

“Like it or not, we are the stewards of the church for our generation. More daunting than that is the fact that we determine what comes to mind for the next generation when they hear the term church. Because of that, the church needs leaders who are willing to do whatever necessary to ensure that we hand it off to the next generation in better shape than we found it.”⁴⁶ Andy Stanley writing in, *Deep and Wide*, challenges the reader to look at their strategies and methods to create churches unchurched people love to attend. The theme throughout this writing could be summed up in the following way: “When a church fails to distinguish between its current model

44. Tim Suttle, *Shrink – Faithful Ministry in a Church-Growth Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2014), 8.

45. Suttle, 17.

46. Andy Stanley, *Deep and Wide – Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2012), 56.

and the mission to which it has been called and mistakenly fossilizes around its model, that church sets itself up for decline."⁴⁷ Leadership methods and models are crucial for churches to experience health and growth in their local context.

Fast-Growing Churches

Many other writings have focused on strategies, principles, and models to help struggling churches begin thriving again. Church leadership expert, Lyle Schaller, in his book, *A Mainline Turnaround*, believes a great remedy for struggling churches is to reinvent themselves, redesign their ministries, and redirect their efforts to those born after 1960. Schaller's work is out of the box, but it challenges church leaders with strategies to turn around a local church or even an entire denomination. Hard data, research, and facts need to be a great focus for anyone looking to create long-term and sustained church growth.

Along the same lines as Lyle Schaller, David T. Olsen, shares groundbreaking research based on a national database of over 200,000 churches which reveals the overall population growth rate far outpaces the church's rate of growth. The director of the American Church Research Project, Olsen analyzed church attendance patterns over time, showing they stayed virtually unchanged from 1990, while the population grew by fifty-two million people. Though the study is over a decade old, Olsen's work not only gives a real picture of the state of the church, but also provides insight into how the church must change to reach a changing world with the hope of the Gospel. Olsen writes, "The American church is in crisis. At first glance, this

47. Stanley, 284.

may not be apparent, but while many signs of its evident success and growth abound, in reality, the American church is losing ground as the population continues to grow."⁴⁸

Thom Rainer writes about breaking out of mediocrity in the local church and moving towards excellence in his writing, *Breakout Churches*. "Eighty percent of the approximately 400,000 churches in the United States are either declining or at a plateau."⁴⁹ This statistic is the driving force behind, *Breakout Churches*, and serves as the foundation for Rainer's research. Of the thousands of churches examined in this study, only 13 met the criteria for a breakout church. *Breakout Churches*, tells the story of these churches and their pastors using a statistical approach to identify key patterns and characteristics common to churches that have experienced turnarounds. "While we see many common characteristics of breakout church leaders, one trait that manifests itself repeatedly is persistence. These leaders see a clear goal, and though it may take years to reach the goal, they do not see giving up as an option."⁵⁰ Rainer's research has a stated goal of helping provide hope for struggling leaders and churches. While Rainer uses numerous statistical and quantitative data throughout his research, he ultimately yields that transformation only takes place in God's power and by God's power.

One practical review of a fast-growing church utilizing technology and innovation is Crossroads Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. Kelly Carr and Jonathan Willis write, "Clinging to things of the past oftentimes distract us from the real mission of the church. Churches can become

48. Olsen, *The American Church in Crisis*, 15.

49. Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches – Discover How to Make the Leap* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2005), 21.

50. Rainer, 37.

tethered to a thing that people like. But the church is not designed to keep its people happy,”⁵¹ In an interview with Lead Pastor, Brian Thome, he said, “Becoming comfortable, becoming complacent — it leads to irrelevancy. The opposite of that is entrepreneurial.”⁵² Crossroads is willing to let go of even successful and innovative initiatives that hamper its vision of being “one church in many locations.” How can the local church hold tight to Scripture, and do everything they can to be relevant to the community in which they minister? The church is the bride of Christ for whom he went to the cross. Knowing this to be true, the goal of the local church and local church pastor should be to lead in such a way that they maximize the church’s potential in the context and community in which they live. The literature review of various leadership experts, church theorists, and church practitioners will aid in the researcher having a complete informative leadership framework and makeup that will help churches in the CMA experience sustained growth for years to come.

Theological Framework

Acts 2 gives pastors and local churches a blueprint for success in the local church. The insights found in Acts can be implemented when church planting or revitalizing the established church. What is the church? Our culture today understands the church as a building. This is not the Biblical understanding of the church. The word church comes from the Greek word "Ecclesia" which is defined as "an assembly," or “called out ones.” The root meaning of “church” is not a building, but people. Today when you ask people what church they attend, they

51. Kelly Carr and Johathan P. Willis, “The Business of Growing a Church: How Cincinnati’s Crossroads Uses Entrepreneurial Strategies for Gospel Ends,” *Christianity Today* 62, no. 4 (2018): 50-57, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0&sid=fe616cbf-5d19-4f99-8c49-343358ffbc1c%40pdc-v-sessmgr06>.

52. Carr and Willis, 50-57.

usually give a response like Baptist, Methodist, or another denomination. This also happens when people are asked their religion. Responses are usually something like Lutheran, Catholic, or Baptist.

Culture, heritage, and family origin have a great effect on how people think about the local church. In Romans 15:5-6, Paul speaks to what the church should look like: "May God, who gives you this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other – each with the attitude of Christ Jesus towards each other. Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (NLT).

The church is first the Body of Christ. Ephesians 1:22-33 says, "And God has put all things under the authority of Christ, and he gave him this authority for the benefit of the church. And the Church is his body; it is filled by Christ, who fills everything everywhere with his presence" (NLT). The Body of Christ is made up of all believers from the time of Pentecost until Christ return. This means the universal church consists of all those who have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:13 is a well-known passage that is often shared when thinking about the Body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:13 from the Message says,

You can easily enough see how this kind of thing works by looking no further than your own body. Your body has many parts — limbs, organs, cells — but no matter how many parts you can name, you're still one body. It's the same with Christ. By means of his one Spirit, we all said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives. We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which he has the final say in everything. (This is what we proclaimed in word and action when we were baptized.) Each of us is now a part of his resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at one fountain—his Spirit—where we all come to drink. The old labels we once used to identify ourselves—labels like Jew or Greek, slave or free—are no longer useful. We need something larger, more comprehensive.

Anyone who believes in Jesus Christ is part of the body of Christ. The true Church of God is not any particular Church building, denomination, or group of people. The true universal

Church of God is all those who have received salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. For this reason, the Christian and Missionary Alliance refers to itself as an Acts 1:8 Christ-Centered movement. If one receives Christ as Savior, then that person is a member of the Holy Church. Is there a difference between the local church and the universal church? In Galatia, there were many churches of what we would call the local church. However, it is important to understand no one individual denomination is the universal church, but they are comprised of local churches making up the universal Church. The local church is described in Galatians 1:1-2, "Paul, an apostle...and all the brethren who are with me, to the churches of Galatia." This helps us understand the church is not a building or a denomination. According to the Bible, the church is the Body of Christ – all those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. There are members of the universal church in local churches.

What about the “First Church”? The first church is the church that is recorded in the New Testament Books of Acts. This New Testament church is known as the original church and the one true church made clear by Scripture. The church that is recorded in the New Testament reflects God’s pattern and foundation for His church. The first Church grew quickly with 3,000 members on the Day of Pentecost. What caused this great movement of God? The Bible says in Acts only God adds to the Church. There is only one form of church growth in the Kingdom of God and it is people being saved from their sin and experiencing new life in Christ, referred to as regeneration. In today's churches, we find leaders often satisfied with transfer growth. Church hoppers are not an accurate statistic of church growth. This is where a Christian simply switches church for various reasons, but mostly from frustration. True church growth is not the transfer of believers from one church to another; it is the conversion of lost souls, who are added to the Church. In the early church, it says in Acts 5:14: “And more and more people believed and were

brought to the Lord – crowds of both men and women.”⁵³ Sadly, there are churches all over not baptizing one person per year. Some churches are satisfied with the status quo, meeting their budget, and content if there are no complaints. However, local churches that are experiencing no salvations or baptisms should make some drastic changes to get in alignment with the biblical first church.

The Church sees growth when people’s lives are transformed by Christ; the old is gone and new has come. The Gospel message is love, but also very confrontational. When people are suddenly confronted with the living God, their hearts are open to respond to the Gospel message. When Peter and John were claiming that there was a resurrection from the dead, it says in Acts 4:3 that they were arrested and jailed until morning. However, in Acts 4:4 the living God worked in many of the people’s lives because of their obedience: Acts 4:4 says, “But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so that the number of believers totaled about 5,000 men, not counting women and children.”⁵⁴ A similar story is true in Acts 16 when Paul and Silas were jailed. The jailer was confronted by the Holy Spirit because of Paul and Silas' obedience. Acts 16:29-32, “Trembling with fear, the jailer called for the lights and ran to the dungeon and fell before Paul and Silas. He brought them out and asked, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’ They replied, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with your entire household.’ Then they shared the word of the Lord with him and all who lived in his household.”⁵⁵ People must be confronted with the living God in our Church and ministry.

53. New Living Translation.

54. New Living Translation.

55. New Living Translation.

Most importantly, prayer must be a vital part of the Church. The early Church made a huge emphasis on prayer. You cannot study the life early Church without seeing the strong emphasis on prayer. Acts 2:42 says, "They joined with other believers and devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and fellowship, sharing in the Lord's Supper and *Prayer*." As a result of their prayer, it says in Acts 4:31, "...the building where they were meeting shook, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. And they preached God's message with boldness."

Church growth and momentum start with prayer and both personally and corporately. Christ is the head of the Church and He initiates movements that happen in the Body of Christ. Church growth is near to the heart of God. The universal Church is growing faster than ever before. We need to challenge our people to be men and women of prayer. Mathew 16:18 says, "Now I say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it".⁵⁶ Bridget Williard writes, "Church isn't where you meet. The church isn't a building. The church is what you do. The church is who you are. The church is the human outworking of the person of Jesus Christ. Let's not go to Church, let's be the church."⁵⁷

Leadership in the local church from a theological perspective can be found in the pages of Scripture. Numerous Old Testament and New Testament leaders create a blueprint for Christian leaders and pastors in the local church. "In a broad, functional sense, what seems to be central to every level and context of true leadership are initiative and influence. One sees a need and, based on one's governing convictions, exercises initiative to address that concern; influence

56. Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 44.

57. David J. Felter, "The Story of the Church," *Holiness Today*, Jan/Feb 2008, <http://holinesstoday.org/the-story-of-the-church>.

is then brought to bear on others to join and contribute to the accomplishment of a stated objective.”⁵⁸ One example of Old Testament leadership is found with the life of Solomon.

Solomon's leadership profile saw both struggle and Godly moments. He struggled with allurements of material wealth and his wisdom at times was undermined by compromise. He also battled projects over people. "The leader who values projects over people, accomplishment at the expense of the relationship, may achieve success, but at a prohibitive cost."⁵⁹ Jesus was our ultimate example, humbling himself to serve those around him. Howell writes, “to obey Jesus’ call to servanthood would involve a radical surrender of one’s natural pursuit of comfort, wealth, and recognition. The path to promotion, then, is the way of the servant both for Jesus and for his followers.”⁶⁰

The ultimate goal of leadership is promoting the Kingdom of God and influencing lives for Christ. Biblical leadership is servanthood, and to grow in understanding of the term “servant of the Lord” will allow Christian leaders to build a strong spiritual foundation for their leadership roles. “The great leaders in the Old Testament are commonly designated “servant of the Lord.” This is the title of honor par excellence for those who discover a joyful abandonment to the will of the Lord.”⁶¹ Two leaders that represent this best in the Old Testament are Moses and David. In the New Testament we see a shift: “The theological framework of the Gospel, then, provides the

58. Howell Jr., *Servants of the Servant*, 1.

59. Howell Jr., 11.

60. Howell Jr., 203.

61. Howell Jr., 7.

basis for the transformation of a term of degradation, ‘slave (of man, sin, the law)’ to a badge of honor, ‘servant of God.’”⁶²

Jesus set the example for servanthood in the new covenant. The context of service in the Old Testament was often out of obligation but Jesus changed everything by inviting his followers to join in communion with him and inviting them to be a part of extending the Kingdom to the world. Jesus set the example. He walked humbly, served graciously, and always looked out for the needs of others. Philippians 2:6-7 reminds Christ-followers of the nature of Jesus’ servant character: “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”

Another theological foundation in leadership can be found in the leadership profile of Joseph. Joseph modeled the power of living a life of integrity before God and man. "A defining moment for Joseph came when he was alone with the beautiful Potiphar's wife. The sexual act would have been consensual and the brief pleasure intense. But Joseph knew that the long-term consequences would be disastrous: spoiled stewardship of this master, a violated conscience, and, above all, an offended and dishonored God."⁶³

⁵ From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned; the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. ⁶ So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph’s care; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate. Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, ⁷ and after a while his master’s wife took notice of Joseph and said, “Come to bed with me!”⁸ But he refused. “With me in charge,” he told her, “my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. ⁹ No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?” ¹⁰ And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her

62. Howell Jr., 13.

63. Howell Jr., 25.

or even be with her.¹¹ One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. ¹² She caught him by his cloak and said, “Come to bed with me!” But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.⁶⁴

The power of the principle of integrity is that anything less than obedience in his decision would result in Joseph greatly sacrificing his future. While it takes a lifetime to build a good reputation, it only takes one bad decision to ruin it. Living a life of integrity before God and man is essential in true biblical leadership. Pastors and Christian leaders are not to put on a façade to man that they are living lives of integrity, but rather they must remember God sees it all and all leaders are ultimately accountable to him.

Another area of sound theological leadership can be found in the life of Paul and the idea of boasting. “The credentials that authenticate Paul as a true servant of Christ, however, are not academic degrees, accumulated knowledge, or rhetorical skills, but sacrificial labor, physical deprivation, imprisonment and torture, exposure to constant danger, and much more.”⁶⁵

I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then tolerate me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting. ¹⁷ In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool. ¹⁸ Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast. ¹⁹ You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! ²⁰ In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or puts on airs or slaps you in the face. ²¹ To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that! Whatever anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about. ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham’s descendants? So, am I. ²³ Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold

64. Gen. 39:5-12.

65. Howell Jr., *Servants of the Servant*, 203.

and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?" ³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.⁶⁶

Paul desired to expose his frailty and lead himself to depend on God's power rather than on human qualifications. This is the greatest level of servant leadership. Paul demonstrates leadership principle for all pastors, leaders, and Christians in general. A true servant of the servant is one that always depends on God's power, strength, and protection before their own.

The Bible also gives a road map and example for helping young leaders grow through the life of Timothy. Young leaders can learn to have biblical discipline over themselves, grow in their duties as a pastor, develop and delegate to others, and build a foundation rooted in the Word of God. Like Timothy, young leaders need to be grounded, yet flexible in their ministry so they can do the things needed to be done, whether it is in their gift set or not. God, through Paul, set forth credentials for leaders in the local church in 1 Timothy 3.

Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. ² Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. ⁵ (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷ He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

Paul is making clear to Timothy in 1 Timothy 3 to place people in primary church leadership positions in Ephesus only if they had proven Christian character and basic leadership qualities. The following questions could be key in faithfully discerning a young leader's ability to fulfill a leadership role in the church:

- a. What are three ways that you practice personal care on an ongoing basis?

⁶⁶. 2 Cor. 11:16-30.

- b. How would you describe your family life in three sentences?
- c. What are three ways that you regularly demonstrate devotion to the gospel?
- d. What are the top three features or practices in your leadership style?

Paul was urging Timothy to take the time and make a concerted effort to appoint qualified, committed believers to leadership roles in the Ephesian Church. One way Timothy could identify those potential leaders was to ask them the right questions. The church's ongoing spiritual health depended on his success. Leadership rises and falls with integrity, servanthood, and character-driven leaders. "Servant leaders are not visionaries who devise a brilliant plan, then by dint of personal charisma draw others to fulfill those ambitions. Rather they are faithful stewards of a divine mandate – to fish and to feed, to evangelize and to teach, to pioneer and to the pastor."⁶⁷

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis for the proposed project discusses the purpose and role of the church, and factors and methods in leadership that produce lasting, growing, and sustainable churches. Followers of Jesus believe the local church is the hope of the world and a theoretical basis will model and highlight the high impact, reproducible, God-honoring churches. Jesus told Peter in Matthew 16:18, "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."

What should the laser focus be for both church plants and the revitalization of an established church? The focus should be a *Great Commitment* to the *Great Commandment* and the *Great Commission*. Jesus's purpose in life was to do the will of His Heavenly Father (John 4:34). Wherever Jesus went, He brought goodness, truth, and grace. To achieve this purpose and

67. Howell Jr., *Servants of the Servant*, 301.

mission, Jesus went about preaching, teaching, reaching souls, and addressing societal issues that were serving as barriers to spiritual renewal and development. Similarly, the local church has to move beyond societal norms, church traditions, and personal preference to fulfill the great commission and great commandment given to us by God. According to Matthew 4:23, “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.” In some cases, these diseases or situations represented sin. Thus, Jesus proclaimed healings and commanded the individual “to go and sin no more” (John 8:11). An aspect that cannot be overlooked is Jesus's proclamation in Luke 4:18-21:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”

The symbolic, yet real, relationship lies in the need for physical freedom and releases from worldly oppressors as an example of spiritual freedom from the forces of evil. To fully comprehend this Gospel message, one must first comprehend and understand that Jesus came to seek and save the lost. In human form, Jesus fully understood the physical struggles of man, and He preached salvation and holiness unwaveringly. Throughout the Old Testament, there was a constant call for an exodus of the children of Israel from captivity. This release was physical in nature, with spiritual, emotional, and psychological implications for those involved. Throughout Scripture, God is constantly calling us towards a more intimate, more obedient, more set-apart walk with Him. By re-establishing this connection, the church is the only agency equipped to lead the development effort to achieve spiritual and physical wellbeing on earth. For this reason, the local church must be running on all cylinders at all times, preaching the Good News and

baptizing people in Jesus' Name. When the local church reconnects with its “*first love*,” it allows the church to once again take its rightful place in disciple-making and impact the world for Christ. Scripture demands the church's engagement and calls the church to *put its faith in* action.

The model for this project will be focusing on the local church and the mission of Christ in the following key areas:

1. Are people coming to Salvation through Jesus Christ?
2. Is the local Church laser-focused on the Great Commandment and Great Commission?
3. Is the church walking humbly and repentant, or getting off course?
4. Is the church laser-focused on God's Word being the authority in all decisions moving forward?
5. Is the church willing to do anything short of sin to reach people for Jesus Christ and growing them through discipleship?
6. Is the local church unwavering in God's timeless truth, but seeking new ways to be relevant within the culture it resides?

When the local church adheres to the following areas, the church will experience health and engage the communities in which they live biblically. The outcome from a lack of focus is church decline, lack of passion, lack of purpose, and ultimately, church closure. The stakes are high and when the local church takes its mission seriously, it proclaims to the world God's message is valuable and for everyone.

Both the Old and New Testament writers provide the foundational leadership characteristics required for ministry success. The Old Testament points to the fact that successful leadership is contingent on recognizing God as the ultimate leader and source for vision, influence, anointing, empowerment, wisdom, and knowledge. In Proverbs 9:9-10, the writer

states, “Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.” In the New Testament, Jesus explained to his disciples that he was to be the wellspring of life and ministry. Anything apart from him would bear no fruit according to John 15:5.

The future of the church and the Christian and Missionary Alliance movement will hinge on their ability to train, develop, and send leaders. Dr. Eugene Habecker, the 30th President of Taylor University, defines leadership as, “those persons who believe they can and must make a difference in their organizations, their families, and their communities, and who do so by following biblical principles. In addition, for the Christian who leads and follows, the ends or objectives aspired to in leadership must also be biblical.”⁶⁸ 2 Timothy 2:11-13 says, “It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us; If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.” Even in our worst moments, our God is still faithful to us. This alone should cause all Christian leaders to value faithfulness to God as more important than numeric size, title, or position. “The church’s job is not to grow. The church’s job is not to thrive. The church’s job is not even to survive. The church’s job is to be faithful.”⁶⁹

Christian leaders have allowed the American way of leadership and modern leadership philosophy to trump Jesus’ vision of the Kingdom. While the local church is desperate for leadership, Christian leaders and pastors need to be careful they are not built on anything less

68. Eugene B. Habecker, *Rediscovering the Soul of Leadership – Inner Disciplines for the Effective Leader* (Upland, IN: Taylor University Press, 2006), 17.

69. Suttle. *Shrink*, 27.

than the foundation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. True biblical leadership is having the confidence that God is leading and pursuing faithfulness without having to manufacture growth.

"When church leaders focus on faithfulness (fidelity, virtue, and an active, living, breathing allegiance to the way of Christ), they have done all they are meant to do regardless of their ministry's results. Faithfulness is our part; growth is God's part."⁷⁰ In John 3, John the Baptist models faithfulness to the people. John the Baptist was a rock star and people were looking to him as the "Christ," but he set the record straight about the one to come in John 3:30-36:

30 He must become greater; I must become less. **31** The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. **32** He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. **33** Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. **34** For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. **35** The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. **36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.

John makes it clear who his allegiance is to and ultimately models faithfulness to God, himself, us, and all that read this passage. "When we humble ourselves and '*Shrink*,' Christ can become more present in our lives, living in and through us, making and remaking us in his image, and carrying that image to the rest of the world."⁷¹ Faithful Christian leaders lead from a position of vulnerability. Vulnerability is not a sign of weakness, but rather it is a platform for which Christ Jesus can shine in and through you. Embracing weakness is at the heart of what it means to follow Jesus. Mathew 10:39 says, "Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it."

70. Suttle, 38.

71. Suttle, 40.

Christian leaders, pastors, ministry leaders are called to die to self daily. This is true vulnerability and trust in the Father. "Only those who know and feel loved are able to love others in return. Only those people who feel forgiven can truly forgive. Only those people who allow them to be seen for who they are can know the freedom and power that comes in being vulnerable."⁷² True vulnerability is essential for anyone seeking to be faithful in their Christian leadership. Henri Nouwen says when leading people, "we must forget ourselves in order to let the other person approach us. We must be able to open up to him or her to let their distinctive personality unfold; even though it often frightens and repels us."⁷³ Vulnerability starts with Christian leaders opening themselves up to others as we lead them towards the greatest story ever told; the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Character-driven leaders do everything they can to live a life of character and integrity which leads to moral credibility in their leadership. Character-driven leaders see their responsibility of developing other people of character more valuable than building up their name. They are rooted in Jesus Christ and lead with a strong biblical conviction. "If you understand your fallenness and the need to find your confidence in Christ and his counterintuitive, countercultural ways, and if you desire to bring the values of the kingdom to bear on your leadership and those you lead, you have a good chance of choosing the maximum successes of character-driven leadership."⁷⁴

Scripture makes it clear the best type of leadership is character-driven leadership. Leaders who possess true moral authority genuinely seek to live and lead with integrity as followers of

72. Suttle, 155.

73. Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out – The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1975), 107.

74. Stowell, *Redefining Leadership*, 33.

Jesus. They practice what they preach and try to remain consistent with Kingdom values and principles in the governance of the organization. This type of leader is not only attractive but will bear the most fruit over their lifetime.

God doesn't need experts in the latest models, strategies, and techniques. He needs broken people who can sit with other broken people and appreciate them as precious children of the Father, prodigals returning home. When we sit with someone who is so broken that they have nothing to offer us that will help us get ahead, nothing that is of use to us, nothing that will enhance our reputation, and little that is of pleasure, then we are forced either to walk away or to stay long enough to begin to recognize the spark of the divine living with them; even in their humble state. Only then can we begin to see our power, wholeness, usefulness, and competency as a roadblock instead of an advantage.⁷⁵

Christian leaders and pastors need to be able to answer the following questions with an honest heart to create and develop fast-growing, effective churches:

Do you want to create or be a part of a team that creates a church unchurched people love to attend? Are you ready to try some things? Possibly fail at some things? Is there a part of you that desires to step away from the familiar and predictable and embrace something new? Are you content to spend the rest of your life doing church the way you've always done it? The way your tradition expects you to do it? Do you want to continue designing services and programming for church people? Do you want to spend another season of ministry doing things that make unbelievers unnecessarily uncomfortable because it's comfortable for you?⁷⁶

The local church is God's Plan A to get the Gospel to the world. Because of this, every local church needs to ask tough questions, make strategic decisions, and keep their eyes fixed on the prize as they steward the leadership of the local church. Every Christian leader and pastor should walk through life with Psalm 28:7 as the soundtrack, "The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him." This is the road to faithfulness in Christian leadership.

75. Suttle, *Shrink*, 194.

76. Andy Stanley, *Deep & Wide*, 311-312.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Intervention Design

"Healthy churches today do not just run programs of events, they design a clear process and system whereby they intentionally "make disciples." Every church's system is perfect for the results they are currently getting. If they want different results, they must build a different system."⁷⁷ The CMA is an Acts 1:8 Christ-Centered movement as defined by the National Office of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. If this is true, then CMA leadership must make sure we are developing leaders and churches to be high capacity and high impact for the communities in which they reside. The intervention plan the researcher will use to address the problem of declining established local churches and church plants in the CMA will take place through interviews and questionnaires' of 10 high capacity church leaders and lead pastors in the CMA, determined through data analysis.

The purpose of this qualitative grounded theory research project is to facilitate an understanding of the significant leadership factors that influence church growth for the CMA denomination in the United States. Also, this research seeks to provide CMA pastors with a substantive theory and leadership factors to aid in the foundation, initiation, and maintenance of healthy church growth. Through comparative data analysis of fast-growing church plants and established churches, the researcher will narrow the focus and study to 10 CMA lead pastors. These 10 pastors will have experienced 5% growth sustained over five years. This narrowed focus will help acquire shared leadership dynamics and personal factors of influence that affected church growth outcomes.

77. Larry McKain, *Falling in Love with the Church – Building Agenda Harmony for Church Health and Church Multiplication Movements* (Kansas City, MO: New Church Specialties, 2004), 174.

This thesis project aims to develop a substantive theory of action for initiating and maintaining healthy church growth in the CMA from grounded data. The researcher will use the following three questions to guide the action research concerning leadership factors in healthy growing Christian and Missionary Alliance local churches.

1. What leadership factors do successful, healthy, and growing CMA church pastors think influence the growth of their local church?
2. What leadership principles and methods do lead pastors in the Christian and Missionary Alliance identify as important to their roles and healthy sustainable church growth?
3. What common strategies and numerical ministry dashboards do pastors of growing churches utilize when measuring growth predictors?

The researcher gathering the qualitative and quantitative data will analyze, compare, and review statistical facts from the 10 lead pastors in the CMA. “Qualitative research is a useful tool of complexification which can enable the practical theologian to gain rich and deep insights into the nature of situations and the forms of practice that are performed within them.”⁷⁸ The statistical facts and data will act as a useful tool to explain the personal factors that the participating lead pastors believed influenced and sustained the growth of their local church. “Evaluation is the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of actual programs in order to make judgments about specific aspects of the program, improve the program's effectiveness, and make decisions about the program's future.”⁷⁹

78. Swinton and Mowat. *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 67.

79. Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research – A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011), 70.

The intervention will speak specifically to the problem of declining church plants and declining established churches in the Christian and Missionary Alliance. The problem this project will address is declining and ineffective leadership models, methods, and practices in the CMA's established churches and new church plants so that the local church can be vibrant and healthy. The study and comparative analysis of 10 highly effective lead pastors and their churches will help the Christian and Missionary Alliance as a whole to implement models, methods, and practices that will ensure healthy growth over a sustainable period.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

The initial research for this project will start in January 2020, focusing on five CMA church planting pastors and five CMA established local church pastors based in the United States. Each pastor will have experienced at least 5% sustainable growth over five years to qualify for the project. The author performed this research with the idea that the local church is the primary mission of Christ's church in the world.

This project will be qualitative and quantitative in that the researcher will provide a questionnaire to the 10 lead pastors. This questionnaire will seek numerical data and non-numerical data consisting of meanings, concepts, methods, definitions, characteristics, and a description of ministry leadership observations not dealing with counts or measures. Data triangulation will take place utilizing the vital facts, figures, and insights to help develop the overall quantitative research. "Data triangulation is the use of data sources in a study. For example, comparing and contrasting data from observation, documents of official records, and interviews will give you a more detailed description than you could otherwise know."⁸⁰ With the help of Terry Smith, National Director of Church Ministries of the Christian and Missionary

80. Sensing, 81.

Alliance, the researcher will choose 10 lead pastors in the CMA that meet the strict criteria to be a part of the project. The researcher must seek to obtain accurate statistics from the National Office of the CMA to make sure they fit within the guidelines of a minimum of 5% growth over five years. The office of Church Ministry at the National Office has the best opportunity to identify churches that meet this criterion.

The researcher, following approval from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and permission from Terry Smith (National Office of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Director of Church Ministries) and Ivan R. Marti Sr. (National Office of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church Multiplication and Leadership Development), will seek data through questionnaires providing qualitative and quantitative church data from 10 lead pastors and churches in the CMA. The researcher will then need the approval of the 10 CMA lead pastors. Based on a personal invitation via email, the researcher will seek the participant's consent via signature to utilize their name and the church name in the thesis project. The participants will be consenting to complete a questionnaire that will take 45-60 minutes to complete and provide church quantitative data. The risks are minimal in this study, which means they are equal to the risks one would encounter in everyday life. Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study or be compensated in any way. Lastly, the pastors and churches in this study are participating on a voluntary basis and can withdraw from the study at any time. The consent form and signature will be a part of the digital questionnaires' they complete and are in Appendix 2.

The detailed questionnaire will be sent out to the following CMA lead pastors in the United States as identified by Terry Smith and Ivan R. Marti Sr. from the National Office of the Christian and Missionary Alliance:

Church Planting Pastors:

1. Matt Cohen – Lead Pastor
Citylight Philadelphia
4101 Freeland Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19128
www.citylightphilly.com
2. Gavin Johnson – Lead Pastor
Citylight Omaha 4383 Nicholas Street
Omaha, NE 68131
www.citylightomaha.org
3. Spencer Sweeting – Lead Pastor
City Alliance Church
380 W 4th Street
Williamsport, PA 17701
<https://cityalliance.org/>
4. Eliezer (Ruben) Clemente – Lead Pastor
Encounter with Jesus
Birmingham, AL
5. Jason Malone – Lead Pastor
Summit Church
1301 Rutherford Rd.
Greenville, SC 29609
www.summitupstate.org

Established Church Pastors:

6. Jeremy Gorham – Lead Pastor
Crosstown Alliance Church
450 N Highland Ave.
Wellsville, NY 14895
www.crosstownalliance.com
7. Ted Kang – Lead Pastor
San Jose Christian Alliance Church
2360 McLaughlin Ave.
San Jose, CA 95122
www.sjacac.org

8. Reubens Ruba – Lead Pastor
Lewisburg Alliance Church
137 Supplee Mill Rd.
Lewisburg, PA 17837
www.lewisburgalliance.com
9. Scott Brooks – Lead Pastor
Freshwater Church
590 Hartman Rd.
Wadsworth, OH 44281
www.thefreshwater.church
10. Doug Goodin – Lead Pastor
Front Range Alliance Church
5210 Centennial Blvd.
Colorado Springs, CO 90919
www.frontrangealliance.org

After securing and approval of the 10 lead pastors, the researcher will use the following method to inform and involve each lead pastor in the project. The researcher will inform and engage the 10 Christian and Missionary Alliance lead pastors in the following steps:

- A. The researcher will email each CMA lead pastor individually, inviting them to be a part of this thesis research project.
- B. The researcher will then send a short letter to each lead pastor explaining the purpose, goals, and guidelines for this Action Research project.
- C. The researcher will follow up on the phone call and letter by emailing the questionnaire and allowing 30 days for completion.
- D. The researcher will follow up with a personal phone call thanking each lead pastor and sending them the Action Research findings following the approval, passing, and defending of the Thesis Project.

The initial research will begin January 2020 and be completed by May 2020. The researcher will type up a questionnaire and send to pastors through the mail, or email upon request. The following questionnaire will be utilized to collect qualitative and quantitative data.

Questionnaire

Leadership Dynamics and Factors of Fast-Growing Church Plants and Revitalized Established Churches in the Christian and Missionary Alliance Doctoral Project Questionnaire

Church Name: _____

Location: _____

Church Size: _____

Number of Staff (Full Time/ Part Time): _____

Total years in Ministry: _____

Ordained or Licensed in CMA? _____

Total years as an Alliance Pastor: _____

Years at current Church: _____

Are you the founding pastor? _____

Are you leading an established church or church plant? _____

If in an established church, have you planted a church before? _____

Mission Statement:

Vision Statement:

Values:

Do you have a strategic plan? 1 year? 3 year? 5 year? 10 year? _____

Do you provide leadership training to your staff, leaders, and church members? If so, what?

Top 5 pros of the Church today?

- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____

Top 5 threats to the Church today?

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

Top 5 pros of revitalizing an established Church?

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

Top 5 cons of revitalizing the established Church or landmines to avoid?

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

Top 5 pros of Church planting?

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____

Top 5 cons of church planting or landmines to avoid?

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____

S.W.O.T Analysis of your specific local church: (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats*)

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Opportunities:

Threats:

Why do you think the established churches are dying at a fast rate?

Why are we seeing some church plants start fast and succeed while other church plants do not make it past the 12-month mark?

Have you experienced 5% growth sustained over a 5-year period? What are the key factors, leadership models, or strategies that have contributed to this success?

Any other thoughts, concerns, or recommendations on this subject matter?

Would you consider providing the following data from your church to help this thesis project succeed?

- a. Attendance records from the past five years (2013-2018)
- b. Overall church ministry programming
- c. Overall ministry strategic plan including goals (12, 24, 36 or beyond)
- d. Financial history (Has your giving increased with increased attendance? If so, by what percentage?)
- e. Specific staff and titles

- f. Debt, if any
- g. The number of volunteers serving per weekend and the overall total number of volunteers for the entire church
- h. Any other info that will help glean leadership factors in fast-growing sustainable church plants and revitalized established churches

The questionnaire found in Appendix A will be sent to each pastor to acquire critical data, both qualitative and quantitative, from each local church context and determine key leadership factors that have facilitated church growth and sustainability.

Upon receiving the completed questionnaires, the researcher may need to contact the lead pastor participants on the phone for follow-up questions to bring clarity to the data. The researcher will seek to get an overview of the congregation, culture, and DNA of the church that is fostering growth.

When talking with each lead pastor on an “as needed basis,” the researcher will ask them the following key questions:

1. What is the style of your church, size of your church, and how many years of experience do you have?
2. Have you ever church planted? If so, what are some pitfalls and success stories?
3. Have you ever revitalized an established church? If so, what are some pitfalls and success stories?
4. What is the current state of the church?

Strategic Timeline

Developing a strategic timeline of events of the research project will be crucial to the success of the implementation of the intervention design. The initial research for this project will

begin in January 2020. Following the completion of DMIN 840, approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Liberty University, and Divinity Department approval, the researcher will utilize the following plan and timeline to carry out the action research thesis.

- **January 20, 2020** – The researcher will contact Terry Smith (Director of Church Ministries at the National office of the Christian and Missionary Alliance) and Ivan R. Marti Sr. (Director of Church Multiplication and Leadership Development at the National office of the Christian and Missionary Alliance) to seek essential facts, figures, and insights to help develop of the overall quantitative research. This request will include the latest data on churches in the Alliance growing at a sustained rate of 5% over five years. The researcher will finalize the lead pastor/church participation list based on the data received from the National Office.
- **February 2, 2020** – Following IRB approval, all 10 Action Research participants will be contacted for an initial personal call inviting them to be a part of the project. The researcher will personally interview and have a questionnaire filled out by the following CMA Church Planting and Established Church lead pastors in the United States:
Church Planting Lead Pastors:
Matt Cohen (CityLight Church Philadelphia), Gavin Johnson (CityLight Church Omaha), Spencer Sweeting (City Alliance Church), Eliezer (Ruben) Clemente (Encounter With Jesus), Jason Malone (Summit Church).
Established Church Lead Pastors:
Jeremy Gorham (Crosstown Alliance Church), Ted Kang (San Jose Christian Alliance Church), Reubens Ruba (Lewisburg Alliance Church), Scott Brooks (Freshwater Church), Doug Goodin (Front Range Alliance Church).

- **February 16, 2020** – The researcher will follow up on the welcome email consisting of the consent form and questionnaire and remind each lead pastor the 30-day deadline is March 3, 2020 for completion. The researcher will remind each participant of the following data points:
 - a. Attendance records
 - b. Overall church ministry programming
 - c. Overall ministry strategic plan including goals (12, 24, 36 or beyond)
 - d. Financial history
 - e. Specific staff and titles
 - f. Debt if any
 - g. Number of volunteers
 - h. Any other info that will help glean leadership factors in fast-growing sustainable church plants and revitalized established churches.
- **March 3, 2020** – The researcher will begin to analyze data collected from 10 lead pastors and churches, categorize, finalize, compare, prepare, and disseminate the data for the action thesis project.
- **April 3, 2020** – The researcher will follow up with a personal phone call thanking each lead pastor and sending them the action research findings following the approval and passing of the project.
- **May 2020** – The researcher will finalize the thesis project and turn it in for completion in pursuit of defending the project. The researcher will also offer a copy of the research to the National Office of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

The gathering and evaluation process of the data will take approximately eight full weeks before it is ready to be utilized for the action research thesis project. Six weeks will be allowed for the participants to get their data returned to the researcher, and two weeks will provide the researcher ample time to evaluate, categorize, compare, and finalize the data. The researcher will stick closely to the implementation plan and methods for data collecting, as written above. An analysis of all data will take place in a systematic manner, which will allow the researcher to analyze data that will produce sound results to the problem presented.

The research for this project cannot be accomplished without receiving quality questionnaire responses from the 10 healthy, high impact Alliance Churches. Thomas Fuller writes, "Get the facts, or the facts will get you. And when you get them, get them right, or they will get you wrong. All things are difficult before they are easy."⁸¹ The research model, timeline, and evaluation of the qualitative and quantitative data listed will help significantly in getting the facts that lead to healthy, sustainable, growing churches in the Alliance. Each participant, because they are licensed or ordained in the CMA has a high view of Scripture, and they are intensely obedient to the Great Commission. Their churches, because of their affiliation with the Alliance, are working to closely resemble the first church found in Acts 2:42-47. They exist to bring glory to God, but each one will be different in culture, context, and model. Every church desires to move from a period of struggle, staleness, or mediocrity to sustained breakout growth, health, and impact. When this happens, the local church can genuinely have a significant effect on the community in which they live and beyond.

81. Rainer, *Breakout Churches*, 69.

Chapter 4

Results

Unless strategy evaluation is performed seriously and systematically, and unless strategists are willing to act on the results, energy will be used up defending yesterday.⁸² Today in the local Church, many new exciting Church plants are being planted all over the world. At the same time, many old established Churches are suffering and shutting their doors. They find themselves not reaching outward, but rather inward. Also, many Church plants struggle to be sustainable and find themselves not making it because of finances, lack of core launch team, lack of quality leadership, and many other variables. The following 10 healthy church plants and established churches in the Christian and Missionary Alliance will serve as a guide to seeking key leadership factors and methods of fast-growing church plants and established churches in the Christian and Missionary Alliance. They will also look at the pros and cons of church planting and revitalizing an established church.

Within many churches, it is believed that there is truly a spiritual battle for the hearts their leaders. Church leaders find themselves burnt-out, in despair, tired, and with deep feelings of aimlessly leading. It is so easy to think of all the negatives of why a Church is not successful. Many pastors and Christian leaders have experienced great spiritual victories leading and serving in the church, but they have also experienced setbacks, heartbreak, and things they wish never happened in church leadership. In this chapter, the researcher is going look closely at 10 churches, with a focus on the data provided by 10 lead pastors from all over the United States. Five are currently the lead pastor of a church plant in the CMA and the other five are lead pastors in Established churches they personally did not plant.

82. Bob Whitesel, *Growth by Accident, Death by Planning – How Not to Kill a Congregation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 80.

The American Church is at a crossroads. Pastors and Christians leaders are in a trying time in our country's history and the church will experience dramatic change. Leaders need to be ready for whatever comes their way and be proactive in their leadership capacity. The facts, qualitative data, quantitative data, and professional opinions of these 10 pastors will help shape the results in this chapter.

“Some pastors whose churches are dying don't want to know the objective facts of their situation because they are genuinely afraid the raw information will be more than their hearts could bear.”⁸³ In the following pages, the researcher gives a Church Profile Snapshot of the 10 Christian and Missionary Alliance Churches. While this is not all the data collected from these 10 churches, there will be an adequate profile, in the words of the pastors of each church, that will allow further understanding of the results to follow. The researcher does not necessarily endorse or agree with all the thoughts, opinions, and suggestions of each lead pastor. “Get all the facts at any price and hold on tightly to all the good sense you can get.”⁸⁴

Five Alliance Established Church Snapshot Profiles

Church #1: Freshwater Community Church, Wadsworth, OH

Questionnaire Completed By: Pastor Scott Brooks, Lead Pastor

Church Name: Freshwater Community Church

Location: Wadsworth, Ohio

Church Size: Average attendance 720 // 900+ call Freshwater home

Church Age: 88 years old (est. 1932)

83. Bill Hybels, *Axiom – Powerful Leadership Proverbs* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2008), 73.

84. Proverbs 23:23.

Church Worship Style: Contemporary

Church Service Times: 8:45 am & 10:30 am

Small Groups or Sunday School Model: Small Groups

Mid-Week Activities/Services: If yes, what are they? Community Groups, Bible Studies, Kids Ministry

Number of Staff (Full Time/Part Time) Please list roles/titles and full-time or part-time:

Full-Time: Lead Pastor, Youth Pastor, Discipleship Pastor, Worship Pastor, Children's Director, Administration Director

Part-Time: Children's Assistant, Youth Assistant, Discipleship Assistant, Receptionist, Office Manager, Communications Assistant

Total years in Ministry as a Lead Pastor: 17+

Total years as an Alliance Pastor: 21+

Years at current Church: 17+

Are you the founding pastor? No

Other roles you served in prior to being a Lead Pastor: Ministry intern, Worship pastor (4 years)

Ordained or Licensed in CMA? Yes

Are you leading an established church or church plant? Established church

If established church, have you planted a church before? No

Mission Statement: To glorify God by connecting to Him, connecting to His family, and connecting to His mission.

Vision Statement: What we're striving for: To see disciples making disciples in which the presence of God flows through them into the world to bring transformation.

Values: How we live:

- **Spirit Led:** We seek and submit to the continuing ministry of the Holy Spirit
- **Authentic:** We live openly and honestly before God and people
- **Relational:** Every person matters and has worth
- **Missional:** We advance God's kingdom in all aspects of life

Do you have a strategic plan? 1 year? 3 year? 5 year? 10 year? No. Finished one up two years ago and just about to embark on a new one.

What is your leadership structure and elder or governing board make-up? How many are on the board and in point leadership type roles? Men Only? Women? We are an elder board governed and staff led church. Men only on the board. Right now, 6. Our staff are non-voting elders, which makes it 12 people in the room. Too many. We are about to divide and conquer because of the inefficiency and bottlenecks that come with too many people on a board. All elders are serving some sort of ministry within the church.

Do you provide leadership training to your staff, leaders, and church members? If so, what? We have a 2-semester leadership development entitled CORE. It focuses on Abiding in Christ, Self-leadership (Spiritual, mental, emotional, physical), Prayer, Missions/Evangelism. We have a youth version of it. Around 80 people have gone through it over the past 8. Only 4 per group max. We require “Steps to Freedom” which is an intense life-assessment of sin, wounds, vows and getting people healing and freedom. It’s a 10 out of 10 in terms of authenticity and vulnerability. It is about a 7 in terms of studying and content.

Would you consider your church board governed and staff-led? If not, explain your model? Yes

Top 5 pros of the Church today? 1. She’s the Bride of Christ. He loves her; 2. Christ is still sending her out with power and authority; 3. She is still the one Jesus uses to reach this world; 4. God manifests His presence as they gather in worship / discipleship; 5. She is still salt in this world

Top 5 threats to the Church today? 1. Satan still remains the number one foe of the church; 2. Heresy and the erosion of belief in the inerrancy of scripture; 3. Promoting of unhealthy and immoral people into leadership; 4. Exchanging the presence and power of Christ for traditions / forms; 5. In America people are utterly exhausted and distracted and have no idea how to prioritize Jesus

Top 5 pros of revitalizing an established Church? 1. Infrastructure in place. That’s huge. (place to meet); 2. I would say the rest has to do with the 5 pros’ above; 3. Heaven won and Hell lost. That’s always good; 4. A church family that has people already connected to the community; 5. Self-sustaining

Top 5 cons of revitalizing the established Church or landmines to avoid? 1. A very unhealthy leadership; 2. A church that is not desperate to change; 3. A church loyal to dead traditions; 4. A church that quit caring multiplication and reaching the lost; 5. Very difficult to change its reputation in a community

Top 5 pros of Church planting? 1. Multiplication. This is kingdom DNA; 2. A new body of Christ impacting a community; 3. Creates room to multiply again in the Mother church; 4.

Creates room for people to serve and make an impact; 5. Provides another context for multiplication to happen again.

Top 5 cons of church planting or landmines to avoid? 1. Doing it without God's leading; 2. Ill-born church – birthed out of conflict

S.W.O.T Analysis of your specific local church: (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats*)

Strengths: As we evaluate our mission of Living Up, In, and Out, we continue to see and witness people following God, a high level of people serving and belonging to a community group or bible study, engaged in evangelism. We continue to see a high level of participation in prayer spread out through the body. We see and hear stories of transformation, Spirit encounters, and surrender. We are seeing multiplication of disciples making disciples.

Weaknesses: One weakness right now is the fact that as a church we have been a ceiling in our growth the past two years in our leadership structure. We are a large church but we're still acting like a small to medium size church. It's killing our momentum. We have to make dramatic shifts in delegation and empowerment and trust if Freshwater is to continue to multiply and grow. Another weakness is my leadership because I have not changed my leadership style to a large church. In a small church I could rely on my own relational capacity and the "tribal system" to communicate vision. This doesn't work in a large church, but I haven't changed. So, our church as a whole has no clue what our vision and mission and values are. We still have good instincts, but we are starting to lose momentum. We are weak in multiplication when it comes to church planting and sending people out. It's something we are aware of and incorporating into our 10-year goals.

Opportunities: Internship Site: We are looking to become an internship/apprenticeship site. The intentional piece is to raise up leaders within for Freshwater but also to send out. Alpha: We have an opportunity to see Alpha become a leading engine of growth at Freshwater. We started with just 12 guests 5 semesters ago. We are up to almost 70 guests invited. The stories of conversions and people being thawed out spiritually are staggering. We see this only growing larger.

Church Multiplication: We are positioned in such a way that it seems like God may be opening doors for us to come alongside churches and help them be revitalized and send off some of our leaders and members to turn the church around. We also have two communities we are "eyeing" to be a church planting site.

Threats: Not changing with culture: Our church has changed a lot over 17 years but we are facing a new test of change as we adjust to the Millennials who are starting to move into positions of influence. This change is going to be difficult for the Xers and Boomers. Not changing with growth: We face a leadership test of changing to grow.

Why do you think established churches are dying at a fast rate? I think it's the above answers and also the Post-Christian culture has landed all across America. So, people don't need church anymore. It doesn't matter if you're "seen" there like it used to. It is no longer the cultural thing to do so people aren't faking it anymore.

Have you experienced 5% growth sustained over a 5-year period? Yes

What are the key factors, leadership models, or strategies that have contributed to this success? Prayer, Holy Spirit Dependence, ensuring our services our filled with the presence of God, Leadership development, a commitment to evangelism and discipleship.

What bold decisions have you made as a Lead Pastor, Governing Board, and staff that has taken your church to the next level? At the very beginning the former senior pastor retired and they asked the remaining staff members to move so I could start with a clean slate. Early on in the revitalization we went contemporary in our music and put a new sound a/v in, got rid of the pews and put in chairs to create a large multipurpose room, renamed our church, invested around \$200,000 in the building to improve aesthetics, got serious about evangelism, shut down Sunday service and went to community groups, focused on young families and made sure our children's ministry was solid, I led the worship and preached. A small church had a worship pastor - that was a big deal. Our services consistently were powerful times of worship and encountering the presence of God. Over the years we made bad hires and in the 17 years I've been here we've fired or asked for the resignation of 4 staff. A few more moved on of their own volition. The bold decision is striving for excellence and not be afraid to let people go who should not be on staff. We also have hired some amazing leaders. There's isn't a weak link on staff which can be intimidating sometimes. We bought property and raised money and built in a new location. Huge risk. It has paid off. We continue to make changes and shut down ministries that are ineffective. We will forever keep doing this. The growth from 135 people to where we are now has been challenging. This stage we are in of going from a small and medium size church to a large church has been the most difficult for me personally. I am having to give away all kinds of ministry and truly focus in on leadership care and development. It's been a 2-year journey and one I almost didn't think I'd make it through. It's why we don't have a 3-5-year plan. I've been lost in the size. But I'm on the other side of it and we're about to kick in a plan by the end of the year. I can't wait.

Would you consider providing the following data from your church to help this thesis project succeed? It should be noted that a massive shift occurred at Freshwater the last two years. People's definition of average attendance has shifted from 2-3 times a month to 1-2 times every 4-6 weeks. Listen to Cary Neuhoff episode 245 on this shift that has hit USA and Canada. It's something that became a thing in the past 2 years. So, we're really trying to figure out what this looks like to factor attendance into our scorecard. In April/May of 2019 we did a survey of people (not visitors or new people but only those who give) who call Freshwater home and we found that in a 6-week period we saw 720 people attend. That's part of a larger number of growths that we know we have experienced but have not seen in the data. So, have we grown? The way we have traditionally counted average attendance would be, "no". But in 2019 we actually declined in our average attendance which doesn't jive with our giving which increased by almost 5%. The giving points to the growth we've experienced.

- **Overall church ministry programming:** Children's Sunday morning. Children's mid-week (every other week). Youth ministry on Sunday evenings. Community groups spread throughout the week. Women's ministry. Men's ministry. Worship ministry. Outreach – Alpha twice a year. Missions Team.

- **Overall ministry strategic plan including goals (12, 24, or 36 months)** – in the middle of crafting this.
- Financial history (Has your giving increased with increased attendance? If so, by what percentage?) see sheet
- **Debt, if any. \$1.2 million**
- **The number of volunteers serving per weekend and the overall total number of volunteers for the entire church.**
 - We have almost 500 servant positions throughout the week.
 - And 287 individual people serving.

Church #2: Front Range Alliance Church, Colorado Springs, CO.

Questionnaire Completed By: Pastor Doug Goodin, Lead Pastor

Church Name: Front Range Alliance Church

Location: Colorado Springs, CO

Church Size: 563

Church Age: 30 years

Worship Style: Elements of both traditional and contemporary

Church Service Times: 10:10 am

Sunday Morning Small Groups or Sunday School Model: We have Sunday education for infants through 12th grade, plus multiple adult classes at one campus; kids' education and occasional adult classes at the other campus.

Mid-Week Activities/ Services: If yes, what are they? Women's Bible Study, Men's Bible Study, youth ministry meetings, small groups, senior adults meeting, college-age meeting

Number of Staff (Full-Time/ Part-Time): Please list roles/titles and full-time or part-time:

Full-time: Senior Pastor, two Co-Pastors of another campus, Executive Administrator, Ministry Development Director

Part-time: Office Manager, Music Director, Administrative Assistant, Facilities Manager

Total years in Ministry as a Lead Pastor: 15 years

Other roles you served in prior to being a Lead Pastor: Assistant Pastor – 6 years

Ordained or Licensed in CMA? Yes

Total years as an Alliance Pastor: 23

Years at current Church: 21

Are you the founding pastor? No, 3rd lead pastor

Are you leading an established church or church plant? Established, which has launched a church-plant-like campus.

If established church, have you planted a church before? Yes

Mission Statement: To present everyone complete in Christ.

Vision Statement: To fill Colorado Springs with disciples of Christ.

Values: Loving Jesus, preaching the gospel, loving in community, thriving in your stage of life, giving generously.

Do you have a strategic plan? 1 year? 3 year? 5 year? 10 year? 3-5 year

What is your leadership structure and elder or governing board make-up? 14 men who share leadership equally.

Do you provide leadership training to your staff, leaders, and church members? If so, what? Yes, various types. For years, Global Leadership Summit by Willow Creek, plus others.

Would you consider your church board governed and staff led? Day-to-day “corporate” and programmatic decisions are delegated to staff, under the authority of the elder’s collectives. We are an elder-led church.

Top 5 pros of the Church today? 1. Engaging the culture; 2. Passion for missions; 3. Devotion to planting churches

Top 5 threats to the Church today? 1. Lack of expositional preaching; 2. Weak male leaders in home and church; 3. Celebrity leaders; 4. Minimizing the biblical gospel; 5. Social media

Top 5 pros of revitalizing an established Church? 1. It’s often easier to start with something rather than nothing; 2. There should be some available resources, personnel and financial

Top 5 cons of revitalizing the established Church or landmines to avoid? 1. There’s a reason it needs revitalizing. Those reasons must be identified and improved; 2. Controlling, domineering, unbending people must not be allowed to become a drag on needed changes; 3. It takes certain types of leaders to turn things around. Such men are hard to find.

Top 5 pros of Church planting? 1. New beginnings are exciting; 2. Flexibility and “startup” mentality; 3. Lack of traditions to weigh down the effort; 4. Gives new opportunities for leaders in all areas of ministry

Top 5 cons of church planting or landmines to avoid? 1. Burn out of all involved; 2. It’s easy to lose focus or try to do everything an established church does, thereby doing nothing well; 3. Pride of leadership; 4. Difficult to maintain momentum; 5. Lack of quick growth brings discouragement

S.W.O.T Analysis of your specific local church: (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Strengths: Preaching/teaching, community, mission’s involvement, developing leaders

Weaknesses: Evangelism, specifically calling unbelievers to faith (we are good at cultivating relationships, but lack “going for the close,” you might say). Also, we serve young families well, but need to improve our impact in unmarried individuals.

Opportunities: Colorado Springs is liberal and largely unchurched.

Threats: Liberal politics may push against church freedom.

Why do you think established churches are dying at a fast rate? Poor leadership, compromising on the gospel, lack of expositional preaching, failure to develop elders who are true shepherds and teachers.

Why are we seeing some church plants start fast and succeed while other church plants do not make it past the 12-month mark? Poor leadership, lack of focus, lack of evangelism, trying to do everything (kids ministry, youth ministry, men’s and women’s ministries, small groups, outreach, etc., etc.).

Have you experienced 5% growth sustained over a 5-year period? Yes

What are the key factors, leadership models, or strategies that have contributed to this success? Based on feedback from newcomers, expositional preaching and being a loving community are our biggest draws. A close third is our passion for global missions and reaching our city.

What bold decisions have you made as a Lead Pastor, Governing Board, and staff that has taken your church to the next level? Eliminating mid-week church-wide services in order to free up time for fellowship and evangelism. Also, launching a new campus that is still part of the church, with significant independence, while maintaining one elder board, one budget, and one vision.

Church #3: San Jose Christian Alliance Church, San Jose, CA.

Questionnaire Completed By: Pastor Ted Kang, Lead Pastor

Church Name: San Jose Christian Alliance Church (*English and Mandarin Speaking*)

Location: San Jose, CA

Church Size: 850

Church Age: 44 Years

Church Worship Style: Contemporary

Church Service Times: 9:30 am, 11:20 am, 4:00 pm

Small Groups or Sunday School Model: Small group on Saturday evening, Discipleship Training on Saturday morning

Mid-Week Activities/ Services: If yes, what are they? Prayer meeting, mom's group, ESL outreach, afterschool program

Number of Staff (Full-Time/ Part-Time):

Full-Time: (15) 3 Associate Pastors for 3 language congregations, 2 Assistant Pastors, Worship Pastor, Youth Pastors, Children Ministry Director, Operation and Development Director, Prayer Ministry Director, Ministry Development Coach.

Part-Time: 10 Part time staff. Office Assistant, Finance, Youth Ministry, Children's Ministry.

Years at current Church: 6

Are you the founding pastor? No

Are you leading an established church or church plant? Both

If established church, have you planted a church before? Yes

Mission Statement: Bringing People to Wholeness and Fruitfulness

Vision Statement: No vision statement, but a vision document that highlights how to accomplish the mission.

Values: Holiness, Selflessness, Generosity

What is your leadership structure and elder or governing board make-up? Male only board with senior pastor as chair, 2 associate pastors, and 9 elders.

Do you provide leadership training to your staff, leaders, and church members? If so, what? Yes. 3-year discipleship training, 2-year leadership training track led by the elders and pastors.

Would you consider your church board governed and staff led? If not, explain your model?
Yes, board-governed, and staff-led.

Top 5 pros of the Church today? 1. Multi-ethnic & multi-lingual; 2. Multi-generational; 3. Community engagement; 4. Mission Engagement; 5. Generosity

Top 5 threats to the Church today? 1. Decline of the 20s-30s; 2. Maintaining unity amidst diversity; 3. Busyness and demand of life; 4. Holy living amidst shifting culture; 5. Ethnocentrism (Chinese-first mentality)

Top 5 pros of revitalizing an established Church? 1. Holy Spirit Empowerment; 2. Leadership Development; 3. Healthy Culture; 4. Sound Teaching; 5. Reproducing Ministries (church planting)

Top 5 cons of revitalizing the established Church or landmines to avoid? 1. Top-down leadership structure; 2. Developing programs and not people; 3. Focus on numbers rather than impact; 4. Lack of vision; 5. Lack of processes to sustain the vision

Top 5 pros of Church planting? 1. Best way to develop leaders; 2. Revitalization of the sending church; 3. Best way to evangelize; 4. A new way to engage the community; 5. A healthy way to reproduce ministries

Top 5 cons of church planting or landmines to avoid? 1. A premature launch; 2. A personality-driven ministry; 3. Not relying on the Holy Spirit; 4. Lack of grit and resilience; 5. Lack of proper support from the sending church/organization

S.W.O.T Analysis of your specific local church: (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats*)

Strengths: Unity among the leaders and staff, good processes to develop leaders, strong administration

Weaknesses: Complexity of multi-ethnic, multi-congregational ministry

Opportunities: Potential to reach the growing immigrant population from the mainland China. Strong partnership with other ethnic congregations.

Threats: Numeric growth without discipleship, dependence on human strength and strategies rather than the Holy Spirit

Why do you think established churches are dying at a fast rate? Status Quo, unhealthy culture, inability to develop people

Why are we seeing some church plants start fast and succeed while other church plants do not make it past the 12-month mark? Weak core group, lack of proper support necessary for the developmental years of the plant

Have you experienced 5% growth sustained over a 5-year period? Yes

What are the key factors, leadership models, or strategies that have contributed to this success? Holy Spirit empowered, people-focused, trust-based leadership model

What bold decisions have you made as a Lead Pastor, Governing Board, and staff that has taken your church to the next level? Decision to send people out rather than to keep them in, not to build congregations, but to build people, to develop elders to take on the teaching and shepherding role rather than decision-making role

Any other thoughts, concerns, or recommendations on this subject matter? Invest in people, rather than buildings and programs. Learn to develop people who have depth and maturity, not just skills for ministry, put priority on healthy culture over vision and growth. Growth comes as a result of health

Church #4: Crosstown Alliance Church, Wellsville, NY

Questionnaire Completed By: Pastor Jeremy Gorham, Lead Pastor

Church Name: Crosstown Alliance Church (1 Church- 4 Locations)

Location: Wellsville, NY

Church Size: 1200

Years in Ministry: 18

Years at current Church: 8 years

Are you the Founding Pastor? No

Have you church planted today? Yes

Vision Statement: Bringing Hope Alive

Mission Statement: We are all about pointing people to Jesus by stepping into hopeless situations and be the hands and feet of God's love and carry the truth to the broken world, wherever we go.

Number of Staff (Full-Time/ Part-Time): Please list roles/titles and full-time or part-time:

Full-time: 5 Pastors

Part-time: 14 Part time

Top 5 Pros of the Church Today: 1. The Church is helping people that are in adversity find hope; 2. The Church today is serving all generations; 3. Churches are partnering with para-church ministries, not only financially, but by serving them; 4. The church today is refocusing its

effort to feed the poor, help financially, and serve the community; 5. The church is becoming more and more the hands and feet of Christ which gives our spiritual ministry even more influence in the world

Top 5 Cons of the Church Today: 1. Things that have happened in the name of the Church that should have never happened; 2. Things that have more particularly happened in the name of Christ that should have never happened; 3. We have historically been perceived as serving ourselves more than serving anyone else; 4. When we allow our baggage to lead us, instead of Christ leading us

Pros/Cons of Revitalizing an Established Church: There is a strong movement in our culture to return to cities to revitalize urban areas. Existing churches now have a far greater appeal than they did during the days of suburban spread. The top cons of revitalizing the church is that many times they have issues that cannot be fixed. Sometimes it is simply that the church was built in a different culture and does not work in the present culture. This is most commonly associated with churches in urban areas that were built when people walked to church. There are many buildings in urban areas that have seating for 1,000 but parking for only a fraction of that number. Other times buildings that have been around for a long-time are more costly to maintain than is feasible. Many times, churches find themselves trying to minister to one demographic, but they are located in a completely different demographic.

Pros/Cons of Church Planting: 1. Lack of funds 2. Poor leadership 3. One question I would ask; Does the church have critical mass to sustain itself in terms of people, volunteers, and financial resources? It's only in the movies that it is true, "if you build it, they will come." Most of the time enthusiasm overrides good judgment and people skip Jesus' warning – Let man count the cost before he builds the tower. We often substitute spiritual sincerity for sound business thinking. Church plants often attract people who are either discontent with their existing church or are always going for what's new. It's not new for very long. My rule of thumb is that people give you between one and two years to be a full-service church. After a year, they start questioning why there isn't the programming they need. At the end of two years they make a decision they have to go somewhere else because the church isn't ministering to their kids or their teens. It's very hard to achieve solidarity of mission. Many times, new churches attract people who are looking for a venue to run their philosophy of ministry. Often because leadership is new, traditions are absent; many times, church plants have a very competitive number of people trying to grab hold of the direction. One significant pro to church planting is you bring very little baggage into the community. However, even a brand-new church carries the baggage of whatever people have against churches in general and Christ followers in particular.

Church #5: Lewisburg Alliance Church, Lewisburg, PA

Questionnaire Completed By: Dr. Reubens Ruba, Lead Pastor

Church Name: Lewisburg Alliance Church

Location: Lewisburg, PA

Church Size: 460

Church Age: 40 years old

Church Worship Style: Contemporary

Church Service Times: 10:15 am

Small Groups or Sunday School Model: Small groups – Purpose Driven Model (300 in attendance)

Are you the founding pastor? No

Are you leading an established church or church plant? Established

If established church, have you planted a church before? No

Mission Statement: Experiencing a life-changing journey with Jesus together through

- Worship by passionately magnifying God both privately and publicly
- Discipleship by studying and applying God's Word
- Ministry by serving the world
- Fellowship by involvement in LAC group where each one would feel accepted and love
- Evangelism by leading people into a relationship with Jesus

Mid-Week Activities/ Services: If yes, what are they? Awana (65), Small Groups (300 in attendance), Women's Bible Study (100).

Number of Staff (Full-Time/ Part- Time): Full – Lead Pastor; Administrative Assistant; Youth Pastor; Executive Pastor; Children's Director. Part – Facility Director

Total years in Ministry as a Lead Pastor: 38

Other roles you served in prior to being a Lead Pastor: Assistant Pastor and Youth Director

Ordained or Licensed in CMA? Ordained

Total years as an Alliance Pastor: 16

Years at current Church: 16

Are you the founding pastor? No

Are you leading an established church or church plant? Established

If established church, have you planted a church before? Yes

Do you have a strategic plan? 1 year? 3 year? 5 year? 10 year? 3

What is your leadership structure and elder or governing board make-up? How many are on the board and in point leadership type roles? Men Only? Women? Men only – 9 elders/7 Governing Board – though we are going through an organizational re-organization.

Do you provide leadership training to your staff, leaders, and church members? If so, what? Yes. We tailor to each ministry team and once a year (fall) we have entire ministry teams in for training. Elders retreat is held in March of each year.

Would you consider your church board governed and staff led? If not, explain your model?
Yes.

Top 5 pros of the Church today? 1. Worship; 2. Solid theology and teaching on all levels; 3. Children's Ministry; 4. Philosophy of Ministry; 5. Strong Assimilation

Top threats to the Church today? 1. Lack of submission in church staff; 2. Organizational fuzziness on Elders, Governing Board, and Lead Pastor; 3. Disunity among the church; 4. Social issues that the church is adopting that are unbiblical

Top pros of revitalizing an established Church? 1. Strong philosophy of ministry; 2. Testimony to the community; 3. Opportunity to revive a movement or local church that God established

Top cons of revitalizing the established Church or landmines to avoid? 1. Staff growth problems; 2. Know who makes the call on day to day ministry decisions; 3. Lack of unity on the staff, board, and congregation

Any other thoughts, concerns, or recommendations on this subject matter? When I was a Lead Pastor at a former church I didn't know the first thing in how to make a new church plant survive and be successful. Consequently, I felt somewhat of a failure and left after two years. Fortunately, this congregation has survived and is averaging 400 in morning worship today. Therefore, I firmly believe and have experienced that a church planter needs the following: (A) He or she must go through a professional evaluating process to see if he or she is qualified and gifted to serve as a church planter. (B) He or she must go through a church planter's boot camp to learn the essentials. (C) He or she should attend church planter's workshops. (D) It is much better to plant being tied to a group or denomination. This gives necessary support (financial, emotional, and numerical). (E) It is vital to have a mentor or coach to help with the set-up, organization, and performance of the new church plant. (F) The new church planter must be a fund raiser...raising funds for his or her own personal support, the support of the congregation, and for publicity is a must. (G) The new church plant MUST be involved in the community-working on social issues as well as spiritual. I believe church planting is something that must be done and be done fast in the church. The youth and young adults are not without the need of Christ and the established church is not reaching them. In many established churches there are very few conversions of baptisms. The church plants are seeing many young people saved and baptized. This makes for an atmosphere and culture that is alive and exciting. The worship in

many established churches is old and unappealing to the younger generations. Most church plants are using “post modern” music that attracts the young and some old alike. They are reaching out to their communities and helping with social issues. In other words, they are relevant to the world without compromising the message. The Bible is real, fresh, and applicable if we understand that the King James Version will not speak to the 2020 world. Let’s go! Let’s win the world! I have been in the ministry for over 25 years and most of my ministry has been in the established church. Unfortunately, the future is not all that bright for these churches. Churches are being closed all the time due to the fact that the old “saints” do not want change resulting in the young not attending or leaving. I know that there are exceptions to this, but in these churches they have met the challenge to change and are doing so. Can the established church survive? In my opinion, they must agree to change and move in that direction immediately.”

Five Alliance Church Planting Snapshot Profiles

Church #6: Summit Church, Greenville, SC

Questionnaire Completed By: Pastor Jason Malone, Lead Pastor

Church Name: Summit Church

Location: Greenville, SC (1 Church in 5 Locations)

Church Size: 1,500

Years in Ministry: 20

Worship Style: Contemporary

Church Service Times: Multiple times at 5 locations.

Sunday Morning Small Groups or Sunday School Model: Small Group model

Number of Staff (Full-Time/ Part-Time): 14

Are you the founding pastor? Yes

Have you church planted before? Yes

Values: 1. Passionate Pursuit of God; 2. Live Connected; 3. Engaged Spirit Giftedness; 4. Stewardship of Life; 5. Share of our Grace Stories

Vision Distinctives: Target Driven. Interdependent Leadership. Spiritual Formation. Church Planting. Global Partnerships.

Top 5 Pros of the church today: 1. Culture of Acceptance – A “Belong” environment and building community; 2. Quality of leaders at all levels/accountability structures; 3. Generosity & training; 4. Christian school/Childcare Ministry/Ministry to Families; 5. Serving Attitude and meeting the needs of people

Top 5 Cons of the Church today: 1. Hypocrisy; 2. Inward focus; 3. Judgmental spirit; 4. Out of touch with reality/Not relevant to today’s culture; 5. Not engaged in seeing the bigger picture and problems of the world

Top 5 Pros of Revitalizing an Established Church: 1. Established structure/ Process (*You can focus on the real issues of church without worry of raising funds, finding building, etc., in most cases*); 2. Traditions to build on (*This is only true in some cases, in some churches traditions may be a negative thing to build on*); 3. Trained people and leaders are established; 4. Stability/Foundation (*In some cases a denominational backing*); 5. Name recognition

Top 5 Cons of Revitalizing an Established Church: 1. Time and energy required to change the culture; 2. Resistance to change/Losing key people; 3. Changing perception of church to the community (*People already have perceived notions about the church*); 4. Lack of objectivity/Leadership have no clear vision of where they are going; 5. Name identification (*if negative*)

Top 5 Cons of Church Planting: 1. Arrogance “We don’t need anyone else’s help or guidance” mindset; 2. Lack of resources, facilities, or money; 3. Lack of leadership; 4. Lack of structure and process; 5. Name recognition and no solid foundation.

Top 5 Pros of Church Planting: 1. Everything is new and fresh/Start with a clean slate; 2. Draw new unchurched people; 3. Everyone is engaged and on mission; 4. Energy/There is a buzz in their air from the newness; 5. Focus on prayer and the unchurched/Depending on God

Why do you think established churches are dying at a fast rate? Many established churches are unwilling to adapt to change. When change does come, they oppose it at all cost. Established churches also are viewed as not relevant. They are perceived as not connecting with today’s society. Many churches in this category view themselves as superior to other churches. They identify themselves with their name and their past. These churches are also aging and have a lack of connection with younger generations. The church especially does not connect with young people in transition from college to a career and the young person ends up leaving the church because it is not relevant to them.

Why is the church planting effort so high right now? 1. Independent Spirit/“Do it how I want” mind-frame/Doing what God wants mind-frame; 2. Opportunity to be creative; 3. Many good models to follow; 4. Great training and support by the local church and church planting agencies

Any other thoughts, concerns, or recommendations on this subject matter? I am a “change-agent” kind of leader, but we need to make sure we do not completely sever ourselves from our heritage. We are approaching an “anything goes” mindset that continues to follow the latest ideas of concepts. We need to make sure we are rooted in sound theology that we build stability into

the lives of our people. The opportunity to do good is great! We need to continue to find a way to stay outward focused-reaching our community and our world.”

Church #7: Citylight Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA

Questionnaire Completed By: Pastor Matt Cohen, Lead Pastor

Church Name: Citylight Philadelphia

Location: Philadelphia, PA (1 Church in 3 Locations)

Church Size: 1375

Years in Ministry: 18

Are you the founding pastor? Yes

Have you church planted before? Yes

Vision Statement: Love God. Love Others. Love Philadelphia.

Purpose Statement: Citylight exist to make disciples of Jesus to the glory of God

Worship Style: Contemporary

Church Service Times: 6 services on Sunday morning

Sunday Morning Small Groups or Sunday School Model: Small Group Model

Number of Staff (Full-Time/ Part-Time): 9 Full-time Pastors

Ordained or Licensed in CMA? Yes

Top 5 Pros of Revitalizing an Established Church: 1. Building trust with people; 2. Learn the culture, community, demographics, and statistics of the community; 3. Seeking God for the vision; 4. You will go further fast by going slower into change; 5. The leader needs to get “change in their pocket”

Top 5 Cons of Church Planting: 1. Each person has their own agenda with the launch team and there is a lack of harmony; 2. Poor selection of leadership and assimilating people; 3. Mission drift: losing sight of the vision or mission; 4. The plant does not have a denomination or agency backing their vision; 5. The church does not define who they are going to be

Top 5 Pros of Church Planting: 1. Church planting is the fastest way to reach unchurched people; 2. Church planting allows leaders to be grown up; 3. Church planting allows another

venue and/or avenue to reach the lost; 4. No traditions or red tape from the past that holds back the vision; 5. The ability to breathe new life into a community or city and reach people no one else is reaching

Church #8: Citylight Omaha, Omaha, NE

Questionnaire Completed By: Pastor Gavin Johnson, Lead Pastor

Church Name: Citylight Omaha

Location: Omaha, NE (1 Church in 2 Locations)

Church Size: 1,100

Years in Ministry: 18

Are you the founding pastor? Yes, 2012.

Have you church planted before? Yes

Mission Statement: Our mission is to multiply disciples and churches.

Values: The values that drive Citylight Church are a commitment to reveling in God's act of reaching down to us in the gospel and responding by reaching up, in, and out. (Down= Gospel; Up= Spiritual Formation; In= Community; Out= Mission)

Worship Style: Contemporary

Church Service Times: 9:00 am & 11:00 am

Sunday Morning Small Groups or Sunday School Model: City Groups (Small Groups)

Number of Staff (Full-Time/ Part-Time): 38 Staff (25 full-time/13 part-time)

Ordained or Licensed in CMA? Yes

Pros of the Church today: 1. The church is becoming more mission/outreach focused; 2. The church has an incredible opportunity in today's economic downturn; 3. Churches and denominational agencies are working at ways to reach the lost.

Cons of the Church today: 1. Churches can be led by a poor leader and leadership; 2. Established churches gradually become insider focused; 3. Underdeveloped ministries and/or too many ministries that is not effective.

Cons of Revitalizing an Established Church: 1. People and leadership are easily offended because of traditions; 2. You have to constantly fight against traditions, family ties, and the heritage of the church; 3. Leaders try to make changes to fast resulting in lack of trust from the people; 4. Many times, the leadership and congregation do not want to change resulting in either the incoming pastor having many battles or getting frustrated and leaving

Pros of Revitalizing an Established Church: 1. The church can be a vibrant, exciting, growing place where people are reached for Christ again; 2. The church finances, leadership, and building are already in place in most cases and other variables; 3. The church has a positive mark on the community and the community embraces the change

Top 5 Cons of Church Planting: 1. Hiring the wrong leaders; 2. Not having adequate financing and backing from a supporting agency or denomination; 3. No mentoring agency or coaches for the leadership; 4. Trying to be all things to all people. Do not be a smorgasbord church; but do a few things really well; 5. Leadership and people losing sight of vision and mission of why they were planting in the first place

Top 5 Pros of Church Planting: 1. Fastest way to reach people today; 2. Opportunity to be an “on ramp” for non-Christians to show up to church and hear the Gospel; 3. You are able to do far and above more new innovative ways of doing ministry than an established church.

Church #9: Encounter with Jesus, Birmingham, AL

Questionnaire Completed By: Pastor Eliezer (Ruben) Clemente, Lead Pastor

Church Name: Encounter with Jesus (Spanish Church)

Location: Birmingham, AL

Church Size: 475

Are you the founding pastor? Yes, 2012.

Have you church planted before? Yes

Vision Statement: Meeting with Jesus: We are a Christian family committed to Christ and his purposes. Christ Saves, Sanctifies, Heals, and Comes Again.

Worship Style: Contemporary

Church Service Times: 10:00 am

Sunday Morning Small Groups or Sunday School Model: Small Groups

Number of Staff (Full-Time/ Part-Time): 4 Full-time/8 Part-time

Ordained or Licensed in CMA? Yes

Top 5 Pros of the Church today: 1. Worship experiences; 2. Youth Ministry; 3. Children's Ministry; 4. Mission partnerships; 5. Great buildings/locations

Cons of the Church today: 1. Insider focused; 2. Some unwilling to change; 3. Politics takes over the Great Commission

Cons of Church Planting: 1. No Vision; 2. Leadership trying to move to fast; 3. Leadership trying to do it all alone; 4. Lack of quality leadership. You hire based on where you are instead of where you are going.

Pros of Church Planting: 1. Reaches new people with fewer obstacles; 2. More emphasis on evangelism and reaching the community; 3. It's more fun having babies than raising the dead!

Any other thoughts, concerns, or recommendations on this subject matter? I wish I would have responded sooner and referred you to the book, *Unbinding the Gospel, Real Life Evangelism*. It basically asks the question, why isn't the mainline church (like yours and mine) doing a good job at evangelism? The author cites all kinds of statistics and has her report of a four-year study funded by Lilly. Of course, there are many factors, but fundamentally we've lost sight of it and it's not part of our 'mainline' culture. Those churches from the mainline traditions that are doing well (regardless of their theological views). They do well because they've become excited about it again. they have strong pastoral and lay leadership and a commitment to evangelism. Of course, it's not easy. There will be conflicts when one tries to 'grow'. Some churches manage these conflicts well, others don't. A main focus of the book is on prayer. No congregation can expect to do anything that looks like revitalization or evangelism – without prayer and seeking God's direction. Sounds obvious, but this is actually the difficult part. So often we think it all is on us to do these things. I think (just my opinion) a congregation would choose church planting if they themselves are healthy and are trying to spread this health outward as they seek to further God's kingdom. That is if they have the leading from the Holy Spirit to do this and have been resourced and empowered to make it happen. Revitalization sounds like renewal to me. I think that out here at Encounter with Jesus we are constantly 'renewing' ourselves as we try to reach out in our community. For us, I think having the inspiration to do things, having church wide acceptance of the ideas and then active involvement makes for a renewing or revitalizing experience.

Church #10: City Alliance Church, Williamsport, PA

Questionnaire Completed By: Pastor Spencer Sweeting, Lead Pastor

Church Name: City Alliance Church

Location: Williamsport, PA

Church Size: 500

Years at Current Church: 8 years

Worship Style: Contemporary

Church Service Times: 10:00 am

Sunday Morning Small Groups or Sunday School Model: Small Group model

Number of Staff (Full-Time/Part-Time): 6 Full-time/3 Part-time

Are you the founding pastor? Yes

Have you church planted before? Yes

Vision Statement: We are joining with Christ to transform Williamsport with the Gospel for the glory of God and the good of our city.

Values: As a local church, we seek to reflect Jesus Christ through embodying a Gospel—driven culture of: *Transformation; Grace; Presence; & Risk.*

Top 5 Pros of the Church Today: 1. We are the light in a dark world; 2. We are Christ’s ambassadors (We speak for God/We represent Christ); 3. We care about the whole person; 4. We advocate family issues and perspectives; 5. We provide the vehicle of worship to our great God

Top 5 Cons of the Church Today: 1. Most churches have lost the meaning of the Great commission; 2. There is very little unity among the body of believers; 3. Most people outside the church think that it is irrelevant; 4. There is an ungodly jealousy among congregations; 5. We are not meeting the social needs of our world

Top 5 Cons of Revitalizing an Established Church: 1. “We’ve never done it like that before mindset;” 2. The tremendous gap between generations and their likes and dislikes; 3. The belief that the church is a building; 4. The stubbornness of those who believe that it’s all about them; 5. The perception of how the world feels about the organized church.

Top 5 Pros of Revitalizing an Established Church: 1. It brings new life into a stale and declining situation; 2. The people are serving for the good of the church, not their own preferences; 3. The church begins to carry out the Great Commission instead of church as usual; 4. The church begins to reach out to the community as they never have before; 5. The average age of the constituency of the church begins to drop with more emphasis on reaching the youth and young adults

Top 5 Cons of Church Planting: 1. The belief that it is easy to plant a church; 2. Planting in the wrong location; 3. Not having a committed core group/launch team; 4. Not having a financial

base to support the plant for the first two years; 5. The lead pastor must be an excellent speaker and the worship must be excellent

Top 5 Pros of Church Planting: 1. No one says, “We’ve never done it that way before;” 2. If handled correctly, the churches ministry is fresh, vital, and contagious; 3. A real emphasis is placed on winning the community for Christ; 4. There is a real dependency upon God...even just for survival

Planting Healthy Impact Churches

This project looked at five church plants in the Christian and Missionary Alliance from five different states ranging from solo church plants to multi-site church plants of 475 to 1,500 in attendance. “Evangelism: It’s one of the highest values in the church – and one of the least practiced.”⁸⁵ Jesus wants his church to be a missional church. Every leader’s desire is to plant a high impact, disciple making, growing, and healthy church. In reality, many church plants fail within the first 6 to 12 months. Developing, understanding, and implementing key leadership factors and methods for fast growing church plants is crucial to sustainability. Author and pastor, Nelson Searcy, shares what he calls the top three deadly sins of church planters: lack of calling, lack of strategy, and lack of funds:

You must have an action plan for all three before you even attempt to think about church planting. Birthing a church is no easy task. A pastor once told me that birthing a church is like birthing a baby (like he knew what that was like), certain systems must be in place for it to be successful. A premature baby may not survive if he or she is born early. If they do survive, their developmental stages seem to take longer. This is why it is so crucial to plant high impact churches by allowing for the right amount of time for preparation and development.⁸⁶

God expects His church to be both faithful and fruitful. The Alliance movement has no time for churches to settle into survival mode; instead they must be proactive in presenting the

85. Mark Mittleburg, *Becoming A Contagious Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2007), 16.

86. Nelson Searcy and Kerrick Thomas Kerrick, *Launch – Starting A New Church from Scratch* (Ventura, CA. Regal Books, 2006), 23.

Good News in both word and deed as Jesus commands. Colossians 3:17 “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

The five questionnaires specifically focused on methods and factors of fast-growing church plants share some key data and components. The questionnaires and data will serve as a tool for prospective church planters to consider when preparing or undergoing the process of a church plant. The stakes are high and there is no room in the Alliance movement for anything but high impact, biblically based, seeker friendly, character driven church leaders in which Jesus is the center of every decision. The top three factors that five Alliance church planting pastors explained would kill a church plant the fastest were lack of vision, poor funding and backing, and lack of quality leadership.

What does this mean practically for the church? If a local church wants to reach those around them, should they try to renew older established congregations to make them more evangelistic, or should they plant new churches? The qualitative data would suggest church leaders should consider both. However, the fastest and broadest way to reach new Christians in a permanent way is to plant new churches. Lyle Schaller, in his book *44 Questions for Church Planters*, shares the following scenario to give us a picture of why church planting is as important for the health of the American church as a whole:

Imagine Town-A, Town-B, and Town-C are the same size, and they each have 100 churches of 100 people in attendance each. In Town-A, all the churches are over 15 years old, and then the overall number of active Christian churchgoers in that town will be shrinking, even if four or five of the churches get very 'hot' and double in attendance. In Town-B, 5 of the churches are under 15 years old, and they along with several older congregations are winning new people to Christ, but these only offsets the normal declines of the older churches. Therefore, the overall number of active Christian churchgoers in that town will be staying the same. Finally, in Town-C, 30 of the churches are under 15 years old. In this town, the overall number of active Christian churchgoers

will be projected to grow 50% in a generation. Many people would then respond, “But what about the existing church that needs help? Should you just ignore all of them?” Not at all! We plant churches because this will continually renew the whole body of Christ. No one individual church is more important than “The Church” as a whole.⁸⁷ Schaller believes church leadership is making a mistake to think they have to choose

between church planting and church renewal. Both have great potential to complement each other. The American church needs to constantly be multiplying itself in every city across America. This is core to the Christian and Missionary Alliance movement across the country.

The Alliance began with one church plant – the Gospel Tabernacle in New York City. It grew into a healthy congregation reaching the surrounding community, training and sending workers and leaders to reach the world. From this one church, founded over 130 years ago, more than 25,000 fellowships and nearly 6 million believers have emerged. Clearly, the Great Commission is fulfilled when Christian leaders GO plant churches or equip and SEND others to do so. See Appendix VII for more information on Alliance Church Multiplication.

The following two lists are included as important resources for individuals hoping to expand their church. The first is a list created based on the questionnaire research on how church plants can seek sustained growth. The second is from the work of Paul Nixon in *Fling Open the Doors: Giving the Church Away to the Community*.

TOP 10 FACTORS, METHODS, AND RECOMENDATIONS FOR CHURCH PLANTS SEEKING SUSTAINED GROWTH AND HEALTH
(*This Top 10 list is not a complete list but created from pastoral questionnaires research.*)

- 1. Church planting must be a calling:** Church planting is not easy, and you need to know it is going to be hard work.

87. Lyle Schaller, *44 Questions for Church Planters* (Nashville: Abingdon Press Publishing, 1991), 55.

2. **You must be able to raise money:** You need to be able to challenge people to give. It is essential to raise money to plant a church; there is no other way.
3. **Don't try to do too much too soon:** Everyone wants to start a new ministry in a new church. You need to have a filter and action plan for not doing too much too fast. Leadership needs to have two or three things they will do really well and then add more ministries later. Start slow!
4. **Don't give time to complainers:** Negative people will tear down a church plant. You need to avoid complainers and invite them to not be a part of the church. Do not be easily steered off course by them. They will steal your vision, mission, and focus to move ahead.
5. **Hire the right staff:** You need to hire leaders with character, not potential. Church plants often hire based on performance rather than character. It is also important to hire for the future; where you are going.
6. **Church planters must take time off:** Taking time off is biblical and lets God know you know who is in control. Church planters often are workaholics trying to make the church grow. There is an element of hard work, and an element of trusting in God.
7. **Deal with critical people right away:** The vision and mission of the church is much larger than any one person. Church planting allows for many new people coming to church, but also gets frustrated church hoppers. You need to deal with them right away if they are taking away from the vision and mission of the church.
8. **Have a plan for plugging new people in the church:** First time guests are more likely to go out the back door if they are not plugged into a ministry. What will be your action

steps be for someone as a first-time guest; will they be plugged in or go through a discipling process?

9. Don't try to be another church or another leader: You need to be yourself. Find your own identity and self. Leaders and pastors need to be real and find who they are and are called to be. It is important to learn from others, but you need to be yourself.

10. Church planters need to make Sunday most important at first: Make it a priority to have a great Sunday morning services before doing anything else. Many church plants try to have many great ministries on multiple days and often they fail because of lack of excellence.

HIGH IMPACT CHURCHES AND CHURCH PLANTS OF THE 21st CENTURY WILL BE COMMUNITY ORIENTED AND MARKED BY THE FOLLOWING⁸⁸

1. A deeply felt sense of mission that compels them to reach out and make disciples in the spirit of the New Testament without the polarizing theology so common among growing congregations in the 20th century;
2. A view of their physical facilities as community centers for the peoples they serve;
3. An intense concern for connecting with the unchurched public, but never at the price of compromising the core of the faith as they understand it;
4. Multiple locations for doing ministry;
5. A varied experience in church growth patterns; healthy and steady addition in some settings and explosive, combusive multiplication in others;
6. The willingness to change behaviors and strategies in order to bust through plateaus in numerical growth;

88. Nixon, *Fling Open the Doors*, 10.

7. A team approach to ministry; multiple teaching pastors and ministry done by all the church members.

Growing Healthy Established Churches

While we see many common characteristics of breakout church leaders, one trait that manifests itself repeatedly is persistence. These leaders see a clear goal, and though it may take years to reach the goal, they do not see giving up as an option.⁸⁹ This is the spirit behind each Alliance pastor in this research and it has led them to sustained growth over a period of time. In order to revitalize an established church, a church leader must be persistent and Great Commission focused. This type of mindset keeps its eyes on Jesus, has a broken heart for lost people, and a desire to raise up disciples in the church. All people, no matter how long they have been around the church, or how long they have had a relationship with Jesus, face a next step.

Billy Graham once wrote about what it will take for an evangelistic culture to be lived out in the future so that the 21st century becomes the greatest century for Christian evangelism in history. He said one of the things we need:

A willingness to explore new methods and new fields. Methods that have worked in the past that made people aware of the church and brought them into its programs will not necessarily work in this media-saturated age. It is no coincidence that those churches that are most often effective in reaching their neighborhoods and cities for Christ are often those that are the most flexible and adaptable in their methods...The main point is that we need to stand back and be creative.⁹⁰

Church culture, change, and the willingness to explore new methods is foundational to the life and witness of the church. Who wants to be a part of a stagnant church? The answer for most Christian leaders is nobody. However, the reality is churches all over America are not

89. Rainer, *Breakout Churches*, 37.

90. Tim Stevens and Tony Morgan, *Simply Strategic Growth: Attracting a Crowd to Your Church* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2005), 163.

willing to make necessary changes and adjustments to move from a declining church to a revitalized renewed church. Ed Stetzer writes, “Revitalizing a stagnant church is not easy. If it were, 70 to 80 percent of North American churches would not be stagnant or declining, and 4,000 to 7,000 U.S. churches would not close each year.”⁹¹

As a local church goes through its life cycles, it will have a number of experiences. Some of these cycles will be high points and others will not. The established local church in North America is plateauing or declining in many towns. Why? One answer, based on the research participants questionnaire, is churches tend to give greater attention to what they were, rather than what they are becoming. The established church tends to fall in love with tradition while forsaking the mission for which they were first called.

God’s intent and strategy is for His church to be multigenerational. In Genesis 50:24, God made it clear that generations would be the vehicle to share the Gospel message throughout history. Jesus gave us marching orders in Matthew 28:19-20 and the strategy in Acts 1:8 to be Gospel focused, yet many churches today are stagnated and struggling to just survive. The established local church today seems to have lost its original purpose. Many established churches find themselves in a season with no momentum, no excitement, and no moving ahead.

While anywhere from 4,000 to 7,000 local congregations die each year, the Leadership Journal also maintains that 340,000 churches in America have plateaued, are declining, or are on the verge of death.⁹² This means 85 percent of churches in the United States have plateaued or declined in church attendance. These staggering statistics are real, but very few leaders are

91. Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches – How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2007), 58.

92. C. J. Rhodes, “Church Revitalization: Keeping the Doors of Your Church Open,” Church Leaders, last modified December 5, 2018, <https://churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/338842-church-revitalization-keep-the-doors-of-your-church-open.html>.

willing to tackle revitalizing an established church. These churches must change in order to reach their communities.

While many believers know the church's purpose, there is a disconnect between the purpose and the structure of a church to implement the biblical mandate. Participants made clear each church structure and model is set up for the exact results they are getting. The results from this chapter can serve as a guide and tool to help existing churches rediscover their God-given purpose and help identify methods and factors that promote healthy growth. However, it is important to understand this is not a step by step plan for success. Each church is different in demographics, size, location, and leadership structure. The methods and results are born out of research, pastoral questionnaires, and reviews of successful churches. The methods used can be applied to other churches as well.

When pastors and leaders of the local church rediscover the Biblical truth and plan of a New Testament Acts church, then the church can develop a comprehensive strategy to achieve God's future for their church in its community. There is no one-size fits all church health and growth strategy, because research alone cannot replace the guidance of God through prayer, spending time in His Word, and listening to the Holy Spirits guidance through the entire process.

The following is a list based on information collected in the questionnaire. This is meant to be used as a quick guide to recommendations for revitalizing an established church:

**TOP 10 FACTORS, METHODS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
REVITALIZING AN ESTABLISHED CHURCH SEEKING SUSTAINED GROWTH
AND HEALTH**

(This Top 10 list is not a complete list but created from pastoral questionnaires research.)

- 1. You have a core of established trained leaders, structures, and laity to launch healthy change.** You can focus on the real issues of the church without worry about such things as raising funds or finding a building
- 2. Leaders must be ready for the time commitment, energy, and meetings it takes to revitalize an established church.** You will experience many extra meetings and need to develop a strong healthy core leadership team. This process will force you to say “no” to many things.
- 3. You will go further faster by going slower into the change.** Change in the established church can follow Mathew 10:16 as an approach. “Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.” Do not try to throw much at the congregation at one time, but rather go slow so you can bring people along with you.
- 4. Seek God for the vision.** Nothing will cause a train wreck faster for a local church than when its leaders fail to seek God’s vision. Seeking His vision brings about the best opportunity for the local established church to reach people in the community they have never reached before.
- 5. Hire the right staff.** You need to hire leaders with character, not potential. Established churches often hire based on performance rather than character. It is also important to hire for the future. Figure out where you are going and hire for that.
- 6. Stay focused on the Great Commandment and Great Commission.** The leadership must believe a Great Commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission will build a Great Church. When the local church really learns to love God

and love people genuinely, the Great Commission will come naturally to them. The church is not just a building, but the church is a movement seeking to save the lost.

7. **The Average age of the constituency begins to drop.** The local church must always be seeking to reach the next generation. Each generation should see that their legacy is investing in the next generation.
8. **You are helping the church become vibrant again.** The established church can be a vibrant, exciting, growing place where people are reached for Christ again.
9. **Have a plan for plugging new people in the church:** First time guests are more likely to go out the back door if they are not plugged into a ministry. What will be your action steps be for someone as a first-time guest; will they be plugged in or go through a discipling process?
10. **Don't try to be another church or another leader:** You need to be yourself. Find your own identity and self. Leaders and pastors need to be real and find who they are and who they are called to be. It is important to learn from others, but you need to be yourself.

The following factors and methods of fast-growing established churches are specific to the Christian and Missionary Alliance churches experiencing a minimum 5% growth sustained over a five-year period: Birthing the Vision; Casting the Vision; Creating Healthy Change; Church Culture and Values; Goals and Strategic Planning; and Making Disciples.

Birthing the Vision

The number one way a church starts being revitalized is a birthed vision, or the pastor, elders, and/or leadership experiencing a deep sense of discontent. Not only is this a key finding for established churches, but it is vital for new church plants as well. All ten churches have a

compelling vision statement that is outward focused, and they also created values that aligned with living out being an Acts 1:8 Christ-Centered movement as defined the Christian and Missionary Alliance. George Barna writes:

Although the (pastors) are good people and have been called into ministry, most senior pastors do not have an understanding of God’s vision for the ministries they are trying to lead and, consequently, most churches have little impact in their community or in the lives of their congregations. Not even 1 out of every 10 pastors of Protestant churches can articulate God’s vision for their church. Clearly, this is one of the most important areas for growth during the present decade.⁹³

Pastors must see a new vision from God by gaining a new perspective, seeing new opportunities, and developing a new vision/mission of the church. Proverbs 29:18 says, “Where there is no vision, people cast off restraint; but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom’s instruction.” The leaders need to put actions to their visions and dreams. This starting point can help a pastor think through leading the congregation ahead in revitalizing the church.

Church renewal is a concept widely used by theologians and clergy to express concern over the decline or decay of the church and a desire to see the church flourish in the future. In actual usage, the concept is often deployed with reference to decline in church membership and worship attendance, but it can also be used with reference to spiritual decline, to a decline in piety, or to a decline in commitment to practices deemed native to the ongoing life of the church, including worship, prayer, the sacraments, evangelism and mission. Proposals for what needs to be done related directly to the analysis of what is wrong. If decline or decay is understood principally in terms of loss of membership, then proposals for renewal with often focus on ways to attract new members or to encourage persons to attend worship services more faithfully. Similarly, if the decay or decline is understood as spiritual or sacramental in nature, then proposals for renewal will focus on ways to renew the church in sacramental or spiritual vitality.⁹⁴

“Visions are born in the soul of man or woman who is consumed with the tension between what is and what could be. Anyone who is emotionally involved, frustrated, brokenhearted, maybe even angry about the way things are in light of the way they believe things could be, is a candidate for vision... Visions form in the hearts of those who are dissatisfied with

93. Barna, *The Power of Vision*, 31.

94. Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 197.

the status quo.”⁹⁵ Pastors and leaders need to have a renewed sense of why they are serving in the first place. Visions are often caught through prayer. One Alliance pastor wrote, God grants visions through those that are obedient to Him through prayer, personal quiet time, and making Christ number one. Charles Spurgeon writes, “I cannot help praying. If I were allowed to utter a word all day long, that would not affect my praying. If I could not have five minutes that I might spend in prayer by myself, I should pray all the same. Minute by minute, moment by moment, somehow or other, my heart must commune with God. Prayer has become as essential to me as the heaving of my lungs and the beating of my pulse.”⁹⁶

1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us, “Pray without ceasing.” God gives visions to leaders and groups of people seeking and praying for His will to be done. If a local established church is going to birth a new vision, then it is imperative the church leaders realize they are in a state of decline and that something needs to be done about it. This could be the turning point for the church and the ministry when the pastor leads them through the process of understanding where they currently are.

Much like church planting, making the choice to revitalize a church is a daunting task that no single person can do without a compelling vision and the help of the congregation. The pastor during this time will dictate which road the church chooses by his or her actions and decisions. God’s will for the church is for her to flourish, succeed, and be transformational. In Mathew 16, when Jesus looked to Peter and told him, “On this rock, I will build my church.” he went on to say in Mathew 16:18, “not even the Gates of Hell could prevail against His church.”

95. Andy Stanley, *Visioneering: God’s Blueprint for Developing and Maintaining Vision* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishing, 1999), 7.

96. Steve Miller, *C. H. Spurgeon On Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003), 11.

A.B. Simpson, the founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance movement, believed this wholeheartedly and it is no less true today for the church than when Jesus said these words.

Jesus gives us a promise in Acts 1:8 when He says, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere – in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” According to God’s Word, the power Christ sends to us through His Holy Spirit is sufficient to accomplish the Great Commission. As a pastor/leader in a declining established church it is easy to dwell on the lowering attendance, lack of volunteers, lack of energy, lack of budgets, and the feeling that the congregation is not moving forward. There are so many variables that bind up leaders from looking ahead to the future. They end up feeling stuck looking at the past. It is easy for leaders in casual conversation to focus on all that is going wrong in the local church instead.

When leaders are positive and see the tough experiences as opportunities, they can motivate the church to move forward. Each Alliance church in this thesis research birthed a vision that is God-honoring, bold, and strategic in their local context. Leaders may find power in the following vision statements that have led each church to 5% growth sustained over a 5-year period.

1. *What we’re striving for: To see disciples making disciples in which the presence of God flows through them into the world to bring transformation.* (Freshwater Community Church, Wadsworth, OH)
2. *To present everyone complete in Christ and fill Colorado Springs with disciples of Christ.* (Front Range Alliance Church, Colorado Springs, CO)
3. *Bringing People to Wholeness and Fruitfulness.* (San Jose Christian Church, San Jose, CA)
4. *Bringing Hope Alive: We are all about pointing people to Jesus by stepping into hopeless situations and be the hands and feet of God’s love and carry the truth to the broken world, wherever we go.* (Crosstown Alliance Church, Wellsville, NY)
5. *Experiencing a life-changing journey with Jesus together through: Worship by passionately magnifying God both privately and publicly; Discipleship by studying and applying God’s Word; Ministry by serving the world; Fellowship by involvement in LAC*

- group where each one would feel accepted and loved; Evangelism by leading people into a relationship with Jesus. (Lewisburg Alliance Church, Lewisburg, PA)*
6. *Target Driven. Interdependent Leadership. Spiritual Formation. Church Planting. Global Partnerships. (Summit Church, Greenville, SC)*
 7. *Love God. Love Others. Love Philadelphia. (City Light Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA)*
 8. *Our vision is to multiply disciples and churches. (City Light Omaha, Omaha, NE)*
 9. *Meeting with Jesus: We are a Christian family committed to Christ and his purposes. Christ Saves, Sanctifies, Heals, and Comes Again. (Encounter with Jesus, Birmingham, AL)*
 10. *We are joining with Christ to transform Williamsport with the Gospel for the glory of God and the good of our city. (City Alliance Church, Williamsport, PA)*

Casting the Vision

Another key component the leadership needs to work through is casting a new vision. “You won’t do ministry that really matters until you define what really matters.”⁹⁷ This will happen after the leadership has been given the vision from God. The vision of the church must change for change to occur in the church. One of the easiest things to do is create a vision statement, but vision needs to be written on hearts and woven into the DNA of the church. It is so important for the pastor to constantly share the vision of the church in a clear, articulate manner. “You or I could deliver a mind-blowing, God-honoring, pulse-quickening vision talk on Sunday that leaves everyone revved up to go change the world, but by Tuesday, many people have forgotten they were even in church the previous weekend.”⁹⁸

Pastors need to constantly be talking about and sharing the vision for the church to hold to it. The leaders must promote, “This is what we’re about!” The Apostle Paul had this divineness in his DNA as he wrote to the church in Philippi in Philippians 3:13-14, “No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and

97. Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 89.

98. Hybels, *Axioms*, 74.

looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.”⁹⁹

Poor leaders can develop a vision statement or copy someone else’s vision statement in no time. “When Christian leaders adopt the world’s approach to vision rather than seeking God’s revelation, they inadvertently assume God’s responsibility. God is on mission to redeem humanity. He is the only one who knows how to do it. Leaders must understand, as Christ did, that their role is to seek the Father’s will and to adjust their lives on him.”¹⁰⁰

When God lays a vision on the heart of a leader, the leader must remember where the vision came from. “If it is God who has begun painting a picture of what could and should be on the canvas of your heart, over time you will begin to sense that not to follow through would be tantamount to an act of disobedience. Your vision will begin to feel like a moral imperative. As the burden in you grows, you will feel compelled to take action.”¹⁰¹ As multiple Alliance pastors stated in their own way, one should move slowly with the vision and allow time to bring clarity instead of taking on a moral compulsion that leads to destruction. If it is a calling from God, the vision will not go away and the only option will be to follow through on the burden God has put on your heart. “The vision is a picture of the future we seek to create. It depicts the church’s preferred future. While, outside of biblical prophecy, we cannot predict the future, we can create the future. That is the function of the vision. It pictures the end of the ministry at the beginning. The best way to create what you really want is by visualizing the outcome that you are trying to

99. New Living Translation (NLT).

100. Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 104.

101. Stanley, *Visioneering*, 25.

achieve.”¹⁰² The challenge comes when it’s time to allow the vision statement to dictate church structure, strategic plan development, staff hires, and organizational change.

So many churches often allow their vision statement to be on church letter head, a church sign, or printed on a wall, but they do not allow it to be part of the church’s planning and direction. Philippians 2:13 says, “For its God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” The vision is one of the key components in making change in the church. 1 Corinthians 2:9, “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived, what God has prepared for those who love Him.” When there is a refocusing and revitalization of the established church, it makes leadership re-evaluate where they are and where they are going. In the corporate world, if there is something wrong with the mission, vision, or bottom line they will have meetings and change it immediately. In the church it can go for decades or even generations before the problem is attended to. The church should be constantly reflecting and evaluating where they are and where God is leading them. One Alliance pastor wrote, “the local church should be the most well-run organization in the community.”

When the church redefines where they are going and who God has called them to be, God will bring clarity and open doors, so they are able to move forward with their God-given vision. Leaders need to move from spending their time on petty issues, and negative, complaining people, to focusing on the vision and mission God has given them. Vision allows leaders to define values and priorities and serves as a filter for programming. It becomes a great filter for saying no to some ministries and yes to others. However, pastors must take into account that their plans must never take precedence over God’s vision. Proverbs 19:21 says, “Many are the

102. Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 136.

plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." While this passage was written centuries ago, this verse was written with today's church in mind.

Today, local churches, denominations, non-profits, pastoral staff's, and leadership teams have so many plans. The church is very complex with numerous programs and specialized ministries. Never before in history has the church offered and tried so much. This is a great thing if the church and leadership genuinely seek God to discover His vision for the church. No matter how many plans man can come up with, only God's vision for the church will prevail.

Creating Healthy Change

Ed Stetzer shares 5 keys to revitalizing churches in his book *Comeback Churches*.¹⁰³

1. Leaders are the most important factor in making a comeback.
2. Vibrant faith is a significant factor in revitalization, particularly in three faith factors: renewed belief in Jesus Christ and the mission of the church, servanthood, and strategic prayer.
3. Laypersons' becoming actively involved in meaningful ministry is a significant factor in church renewal.
4. Churches will want to be more intentional about their evangelistic effort
5. A "celebrative" and "orderly" mood of worship is a huge factor in revitalization.

No church will ever be turned around if they are not open to change. Culture is constantly changing. High school graduates will most likely have five different jobs in the fifteen to twenty years following graduation. The world is more global than ever before. People are constantly moving, and families are no longer all living the same town in which they grew up. Growth and revitalization in the established church needs to be focused on the unchurched.

103. Stetzer, *Comeback Churches*, 210-212.

Transfer growth will never turn a church around. Often the people transferring are frustrated at the previous church, so what do pastors think will happen when they come to their church? Revitalizing a church will never happen at the expense of other churches. Churches are not in the farming business of shuffling sheep from one pen to another. Instead, the Bible tells us in Luke 15 to find lost sheep and bring them into God's family. Established churches must be mission-minded and focused outwardly/externally on the future. It is vision driven and purpose driven. Leadership has to discover the needs of the people in the community and program ministries that reflect those needs.

The established church tends to fall into the trap over time of focusing on those already attending rather than those not yet part of their programs. Churches tend to hire staff for where they are and not where they are going. Then if the church grows, they have unqualified staff leading larger ministries that are outside of their capabilities. The local church ought to be the hands and feet of God in its community.

Churches have an incredible opportunity to meet the needs of people with the Good News since the gospel is expressed both in word and deed. The people of the world should not just hear the Gospel but also see the Gospel lived out by the church. All genders, races, ages, and cultures need to be invited and incorporated into the local church. Established churches need to grow disciples, not just programs. God works through people, not programs.

Most American Christians never intend to become disciples. Actually, most do not even know what that means and view church more as "self-help" than something that can and will change their lives. Discipleship is a journey that requires a lot of time and work. The purpose of the church, whether it is established or a church plant, is to equip and mobilize men and women for His service. God has called every Christ follower to take initiative in sharing the Gospel.

The Church is not a vending machine of goods and services. It is a place to experience God, grow in community, and serve. The most important thing for pastors to remind their congregants is the church does not exist primarily for them. Rather, the local church is the body of Christ and exists for the world. When leaders get their churches to understand it is not about them, they will be much further ahead in growing highly effective growing churches. Ephesians 2:10 says, “We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” It goes on to say in Ephesians 4:12 “...to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” This is the goal of the local church: to win people for Christ, disciple them, and send them out for Christian service.

Andy Stanley writes, “Clarify the win. It is impossible to know if your church is making progress if you are not clear about your destination. In order to make progress, there must be change. This means examining each and every event and program asking the questions, when all is said and done, what is it we want to look back on and celebrate?”¹⁰⁴ Leaders need to know where they are trying to go as a church and lead the people to this place. This is true especially when dealing with change and transition in the church.

A strategic ministry dashboard is key to discovering measurable facts about the local church. Each Alliance church that has experience 5% growth sustained over a 5-year period measures their church regularly in various areas: Weekend Attendance, Student Ministry Attendance, Small Group Attendance, Children’s Ministry Attendance, and Financial Health. In the questionnaire data, Scott Brooks, Lead Pastor at Freshwater Community Church wrote, “As we evaluate our mission of Living Up, In, and Out, we continue to see and witness people following God, a high level of people serving and belonging to a community group or bible

104. Andy Stanley, Reggie Joiner, and Layne Jones, *Seven Practices of Effective Ministry* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 2004), 31.

study, engaged in evangelism. We continue to see a high level of participation in prayer spread out through the body. We see and hear stories of transformation, Spirit encounters, and surrender. We are seeing multiplication of disciples making disciples.” Evaluation matters and helps the local church make wise changes that keep the church on track to carry out the vision.

Leaders should see what God wants for the future and let nothing get in the way on their journey to carry out the vision. Too many get easily sidetracked by agendas, politics in the church, and complaining. Some allow others to take over the vision that at one time God gave the leaders. No one individual is bigger than the church and the church moving forward.

Sometimes the vision may cause people to leave and at times the leadership may need, with grace, to release people or staff to leave if they are steering the church away from its vision. When the decision is made to turn around the local church, new opportunities and new doors will open that were never there. The key for the leader is to think in steps and not introduce the whole change process to the congregation right away. New pastors coming into an existing church will need more time to implement change than a church planting leader because of history, culture, and strong relational ties. One pastor apart of the research stated “*you must get change in your pocket*” before implementing change; simply meaning you must build trust.

Many established churches have built such strong traditions that they are bound to the past and often resist any change. Churches all the time find themselves settling for the status quo. When introducing change in the church, the lead pastor and governing board must speak and focus positively on the change they are preparing to implement, always pointing back to the vision. When lead pastors and governing boards take the time to help the congregation understand the “why” behind the change, they will have a greater opportunity to implement the change in a healthy way. When change comes with the attitude of, “*our church has always*

resisted change,” the congregation and leadership get defensive on every change they navigate, which does the local church a disservice.

Dan Southerland in his book, *Transitioning: Leading Your Church through Change*, shares seven steps in making course corrections he implemented at Flamingo Road Church, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Each step can serve as a template and would be beneficial to any church leader going through change. The 7-step workbook found in the back of the book helps the reader go through each stage in context with a leadership team. Southerland shares the following seven steps:¹⁰⁵

Step 1: Preparing for vision

Step 2: Defining the vision

Step 3: Planting the vision

Step 4: Sharing the vision

Step 5: Implementing the vision

Step 6: Dealing with opposition

Step 7: Making course corrections

Great and effective leaders need to communicate change and the vision clearly so that the congregants can easily follow. A clear vision and clear next steps towards implementing that vision help the church know what they need to do to make the local church effective. The local church was never meant to be all things to all people, but rather has been given a clear biblical mandate to go into all the world and be Christ’s witnesses. This Acts 1:8 mandate needs to be the focus of the local church and she should not waver from it. Revitalization of any organization requires visionary leadership. “A vision requires an individual who has the courage to act on an

105. Dan Southerland, *Transitioning: Leading Your Church through Change* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1999).

idea.”¹⁰⁶ Leaders must be willing to tackle change. Leaders cannot pander to money, buildings, or programs, but rather communicate in a bold way, “*this is where God wants us to go and here is how we will get there.*”

The following are a couple key questions communicated to the researcher when considering moving the vision ahead: Will this vision transform lives in your community, county, state, nation, and world? Will it fulfill the Great Commission? Will it align with the Alliance movement of being an Acts 1:8 Christ-Centered church? Will it give everyone an opportunity hear, accept, or reject the Gospel message? Once cannot forget, “Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always. Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced.”¹⁰⁷

TOP 10 THOUGHTS WHEN MAKING CHANGES

1. Make changes slowly
2. Develop leadership around you by empowering them. (*Don't delegate, but empower*)
3. Cast the new vision weekly to your leadership and congregation
4. Develop preaching/teaching series about where you are going
5. Have on-going training for volunteers and lay leaders
6. Develop and stay in contact with leaders outside your church
7. Set realistic goals that can be reached, which will build trust with your congregation
8. Be in constant evaluation of ministry styles, services, ministries, leadership, facilities, first impression teams, small groups, and all other important aspects of the church
9. Be in constant prayer
10. Communicate! Communicate! Communicate!

106. Stanley, *Visioneering*, 14.

107. 1 Chr. 16:11-12.

Church Culture and Values

Another important factor in revitalizing the church is for the leaders to know the culture and community they are serving in. Leaders need to know important aspects of the community such as demographics, family stats, cultural issues, and community structure. A wise leader must also know the culture of the church, history, key families, and overall DNA of the church. It is incredibly important for congregations to evaluate and gain a realistic picture of who they are as a church and where they came from. This will allow the pastor, staff, leadership team, and board create values they want to instill in their congregation.

There are numerous resources for any congregation to get an in depth look at who they are, where they are at, and where they are going. Every church develops values and underlying assumptions that dictate everything they do. Also, every church has underlying assumptions they believe will move a church forward. An example for the local church today is that many believe putting people in rows, singing a few songs, and talking to them every Sunday is the best way to teach them. Christ-followers may not actually believe this, but assumptions say the local church does.

Values are foundational to everything the church does and values create culture. Values impact the way a congregation acts. Leaders need to define what the core values will be and stick with them. Core values are essential for a local church to define because they rally the Body of Christ with a clear goal in mind of who they want to be in Christ. Gavin Johnson, Lead Pastor at CityLight Omaha has clearly defined values they want to instill in their congregation. The values that drive Citylight Church Omaha are a commitment to reveling in God's act of reaching down to us in the gospel and responding by reaching up, in, and out. (Down= Gospel; Up= Spiritual

Formation; In= Community; Out= Mission). These values are woven into every aspect and facet of CityLight Omaha's congregation.

Proverbs 29:18 is a verse people often point to when talking about vision, but it applies to core values as well. "If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed."¹⁰⁸ Understanding the vision, the mission, and understanding core values is essential for any organization to set their sails on their unique calling. "You need to know yourself and your culture. Discovering your core values is the basis for knowing and understanding your identity, because they are at the core of the church's culture."¹⁰⁹ Core values define who you are as a church and your identity as an organization. This alone is enough reason for every pastor, church governance, and church body to take some time to really discover who God is calling them as a local church to be.

Malphurs says core values function as the "GPS (global positioning system) that tells the navigator where the ship is and where it is headed."¹¹⁰ Core values help keep the church "on purpose" and also give the church a guiding benchmark of where they are going. "Perhaps more than at any previous time, an organization today must know what it stands for and on what principles it will operate. No longer is values-based organizational behavior an interesting philosophical choice – it is a requisite for survival."¹¹¹ Lyle Schaller says, "The most important single element of any corporate, congregational, or denominational culture, however, is the value

108. The Message.

109. Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 146.

110. Malphurs, 146.

111. Malphurs, 146.

system.”¹¹² When pastors and Christian leaders understand the importance of the value system, it not only helps them be more effective in ministry, but more effective for the Kingdom of God.

Core values have a way of rooting a church in what they believe are the “most important things” as an organization. When a church defines the core of who they are going to be on the basis of Jesus’ teaching, a church is building their foundation upon the rock. Mathew 7:24-25 says, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.”

When a church builds its vision, mission, and core values upon Jesus Christ, they build their foundation upon that which is unchanging. This should excite every pastor, every Christian leader, and every Christ follower to know that we have One that has gone before us. Knowing that no two churches are alike, this will allow the values to be personalized to a specific context of ministry. Ministry distinctives will also act as a filter for starting new ministries and stopping ineffective ministries. “You can learn a lot about the church before you walk through the front door.”¹¹³

The goal of the leader ultimately should be to work at writing the values of the church on people’s hearts. When the leadership and congregation embody the core values in their everyday lives, there will be a greater effect. Core values really do signal a ministry’s bottom line and ultimately communicate what really matters. “A commitment to one’s core values help pastors

112. Malphurs, 146.

113. Malphurs, 146.

know where to draw the line in the sand.”¹¹⁴ Core values align and point a church in a direction that is poised to fulfill the great vision they have been given.

Malphurs defines core values as “the constant, passionate, biblical core beliefs that go deep and really, truly empower and guide the ministry.”¹¹⁵ Every congregation that takes time to prayerfully consider the “constant” and “passionate” core beliefs that will guide their ministry is vitally important. “If a church is off course on its journey to its mission-port, then its values are not in alignment with its stated mission. Values are a church’s shaping force that influences all that its members do as well as how they do it.”¹¹⁶ When church leaders establish and implement core values for the local church, para-church, or missionary ministry, it influences overall organization behavior. Values will then be a great filter for what ministries can do and not do within a local church or para-church organization.

Goals and Strategic Planning

Pastors and governing boards must have a process for evaluation and reflection on how the church is doing. A great tool for any local church to evaluate their current state would be to utilize a S.W.O.T. analysis. This is a priceless tool for churches to understand their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Not every Alliance pastor participated and completed a S.W.O.T analysis on their questionnaire. However, one example is from Scott Brooks, Lead Pastor at Freshwater Church, Wadsworth, Ohio:

Strengths: As we evaluate our mission of Living Up, In, and Out. We continue to see and witness people following God, a high level of people serving and belonging to a community group or bible study, engaged in evangelism. We continue to see a high level

114. Malphurs, 147.

115. Malphurs, 146.

116. Malphurs, 152-153.

of participation in prayer spread out through the body. We see and hear stories of transformation, Spirit encounters, and surrender. We are seeing multiplication of disciples making disciples.

Weaknesses: One weakness right now is the fact that as a church we have had a ceiling in our growth the past two years in our leadership structure. We are a large church but we're still acting like a small to medium size church. It's killing our momentum. We have to make dramatic shifts in delegation and empowerment and trust if Freshwater is to continue to multiply and grow. Another weakness is my leadership because I have not changed my leadership style to a large church. In a small church I could rely on my own relational capacity and the "tribal system" to communicate vision. This doesn't work in a large church, but I haven't changed. So, our church as a whole has no clue what our vision and mission and values are. We still have good instincts, but we are starting to lose momentum. We are weak in multiplication when it comes to church planting and sending people out. It's something we are aware of and incorporating into our 10-year goals.

Opportunities:

Internship Site: We are looking to become an internship/apprenticeship site. The intentional piece is to raise up leaders within for Freshwater but also to send out.

Alpha: We have an opportunity to see Alpha become a leading engine of growth at Freshwater. We started with just 12 guests 5 semesters ago. We are up to almost 70 guests invited. The stories of conversions and people being thawed out spiritually are staggering. We see this only growing larger.

Church Multiplication: We are positioned in such a way that it seems like God may be opening doors for us to come alongside churches and help them be revitalized and send off some of our leaders and members to turn the church around. We also have two communities we are "eyeing" to be a church planting site.

Threats: Not changing with culture: Our church has changed a lot over 17 years but we are facing a new test of change as we adjust to the Millennials who are starting to move into positions of influence. This change is going to be difficult for the Xers and Boomers. Not changing with growth: We face a leadership test of changing to grow.

A S.W.O.T. analysis will give leadership a baseline and clear picture of where they are so they can create bold goals and a strategic plan. Every church wants to gain momentum. Church leaders want to walk in and sense the energy and see there is something different moving forward with the church they lead. Leaders want to see the ball moving forward and things changing for the better. Momentum and power are generated when leaders discover their strengths as a congregation.

In the corporate world, businesses are constantly performing a S.W.O.T. analysis. A S.W.O.T analysis helps the corporation to identify its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within their own business. This analysis helps the business better understand who they are and helps them identify where they are going. It is another example of, “Get the facts, or the facts will get you. And when you get them, get them right, or they will get you wrong. All things are difficult before they are easy.”¹¹⁷ When a church identifies its strengths, they are able to compliment and expand on them. When a church has leadership that is willing to look at their weaknesses and clearly identify what they are, they only put themselves in position for moving forward.

The problem is that many pastors do not want to talk about their weaknesses, and they treat them like an underlying monster that is always in the background. Many times, the weaknesses are obvious to leadership. Great leaders often realize a program or ministry is ineffective before the people do. However, there can be times when the pastors and leaders do not see a ministry or program being weak. One way to see the weaknesses better is to invite pastors from other churches to critique your local church. Another method is to invite a non-Christian into the church and consider nothing off limits for them to share about the local church. Weaknesses should never be the focus, but they should be recognized and acted upon.

Opportunities allow for growth in areas that God places before congregations. Every church has different opportunities based on location, leadership, church size, and communities. When pastors recognize their opportunities in every area, they allow themselves to bring focus to their outreach efforts and overall church structure. Finally, threats can be viewed as dangers that can sidetrack a congregation from taking advantage of the opportunities that God sends its way.

117. Rainer, *Breakout Churches*, 69.

A church must ask regularly what are our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats based on current circumstances?

Based on leaderships research and understanding of the church's true state, church leaders need to work with their governance to set short-term and long-term goals for where they believe God is taking them in the future. What does God want our congregation to be in the next year; 5 years; 10 years, 15 years? The key to leading the local church forward is helping the congregation understand who they are and what they will do in the future. Leaders need to lead their congregation through steps towards who they are called to be. Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."¹¹⁸ What a leader does today for their church will be foundational for its future. When leadership is intentional with its plans, congregations are able move forward in an organized manner. Leadership must be realistic in projecting goals. They must be concrete in their vision and selective in task and leadership personnel. The church must have an evaluating process for their goals and create a long-range plan for future development. This builds a culture of constantly evaluating and reflecting where the church is and where it needs to go. The lead pastor God calls to the church is key to leading this process and making sure it happens.

Making Disciples

One of the greatest calls for the local church and its members is to make disciples. A disciple is a follower of Jesus who is striving to live according to the teachings of Jesus. Effective discipleship training makes disciples. Mathew 28:19-20 gives the Christian his marching orders when it comes to making disciples. "Therefore, go and make disciples of all

118. New Living Translation (NLT).

nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” The Great Commission is probably the most well-known Scripture to which people point when talking about making disciples. Malphurs says, “Not only does the Christian have a role in his or her transformation-maturation process, but the church plays a big role as well. The Christian’s role is personal and individual. The church’s role, however, is public and corporate. We mature together in community.”¹¹⁹ God has called believers to be in community and it is absolutely essential for Spiritual Growth.

“One of the roles of the Holy Spirit is the progressive sanctification of the believer. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:18, ‘And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.’”¹²⁰ Acts 1:8 talks about the power of the Holy Spirit that comes on you when you come to Christ. “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.” Not only does the Holy Spirit change us, but the Holy Spirit empowers us to carry the Good News to the entire world.

For a local Alliance church, discipleship is key to every church’s strategy. All districts make clear local churches need to create a plan and develop their programming with a focus on making disciples. “The church needs to know at a congregational level what is working and what is not. We must ask which primary and secondary ministries are producing fruit and which are

119. Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 199.

120. Malphurs, 199.

not.”¹²¹ City Light Philadelphia created a Discipleship ministry that is flexible, based on season of life, but formational in their approach. They say, “while we can’t dictate every groups DNA, we can create some guardrails for what we want to see in every group.” Their leadership has led them to define what a disciple is, why groups matter, and five DNA points that they want to be a part of every group, regardless of group makeup.

Based on data from the questionnaire, the following is the information City Light Philadelphia uses to explain the importance of disciples and how their ministry works to create them:

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

A disciple of Jesus is one who has chosen to follow Christ, repenting of sin and trusting Him for salvation. A disciple is committed to a life of loving obedience and spiritual growth in which the disciple’s entire life is submitted to and shaped by the teaching and disciplines of the Master. Following the example of Christ, the disciple will make more disciples.

WHY DO GROUPS MATTER?

As followers of Christ we belong to a unique community, one founded solely on Jesus Christ and bound together by the Holy Spirit. We have each been called to become more like him, but we do that best when we do it together. Being a part of a discipleship group helps you connect with others in that community and grow in your faith as you share life together. With a variety of different groups and classes, there is definitely a place for you to connect at City Light Philadelphia.

5 DISTINCTIVE DNA POINTS FOR GROUPS/ DISCIPLESHIP

1. **Highly Relational** (A Place for people to be real with each other)
2. **Grounded in God's Timeless Truth** (God's Word is Foundation)
3. **Call to Action** (It should cause us to put our faith into action as a group and individuals)
4. **Devoted to prayer** (Prayer is powerful and transformational)
5. **Reproducible** (Are the leaders producing leaders/disciples? Disciples make disciples)

Outreach into the Community

“The Savior makes it very clear through the pen of Luke that the church is to be so much more than a holy huddle, or an inward-focused family that cares for its own and no one else.

121. Malphurs, 207.

Instead, the church has a God-driven Christ-given directive to be outward focused on a lost and dying world that desperately needs the Savior.”¹²² When believers understand the heart of God, they begin to understand that God is love, and God does not want anyone to perish. 2 Peter 3:9 says, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” The heart of Jesus is that everyone would come to repentance. Scriptures like 2 Peter, Mathew 28, Acts 1:8, Luke 15, and Romans 10:9-10 reflect this.

In order to reach people in the community for Christ, believers must be Kingdom-minded and living in such a way that they always have their radar up for “the lost sheep” of our community. This is the heartbeat of all 10 Alliance churches in this thesis project. Acts 1:8 tells us, “Rather than staying huddled up in Jerusalem (Acts 1:13), the church is to move out and reach the world with the gospel of Christ.” Acts 1: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” “If leaders utilize Acts 1:8 as their guide, they discover that the church has three kinds of geographical communities where it could exert a spiritual influence. The first is their immediate or local community. The second is their intermediate community, and the final is their international community which extends to the entire world.”¹²³

Jesus leaves the church with a missional plan to reach their area and surround communities for Christ. Each Alliance church’s “Jerusalem” is their local town in which the church is located. Their local town is where they live, raise their family, and serve in ministry on a daily basis. However, pastors are called to lead their congregation to reach out to their “Judea”

122. Malphurs, 175-176.

123. Malphurs, 178.

and “Samaria” as well. All churches have a mandate to reach those different from them in their community, region, and around the world. Pastors and local churches are called to reach to the ends of the earth.

All 10 Alliance church’s in this study are part of the Great Commission Fund. The Great Commission fund supports, funds, and sends over 800 Alliance International workers around the world to the least reached people groups. Global missions work is not a side project for an Alliance church, but it is woven into the DNA of who they are. When a church, ministry, or para-church ministry finds balance living out Acts 1:8, they will be fulfilling the missional call placed upon them. Reaching the community starts with a God-given passion and desire to reach the community. Without a God-given passion and desire to reach the community, a church will easily become inward focused and miss the mark with God’s Mission for the church. The more Christ followers get to know Jesus, the more they will fall in love with him, and the more they want to serve him.

God has called the local church be the hands and feet of Jesus. Communities in the area consist of the local town in which the church is, surrounding communities, housing developments, schools, and retirement centers. Anywhere there is an interacting population of various kinds of individuals in a common location, there is a candidate for a community in which the local church is called to reach. The vision of the Alliance movement is that everyone, everywhere will come to know Jesus as their Savior. How will people see Jesus? They will see Jesus through believers’ lifestyles, their actions, and the way they treat and love one another.

Christ followers are called to live out their walk with Christ in front of everyone they come in contact with. People will also see Jesus when the local church sends disciples out and when the community attends any Alliance church. How will they hear about Jesus? Pastors and

Christian leaders will teach their congregation to tell people about Jesus. All Christ-followers are called to share their faith not only by deed, but in word. People will share Jesus at work, at school, in town, at church, and through local and global church efforts. How will they respond to Jesus? It is imperative that the local church creates irresistible environments that are conducive to non-Christians showing up and hearing the good news and then creates opportunities for people to respond to Jesus regularly through Salvations and baptism.

Local outreach happens when the church prays for the Salvation of loved ones, co-workers, friends, and family. One Alliance pastor wrote, “We will pray for fertile soil (Mathew 13:8) and desire to build a church where people are in tune with the Spirit of God and constantly responding to the spirit’s prompting.” How do you start? How do you reach your community for Christ? “Begin with prayer for God’s direction and for the power of the Holy Spirit. Pray for open doors and open hearts. Pray for the people whom you expect to invite. Pray that God will be glorified by the work you intend to do.”¹²⁴

124. Roger S. Greenway, *Go and Make Disciples – An Introduction to Christian Missions* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1999), 174-175.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

What if the church, over the next thirty years, truly lives the life that Jesus has taught us to live? What if we lose our enemies, pray for those who hate us, and offer our coat when our hat has been taken? Are we ready to truly sacrifice and watch the world move toward the Kingdom of God? The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who loses a pearl in a field and purchases the whole field to find it. If Jesus is as valuable as we say He is, then what will we give up for Him to remain alive in us? Can we, the church, spend the next thirty years valuing Jesus Christ and whatever he asks of us above all else? Can we even imagine what the world would become? If the church will choose to live this way, we can confidently look forward to seeing our culture influenced and changed.¹²⁵

In conclusion, what are key insights for how a local church can gain and sustain momentum, whether church plant or an established congregation? It is imperative based on the 10 Alliance churches experiencing 5% sustained growth over a 5 year period that pastors and leaders give great focus to birthing the vision, casting the vision, creating healthy change, developing church culture and values, implementing goals and a strategic plan, bringing clarity to a discipleship plan, and rallying the church around outreach and Mathew 28.

Every pastor wants to wake up knowing their church is moving forward. No one wants to be stale, without momentum in the ministry. Leaders want to see the needle moving. However, leaders know from both observation and experience that many do not have momentum. If they do, it is negative momentum and they are moving backward. “Absolutely nothing will revitalize a discouraged church (with no momentum) faster than rediscovering its purpose.”¹²⁶

Every church leader in this thesis project could articulate their purpose and vision with clarity. How can a local church rediscover its purpose? First, it starts with seeking God through

125. David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, *Un-Christian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity...And Why it Matters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2007), 10.

126. Rick Warren, *Purpose Driven Life – Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1995), 82.

prayer and his Word. There is no timeline for this, but a church that earnestly seeks him will ultimately hear from him. Proverbs 3:5-6, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.” John 16:13 teaches us, “But when he, the Spirit of Truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.” With Christ as the Head of the Church, the local church needs to embark on strategic planning journey with the church leadership to find their God-given purpose. To fail to plan is to plan to fail. Strategic planning is essential for every organization that wants to be a lasting impact of a sustained period of time.

Aubrey Malphurs in his book, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, writes four reasons why strategic planning is so important.

1. Strategic Planning Makes a Difference.
2. Strategic Planning Addresses Three Organizational Questions (*Who are we? Where are we going? How will we get there?*)
3. Strategic Planning Affects the Long-Term Life of the Church.
4. Strategic Planning Addresses Alignment Issues.¹²⁷

“Strategic planning produces a unique ministry model and it leads to the church’s own authentic ministry model.”¹²⁸ When a church truly discovers who they are, who God has called them to be, and where they are going it will allow the church stay focused on the vision God has given them. Strategic planning acts as guardrails for the ministry in what they will pursue and in what they will decide to forego. Tom Peters writes, “It’s not about a strategic plan, it is about a

127. Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 32.

128. Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 33.

strategic process, an envisioning process. Ritualistic planning fails to provide the deeper fundamental questions and debates about why the organization is, what it is, what drives it, where it is going, and how it will get there.”¹²⁹ What are the core focus points for any church leadership team developing a strong Strategic plan? develop the mission, develop the vision, discover the core values, design the strategy, develop a plan for outreach into the community, develop a discipleship plan, build the team, assess the setting, and raise the necessary finances.¹³⁰

As a local church embarks on creating and developing a strategic plan, it is important they formulate the right team. Strategic planning rises and falls on effective and empowered leadership. When recruiting a strategic team, it is important to remember that a ministry is only as good as the people who lead it. “The functions of the church are those timeless truths that must never change. For the purposes of strategic planning, you must decide what in the process is timeless and should not change. The local church’s values, mission, and vision are key core ingredients for healthy ministry. They make up the congregation’s heart and soul.”¹³¹ The right leadership team will understand this during the process of developing a strategic plan.

The Apostle Paul was a man that caught a vision of who God called him to be, and he never looked back. Paul told the Church in Philippi in Philippians 3:12-14, “Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Paul’s eyes were fixed on

129. Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 33.

130. Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 36.

131. Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*, 44.

Christ, the author and finisher of our faith. In the same way, as a local church creates a strategic plan, they must keep their eyes on Christ through the entire process.

Webster's defines momentum as, "a property of a moving body that the body has by virtue of its mass and motion and that is equal to the product of the body's mass and velocity; broadly: a property of a moving body that determines the length of time required to bring it to rest when under the action of a constant force or strength or force gained by motion or through the development of events."¹³² In the local church, Andy Stanley, defines *momentum* as forward motion by a series of wins. Stanley shares three components of sustained momentum in the church: new, improved, and improving.¹³³ Anytime church leadership wants to gain or sustain momentum in the church, they need to create something new: a ministry, a position, or a service. Something new will always create some kind of momentum in the church.

However, it is important to understand this momentum trigger can be negative or positive. Negative momentum in the local church could be a pastor leaving the church on bad terms. A negative event that could be positive is the pastor leaving the church because it was in the best interest of the church to move forward. A positive event with positive momentum could be the introduction of a brand-new ministry at the church. Stanley believes there are three questions to ask when evaluating an organization or program that lacks momentum: Do we need a new leader, a new direction, or a new product? Or do we need a combination of all three?

Momentum will never be started by tweaking something old, but by introducing something new in the church. Leaders often try to tweak old ministries that were already not working. When you tweak something that does not work in today's church it still will not work.

132. Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. "Momentum," accessed March 14, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/momentum>.

133. Stanley, *Deep and Wide*, 180.

It is also important to understand in the church that “new” does not guarantee momentum, but in most situations where momentum was achieved, it was an essential component. Leaders in the church need to constantly be improving their ministries, staff, and overall culture. One way to do this is never allow a weekend experience to go by without honest evaluation of how it went and how you can improve.

One thing leaders often fail to accomplish with trying to gain momentum is the “new” they create is never a great improvement over the old. Leaders need to ask the question, “Is this a significant improvement over what we had before?” When leaders or staff create or fix an environment that is not much greater than what they had before, they will never gain positive momentum. The problem is most churches are in situations where they cannot afford new ministries or improvements. Limitations, however, can provide opportunity for innovation. Some of the local churches greatest limitations can serve as opportunity to do something new, fresh, or innovative. When churches cannot afford to try new ministries, programs, and environments, there is a good change they are doing too much as a church. The leadership needs to sit down and simplify their programming so they can work towards building positive momentum with their new or improved ministry.

If the leadership of the church has a goal of improving their local church, it is key to gain momentum through continually improving and evaluating the effectiveness of the church. Success cannot be measured when a church does not measure their ministries. Therefore, a part of every local church’s DNA should be to quarterly and yearly evaluate the ministries, staff, and overall organization. Pastors and leaders must allow evaluation that is unfiltered. Pastors often only allow what they want to hear, and they must consider nothing off limits when evaluating the church. Consistent evaluation will allow a church to create positive momentum. All 10 Alliance

Pastors had ministry dashboards in which they measured and evaluated their church weekly.

When constantly evaluating, the staff will often find the problems before the church members ever recognize them.

Positive Ways to Create New Momentum (*List of Examples*)

- **New Staff**
- **New Programming**
- **New Seasons**
- **New Series**
- **New Look**
- **New Venues**
- **New Churches**
- **New Worship**
- **Visit other Organizations**
- **Go to conferences/seminars**
- **Attend other churches**
- **Read Church leadership books**

Momentum Stoppers (*Examples*)

- * Disengaged Leader
- * Micro-Managing Leaders
- * Overactive Management
- * Complacency
- * Age of Ministry
- * Lack of Trust (*Immoral*)
- * To much complexity

Finally, the church needs to live with expectation that God is going to do something beyond human ability. Ephesians 3:20, “Now glory be to God! By his mighty power at work within us, he is able to accomplish infinitely more than we could ever dare to ask or hope. May he be given glory in the church and in Christ Jesus forever and ever through endless ages, Amen.”¹³⁴ While it is evident God is at work in the local church, leaders must embrace the truth that God wants to do infinitely more than church leadership, church boards, and congregational meetings. While God has a glorious plan for the local churches around the world, it is also important to remember every church, whether new or established, will face challenges as it continues in the transitioning journey. Ponder the following questions when thinking about

134. New Living Translation (NLT).

revitalizing the established church or attempting to church plant. The following questions are from Ronny Russell in his book, *Can a Church Live Again?*¹³⁵

- What if we completely revised the whole idea of what church is? What if we began to create a church that was not for the benefit of its members, but instead we began to equip for the benefit of the world?
- What if we devoted most of our church's resources, buildings, budgets, staff, etc., not to the healthy but to the sick? In other words, we determined that our mission is to the irreligious, not the religious.
- What if the goal of our ministries and programs is not to get people to come to church, but to get people to carry out the mission of the church in the world?
- What if we challenged everybody in the church to be involved in at least one mission experience every year whether a crossed sea or in town?

“No single church can possibly reach everyone. It takes all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people.”¹³⁶ Ephesians 4:1-6 says, “I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” As we lead the local church we are called to do so faithfully. Faithfulness is really a heart issue.

135. Ronny Russell, *Can a Church Live Again? The Revitalization of a 21st-Century Church* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2019).

136. Warren, *Purpose Driven Life*, 156.

Mathew 6:19-21 says, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” While this passage is discussing money, it also deals with motives of the heart. When leaders are more concerned with building their little “kingdom” on earth instead of a full focus on the Kingdom of God, they completely miss their calling as Christian leaders. “When the poor and weak are present, they prevent us from falling into the trap of power, even the power to do good, of thinking that it is we who are the good ones, who must save the Savior and his church.”¹³⁷ Pastors and leaders that can lead and expose their brokenness to their congregation is one of the top qualifications of leadership in the church.

God doesn't need experts in the latest models, strategies, and techniques. He needs broken people who can sit with other broken people and appreciate them as precious children of the Father, prodigals returning home. When we sit with someone who is so broken that they have nothing to offer us that will help us get ahead, nothing that is of use to us, nothing that will enhance our reputation, and little that is of pleasure, then we are forced either to walk away or to stay long enough to begin to recognize the spark of the divine living with them; even in their humble state. Only then can we begin to see our own power, wholeness, usefulness, and competency as a roadblock instead of an advantage.¹³⁸

Andy Stanley brings up some important questions to consider as a pastor works through the growth of a church:

Do you want to create or be a part of a team that creates a church unchurched people love to attend? Are you ready to try some things? Possibly fail at some things. Is there part of you that desires to step away from the familiar and predicable and embrace something new? Are you content to spend the rest of your life doing church the way you've always done it? The way your tradition expects you to do it. Do you really want to continue designing services and

137. Suttle, *Shrink*, 177.

138. Suttle, *Shrink*, 194.

programming for church people? Do you want to spend another season of ministry doing things that make unbelievers unnecessarily uncomfortable because it's comfortable for you? ¹³⁹

The local church is God's Plan A to get the Gospel to the world. Because of this, every local church needs to ask tough question, make strategic decisions, and keep their eyes fixed on the prize as they steward the leadership of the local church. Every Christian leader and pastor should walk through life with Psalm 28:7 as the soundtrack, "The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him." This is the road to faithfulness in Christian leadership.

"When Christian leaders adopt the world's approach rather than seeking God's revelation, they inadvertently assume God's responsibility. God is on a mission to redeem humanity. He is the only one who knows how to do it. Leaders must understand, as Christ did, that their role is to seek the Father's will and to adjust their lives on him."¹⁴⁰ This entire thesis project reinforced the author's desire to give his life to the local church and lead a highly effective team that is sold out for the Gospel. The church is a part of the greatest story ever told, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The author is in ministry for the long haul and must remember to daily "renew his mind" so he can ultimately be poised for maximum impact in his God-given leadership roles.

"Every team regardless of whether its life span is defined by a two-hour meeting or a ten-year project needs to be crystal clear about its mission and team member roles. It must be equipped with any mission-critical skills necessary to accomplish the task at exceptional levels of performance."¹⁴¹ In order to really improve and grow in mission-critical skills, it will be

139. Stanley, *Deep & Wide*, 311-312.

140. Blackaby and Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership*, 104.

141. Pat MacMillan, *The Performance Factor: Unlocking the Secrets of Teamwork* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2001), 274.

important to provide opportunity, internally and externally, for professional leadership growth, coaching, feedback, and evaluation. It is unlikely any team will experience growth and development if the leader is not taking the time to be developed. So, while every leader is seeking methods, factors, and models that can lead to sustained growth, it must never become a substitute for the leaders daily spiritual disciplines. “Daily Bible study, meditation, and prayer have the power and potential to make the glory of God big in our eyes once again. And if we are daily confronted with his grandeur, not only will that give us courage and hope but also it will work to remind us that we are neither grand nor glorious. Personal worship has the power to progressively put us in our place.”¹⁴²

Spiritual leadership in the church and effective ministry will flow from the leader’s personal walk with Christ more than any other thing. Pastors and leaders cannot build and lead a church that is truly making a difference with the Gospel of Jesus without the subject of the Gospel, Jesus, being at the center. “Because private worship exposes us again and again to God’s life-altering grace, it frees us from our hope that we can change people. Personal worship is one of the things God uses to free us from any remaining trust we have that we can do what only the Messiah is able to do.¹⁴³ This must be engrained in every Church Leaders heart and mind as they push to lead a highly effective church, living out Acts 1:8; of making disciples in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

142. Tripp, *Dangerous Calling*, 191.

143. MacMillan, *The Performance Factor*, 274.

Bibliography

- Barna, George. *The Power of Vision*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books Publishing, 2003.
- Baughman, Michael. *Flipping Church – How Successful Church Planters Are Turning Conventional Wisdom Upside-Down*. Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources Publishing, 2016.
- Blackaby, Henry and Richard Blackaby. *Spiritual Leadership – Moving People on to God’s Agenda*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2011.
- Carr, Kelly, and Jonathan P Willis. 2019. *The Business of Growing a Church: How Cincinnati’s Crossroads Uses Entrepreneurial Strategies for Gospel Ends*. *Christianity Today* 62 (4): 50-57. <http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=0&sid=fe616cbf-5d19-4f99-8c49-343358ffbc1c%40pdc-v-sessmgr06>.
- Christian & Missionary Alliance. “About.” Accessed August 31, 2019. <https://www.cmalliance.org/about/>.
- Christian & Missionary Alliance. “Finance Manual.” Accessed August 31, 2019. <https://www.cmalliance.org/resources/publications/finance-manual.pdf>
- Christian & Missionary Alliance. “History: Then and Now.” Accessed August 31, 2019. <https://www.cmalliance.org/about/history/>.
- Christian & Missionary Alliance. “Missions.” Accessed August 31, 2019. <https://www.cmalliance.org/ministries/missions>.
- Clinton, J Robert. *The Making of a Leader – Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing, 2012.
- Felter, David J. “The Story of the Church,” *Holiness Today*, Jan/Feb 2008. <http://holinesstoday.org/the-story-of-the-church>.
- Greenway, Roger S. *Go and Make Disciples – An Introduction to Christian Missions*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1999.
- Groeschel, Craig. *It – How Churches Can Get “It” and Keep “It.”* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2008.
- Habecker, Eugene B. *Rediscovering the Soul of Leadership – Inner Disciplines for the Effective Leader*. Upland, IN: Taylor University Press, 2006.
- Howell Jr., Don N. *Servants of the Servant*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2003.

- Hull, Bill. *The Christian Leader – Rehabilitating Our Addiction to our Secular Leadership*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2016.
- Hunter, George and Donald McGraven. *Church Growth: Strategies That Work*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. 2003.
- Hybels, Bill. *Axioms – Powerful Leadership Proverbs*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2008.
- Irwin, Tim. *Derailed – Five Lessons Learned from Catastrophic Failures of Leadership*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Inc., 2009.
- Kinnaman, David and Gabe Lyons. *Un-Christian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity...And Why it Matters*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2007.
- MacArthur, John. *The Book on Leadership*. Nashville, TN: Nelson Publishing, 2004.
- MacMillan, Pat. *The Performance Factor: Unlocking the Secrets of Teamwork*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2001.
- Malphurs, Aubrey. *Advanced Strategic Planning – A 21st Century Model for Church Leaders*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 2013.
- . *Being Leaders – The Nature of Authentic Christian Community*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003.
- McKain, Larry. *Falling in Love with the Church – Building Agenda Harmony for Church Health and Church Multiplication Movements*. Kansas City, MO: New Church Specialties, 2004.
- Miller, Steve. *C.H. Spurgeon On Spiritual Leadership*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2003.
- Mittleburg, Mark. *Becoming A Contagious Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2007.
- Mohler, Albert. *The Conviction to Lead – 25 Principles for Leadership that Matters*. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2012.
- Mouw, Richard J. *The Smell of Sawdust – What Evangelicals Can Learn from Their Fundamentalist Heritage*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2000.
- Nixon, Paul. *Fling Open the Doors: Giving the Church A Way to the Community*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press. 2002.
- Nouwen, Henri J. M. *Reaching Out – The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*. New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1975.

- Olsen, David T. *The American Church in Crisis – Groundbreaking Research Based On A National Data Base of Over 200,000 Churches*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2008.
- Perman, Matt. *What's Best Next – How the Gospel Transforms the Way You Get Things Done*. Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervan Publishing, 2016.
- Pew Research Center. *America's Changing Religious Landscape*. Accessed August 25, 2019. <https://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>.
- Prime, Derek J. and Alistair Begg. *On Being A Pastor – Understanding our Calling and Work*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2004.
- Rainer, Thom S. *Breakout Churches – Discover How to Make the Leap*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2005.
- Rhodes, C. J. “Church Revitalization: Keeping the Doors of Your Church Open.” *Church Leaders*. Last modified December 5, 2018. <https://churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/338842-church-revitalization-keep-the-doors-of-your-church-open.html>
- Russell, Ronny. *Can a Church Live Again? The Revitalization of a 21st-Century Church*. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2019.
- Scazzero, Peter. *The Emotionally Healthy Leader – How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2015.
- Schaller, Lyle. *44 Questions for Church Planters*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press Publishing, 1991.
- Searcy, Nelson and Kerrick Thomas. *Launch – Starting A New Church from Scratch*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2006.
- Sensing, Tim. *Qualitative Research – A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011.
- Southerland, Dan. *Transitioning: Leading Your Church through Change*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1999.
- Stafford, Tim. “North American Mission Board.” Last modified 2007. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/september/36.68.html>.
- Stanley, Andy. *Deep and Wide – Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2012.

- . *Next Generation Leader – Five Essential for Those Who Will Shape The Future*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2003.
- . *Visioneering: God’s Blueprint for Developing and Maintaining Vision*. Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Publishing, 1999.
- Stanley, Andy, Reggie Joiner and Layne Jones. *Seven Practices of Effective Ministry*. Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 2004.
- Stetzer, Ed and Mike Dodson. *Comeback Churches – How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2007.
- Stevens, Tim. *Pop Goes the Church – Should the Church Engage Culture?* Indianapolis, IN: Power Publishing, 2008.
- Stevens, Tim and Tony Morgan. *Simply Strategic Growth: Attracting a Crowd to Your Church*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2005.
- Stowell, Joseph M. *Redefining Leadership – Character-Driven Habits of Effective Leaders*. Nashville, TN: Zondervan Publishing, 2014.
- Suttle, Tim. *Shrink – Faithful Ministry in a Church-Growth Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2014.
- Swinton, John, and Harriet Mowat. *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed. Norfolk, UK: SCM Press, 2016.
- Tripp, Paul David. *Dangerous Calling – Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Crossway, 2012.
- Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8th ed. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Warren, Rick. *Purpose Driven Life – Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1995.
- Whitesel, Bob. *Growth by Accident, Death by Planning – How Not to Kill a Congregation*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010.
- . *Staying Power – Why People Leave the Church Over Change – And What You Can Do About It!* Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003.
- Willard, Dallas. *Renovation of the Heart – Putting on the Character of Christ*. Colorado Springs, CO: Tyndale House Publishing NavPress, 2012.

Appendix I

Church Name: _____

Location: _____

Church Size: _____

Number of Staff (Full Time/ Part Time): _____

Total years in Ministry: _____

Ordained or Licensed in CMA? _____

Total years as an Alliance Pastor: _____

Years at current Church: _____

Are you the founding pastor? _____

Are you leading an established church or church plant? _____

If established church, have you planted a church before? _____

Mission Statement:

Vision Statement:

Values:

Do you have a strategic plan? 1 year? 3 year? 5 year? 10 year? _____

Do you provide leadership training to your staff, leaders, and church members? If so, what?

Top 5 pros of the Church today?

- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____
- 5 _____
- 6 _____

Top 5 threats to the Church today?

- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____
- 9 _____
- 10 _____

Top 5 pros of revitalizing an established Church?

- 6 _____
- 7 _____
- 8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

Top 5 cons of revitalizing the established Church or landmines to avoid?

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

Top 5 pros of Church planting?

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

Top 5 cons of church planting or landmines to avoid?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

S.W.O.T Analysis of your specific local church: (*Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats*)

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Opportunities:

Threats:

Why do you think the established churches are dying at a fast rate?

Why are we seeing some church plants start fast and succeed while other church plants do not make it past the 12-month mark?

Have you experienced 5% growth sustained over a 5-year period? What are the key factors, leadership models, or strategies that have contributed to this success?

Any other thoughts, concerns, or recommendations on this subject matter?

Would you consider providing the following data from your church to help this thesis project succeed?

- i. Attendance records from the past 5 years (2013-2018)
- j. Overall church ministry programming
- k. Overall ministry strategic plan including goals (12, 24, 36 or beyond)
- l. Financial history (Has your giving increased with increased attendance? If so, by what percentage?)
- m. Specific staff and titles
- n. Debt, if any
- o. The number of volunteers serving per weekend and the overall total number of volunteers for the entire church
- p. Any other info that will help glean leadership factors in fast-growing sustainable church plants and revitalized established churches

Appendix II

Church Readiness Inventory 144

Removed to comply with copyright.

Appendix III

Removed to comply with copyright.

Appendix IV

Church Planters Questionnaire

Planting Fast Growing Church by Stephen Gray and Trent Short.

Church Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Did you start the church? Yes or No
2. Have you started other churches? Yes or No
3. What year was your public launch? _____
4. How many currently attend your weekend services?

If your average is 200 or higher, how many months into the public launch did you reach 200?

5. Is the church financially self-supporting? Yes or No

If yes, how many months after public launch did you achieve this? _____

FINANCES

6. Did you start as a full-time church planter or bi-vocational?
7. Did you receive a salary by the sponsoring agent?

How many years? 1 2 3 4 5

8. Did the sponsoring agency provide finances for the purchase of the property? Yes or No
9. Were you given any additional start-up money by the sponsoring agent? Yes or No

If Yes, how much? 1,000-10,000....10,000-25,000...25,000-50,000....other amount?

10. Did you have to raise any additional finances personally prior to public launch? Yes or No?

WHO HAD CONTROL?

How much input did you have in the following areas over the sponsoring agent? Rate how much input you had on a scale from 1 to 5 with 5 being the most input.

11. In creating the vision for the church? _____
12. In determining the worship style? _____
13. In hiring your own support staff? _____
14. In determining where the church was planted? _____
15. In determining your target audience? _____
16. In determining how the funding was spent? _____

PERSONAL SUPPORT (Scale of 1 to 5; 5 being the best)

17. How much encouragement did you receive from your superiors? _____
18. How well did you feel you were supported by your pastoral colleagues? _____

19. How well were you accepted by surrounding churches in your denomination?

20. Did you have regular fellowship with other pastors? _____
21. Was your work celebrated within the denomination? _____
22. How much negativity did you have to overcome from your sponsoring agency?

23. Did you have a prayer network? _____

METHODS

24. Which model best describes your church plant? Mother/Daughter....Parachute
Drop...Other?
25. Did this church plant start with a church-planting team or with an individual planter?
26. How many were in your "core group" before public launch? 1-25...26-50...76-
99...over 100?
27. What percentage of your core group were "seed" families from other churches?
28. Did you use a "preview service" or small group studies as your main avenue to build
your core group?
29. How many attended the public launch service?

Appendix V

CHURCHES VISION AUDIT
(Burt Nanus, "Visionary Leadership")

- 1. What is the current stated mission of the church?**
- 2. What value does the church provide to its community?**
- 3. What is the character of the community in which the church operates?**
- 4. What is the church's unique position in that community?**
- 5. What does it take for the church to succeed?**
- 6. What are the values and the culture that govern behavior and decision making?**
- 7. What are the operational strengths and weaknesses of the church?**
- 8. What is the current strategy, and can it be defended?**
- 9. Does the church have a clearly stated vision? If so, what is it?**
- 10. If the church continues on its current path, where will it be in a decade?**
- 11. Do the core leaders know where the church is headed and agree on the direction?**
- 12. Do the organizations, structures, decisions processes, information systems and personnel support the current direction of the church?**

Appendix VI

10 Questions for Understanding Your Churches DNA & Uniqueness

(From "Church Unique", Will Mancini, 2008)

1. **Leaders:** What are the unique strengths of the leader(s) in your church? *Think of the unique strengths of biblical leaders- the faith of Abraham, the humility of Moses, the courage of Joshua, and the vision of Nehemiah.*
2. **Gifts:** If each person has unique spiritual gifts in your church, what does the collective gift mix look like?
3. **Heritage:** What kind of heritage do your people share? Is it multi-ethnicity, or do they share many family ties? What does a common ethnicity say about your church's DNA?
4. **Experiences:** What shared experiences do your people have in common?
5. **Tradition:** How does the denominational background, or lack thereof, have an impact on your uniqueness?
6. **Values:** What values drive decision making in your church? What unique convictions do your people share?
7. **Personality:** If you were to describe what makes your church distinct from every other church, what would you say?
8. **Evangelism:** How do your people talk about the Great Commission? How does your church nuance it?
9. **Recovery:** What sins and sin patterns have your people been delivered from? What patterns of worldliness are they most tempted by?
10. **Motivation:** Is there a deeply motivated rubric behind how your church sees mission such as community, service, prayer, and worship?

Appendix VII

Church Multiplication Vision and Process in the Christian and Missionary Alliance

<https://www.cmalliance.org/ministries/church-planting>

The Alliance began with one church plant—the Gospel Tabernacle in New York City. It grew into a healthy congregation reaching the surrounding community and training and sending workers and leaders to reach the world.

From this one church, today—over 130 years later—more than 25,000 fellowships and nearly 6 million believers have emerged. Clearly, the Great Commission is fulfilled when Christian leaders **GO** plant churches or equip and **SEND** others to do so.

Church Planting for Church Multiplication

Church planting involves an individual, a mother church, and/or a group of people starting a church to engage a community through gospel proclamation and demonstration, resulting in Kingdom addition.

If Church planting is Kingdom addition, we will become an Alliance that plants churches with a reproducing DNA so that when they are planted, they will plant other churches that plant churches that plant churches, resulting in Kingdom multiplication.

Alliance Church Multiplication

We want to advance a church-planting multiplication movement throughout The Alliance in order to fulfill the Great Commission. We see local churches discovering, developing, and deploying emerging leaders who plant churches that multiply.

- A. **CHAMPION:** We will advocate the biblical priority of church planting by encouraging, empowering, and vision casting.
- B. **PARTNER:** Together as a Christ-centered, Acts 1:8 family of churches, districts, schools, and regions, we will accomplish more.
- C. **RESOURCE:** We will provide necessary resources to districts and churches in order to expand the capacity of influential disciples who plant healthy, reproducing churches.

GO:

Is God Calling You to Plant a Church?

If you believe God may be calling you to plant, consider the following:

- Take the Initial Screening Assessment (\$9.95) to gain a better understanding of your gifts and suitability for church planting. (We may ask you to take a \$99 version later.)
- After you complete the initial online screening, contact the Alliance District or Regional leader in your area about possibly planting a church, or e-mail Grace Kim at the National Office at kimg@cmalliance.org or call (719) 265-2056.

SEND:

Is God Calling your Church to Become a Greenhouse Church?

A greenhouse provides a healthy environment for plants to grow. Greenhouse Churches provide a healthy atmosphere for Christian leaders to develop as church planters.



INTERESTED?

Contact your pastor or local district staff to find out how to become a part of this movement to reach more with the gospel through church planting.

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

January 30, 2020

Kedrick Hirschy

IRB Exemption 4158.013020: Leadership Dynamics and Factors of Fast-Growing Church Plants and Revitalized Established Churches in the Christian and Missionary Alliance

Dear Kedrick Hirschy,

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

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

(iii) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

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

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

Sincerely,



G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

LIBERTY
UNIVERSITY.

Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971