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JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

**Church Revitalization Resources and Connections for the Northside of Indianapolis**

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

by

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## THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to provide a connection point and resources for pastors on the Northside of Indianapolis, IN to revitalize their churches. This project addresses the problem that many pastors on Indianapolis' Northside may lack a connection point and resources to revitalize their churches. The research, resources, and connection points in this study focus on the biblical and practical leadership traits of a pastor, which are necessary to lead a church's revitalization. This study offers a biblical-theological groundwork for a pastor/shepherd, emphasizing that a pastor should be of good moral character, affirming, aware of mutual need, caring, a promoter of kinship, loving to everyone, and approachable. These characteristics are essential traits from a biblical and cultural perspective and form the foundation for a pastor who is called to revitalize a church.

These conclusions were reached through a qualitative analysis of the following intervention. The intervention begins with a unique transferable cold call and networking recruitment method repeatable in other metropolitan and geographic areas with possible revitalization consulting applications. Fourteen pastors from various evangelical churches participated in this study. The intervention has a three-part interview process. First, there is an assessment of each participating pastor's revitalization knowledge and needs. Second, each pastor receives resources and connection points meant to meet perceived revitalization needs. Third, there is an assessment of the pastor's impressions of the resources and connection points received and possible future impact for the Great Commission in Indianapolis. According to statistical analysis, this intervention has a very high probability of repeating similar results in other settings.

Keywords: Church Revitalization, Church Renewal, Church Vitality, Revitalization Leadership, Pastoral Leadership, Indianapolis Churches

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Walking into a church can be a time warp experience. David Olsen points out that troubled churches in America could have flourishing ministries if they were functioning in the 1910s or the 1950s, and he notes that some churches are still living in the 1980s or 1990s.<sup>1</sup> Bill Henard points out that churches in need of revitalization often are like mimeograph institutions in a world of iPads. He goes on to point out that one might think that only churches in decline need revitalization, but even churches that have grown can have issues under the surface that eventually negatively affect them.<sup>2</sup> Lee Kricher believes in the term “perpetual church revitalization,” noting that churches will likely not remain or become dynamic forces in a community unless they embrace the next generation by putting into place policies and practices designed to keep reaching the next generation.<sup>3</sup> The truth is that all churches need to be aware of their vulnerability to demise. They need to be a catalyst for the faith, especially with young people, or the churches will die with the generation that started them. Churches cannot get stuck in the past, or they will be the past. Relevance is not a compromise; it is a responsibility.

It is the responsibility of church leadership, especially the pastor, to ensure that their church is in a constant state of health. The leadership and pastor of a church do not shoulder this responsibility alone. Andrew Davis shares that God requires leaders to act powerfully by the

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<sup>1</sup> David T. Olsen, *The American Church in Crisis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 162.

<sup>2</sup> Bill Henard, *Can These Bones Live? A Practical Guide to Church Revitalization* (Nashville: H&B Publishing, 2015), chap. 11, Operating Through Inadequate Ministry Structures, Wordsearch Bible.

<sup>3</sup> Lee Kricher, *New Generation: A Practical Guide for Revitalizing Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 132, Wordsearch Bible.



Holy Spirit to bring revitalization to a church.<sup>4</sup> Davis also says that the only way for a church to be revitalized is if Christ has absolute ownership and is the church's central focus.<sup>5</sup> This dissertation has the goal of being a tool to help equip pastors and church leaders to revitalize their churches.

## **Ministry Context**

### Church History

The history of the church is full of examples of the need for continued church revitalization. The seven churches in chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation give examples of churches that Jesus critiqued, pointing out the need for revitalization in the first century, especially in five of these seven cities. Henry and Richard Blackaby point out that the seven churches in Asia had severe internal problems and external problems from enemies. Through His power, Jesus assured them that He was able to defeat their enemies, fill their needs, and restore their spiritual passion.<sup>6</sup> The need for church revitalization goes back to the first century. This biblical fact sets the precedent for revitalization in churches today and comes with the hope-filled promise that Jesus can turn a church around if they are obedient.

Jesus called out each of the seven churches for their need to revitalize, but he also promised that He would be with them and reward them for their faithfulness. The promises to the seven churches can encourage pastors and church leaders today as they look to Jesus to revitalize their churches. To the church in Ephesus in Revelation 2:5a, He said, "Remember therefore from

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<sup>4</sup> Andrew M. Davis, *Revitalize: Biblical Keys to Helping Your Church to Come Alive Again* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), chap. 2, What Is Revitalization? Wordsearch Bible.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 2, Embrace Christ's Ownership of the Church.

<sup>6</sup> Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Flickering Lamps: Christ and His Church* (Jonesboro, GA: Blackaby Ministries International, 2015), chap. 4, Christ and His Churches, E-book.

where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first.”<sup>7</sup> To the church in Smyrna in Revelation 2:10b, Jesus said, “Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.” To the church in Pergamum, Jesus promises in Revelation 2:17b that, “To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.” To the church in Thyatira, Jesus promises in Revelation 2:26-27 that the one who keeps His works will have the authority to rule. To the church in Sardis in Revelation 3:5, He said, “The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.” To the church in Philadelphia in Revelation 3:9-12, Jesus promises to make those from Satan’s synagogue bow down at their feet, keep them from the hour of trial, give them a crown, and write on them the name of God and His city. To the church in Laodicea in Revelation 3:19-21, Jesus said, “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.” The instructions given to these churches to revitalize could be applied to churches today, and the promises Jesus made to them can give hope for churches today that Jesus will come through for them if they obey His Word.

The need for church revitalization is a natural reoccurring characteristic of the Christian church since its inception, and it parallels the human life cycle. Job 14:1-2 shows the natural human life cycle: “Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble. He comes out like a flower and withers; he flees like a shadow and continues not.” Gary McIntosh says that for

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<sup>7</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible references in this paper are to the English Standard Version (ESV) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016).

most of the world's people, the life cycle follows a standard bell curve.<sup>8</sup> He claims that as a baseline, churches will have a similar bell curve with rapid growth in the first fifteen to twenty years, a leveling off for another twenty to forty years, and a slower decline in the next thirty to forty years until the church dies or becomes unhealthy and stagnant.<sup>9</sup> McIntosh makes the point that the seven churches in Revelation were only about forty to fifty years old, and they were showing evidence of decline. He notes that these churches' life cycle is sometimes called the St. John's Syndrome, and that this syndrome is present in organizations frequently enough to be viewed as commonly occurring. He claims that local churches today exhibit all the St. John's Syndrome patterns, just like these seven churches in Revelation.<sup>10</sup> Jesus encouraged the churches in Revelation that He could help them revitalize. McIntosh stresses that no matter what kind of organization, including churches, there is potential for revived vitality and growth. He points out that decline is inevitable in the human life cycle, but not so in an organization.<sup>11</sup> Jesus wants to help churches today not to be held captive to the St. John's Syndrome.

Douglas Sweeney warns that in the Christian history of churches and institutions that have revitalized, they had change agents that institutionalize these organizations to preserve their renewal. He notes that the resulting new petrified institutions eventually require revival again.<sup>12</sup> Sweeney also observes a trend that the evangelical church, after times of renewal, tries to standardize revival by attempting to bottle the honorable magnetism of its leaders perpetually.

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<sup>8</sup> Gary L. McIntosh, *Taking Your Church to the Next Level: What Got You Here Won't Get You There* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 23-24.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-30.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-26.

<sup>12</sup> Douglas A. Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement* (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 54.

He notes that time and again, they become corrupt, discouraging the ministry, and leading to further reformation.<sup>13</sup> A riveting focus on the practical application of God’s Word and the spreading of the gospel message will minimize the tendency to standardize revival based on the messenger or traditions.

The history of the Reformation shows a need for continually revitalizing or reforming the church using the Word of God instead of being held to tradition. Mark Dever notes that the Roman Catholic Church used the Latin phrase *semper idem* as somewhat of a motto. It has the meaning “always the same.” In contrast, the Reformed churches used *semper* as somewhat of a motto in this way: *ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum Dei*, “The church reformed, always being reformed according to the Word of God.” Dever notes that a healthy church hears God’s Word continually, always being refashioned and reshaped by it.<sup>14</sup> This idea of the church always being reformed can be applied to the churches on the Northside of Indianapolis. Churches need to revitalize to minister effectively in the time and culture that God has placed them in and not stay the same for tradition’s sake or perpetuate an institutional organization that worked in the past.

### Personal Experience

This dissertation’s ministry context starts at The Gathering Place (TGP) of North Syracuse, New York. It is an Independent Baptist Church founded in 1847. After thirteen years, this researcher resigned as an associate pastor and moved to Indianapolis, Indiana. The Gathering Place had a significant impact on this dissertation’s present context because the experience had there revealed the need for pastors and church leaders to have resources and connections to

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<sup>13</sup> Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story*, 53-54.

<sup>14</sup> Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 58.

revitalize their churches. Therefore, a recap of its history sets the stage for the researcher's present calling to Indianapolis, Indiana.

Before the present senior pastor of TGP, two pastors left on less than favorable terms. The first pastor, who led a building campaign, left the church because of problems between him and the boards. The pastor after him led the church to its maximum number. Then, there were problems related to the *Forty Days of Purpose* with disagreements between him and the boards which caused him to leave and numbers to decline. The present senior pastor made many positive changes over the last twelve years, but the church has not reached maximum attendance under the previous pastor. There has been a steady flow of new people to the church. While some have stayed, a significant number of the long-time members left the church.

The present senior pastor hired a consultant when he first came on who helped the church through a period of healing using the principles in a book written in 2003 by Kenneth Quick called *Healing the Heart of Your Church*. This approach's primary goal is for the senior pastor and leadership to stand in as a mediatorial authority. Quick proposes that mediatorial authority means that a church's spiritual leadership can represent that local church, speaking for them before men and God in the same way that a husband can speak as the head of his household before God and men.<sup>15</sup> Quick relates that the pastor, as spiritual leadership, is representing the church before the congregation. As such, the pastor identifies with the perpetrator of past injustice or injury. He then stands in their place and shoulders the responsibility of past mistakes before the congregation. By taking this role, leadership can enable people to release anger and internalized pain, extend forgiveness, and experience reconciliation.<sup>16</sup> This process met with

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<sup>15</sup> Kenneth Quick, *Healing the Heart of Your Church: How Church Leaders Can Break the Pattern of Historic Corporate Dysfunction* (Bloomington, MN: Church Smart Resources, 2003), 38.

<sup>16</sup> Quick, *Healing the Heart of Your Church*, 75.

some success, but after this, the senior pastor, leadership, and staff essentially embarked on the great adventure of revitalization lacking the present-day variety of resources and possible connections.

In the term of the present senior pastor, many positive changes took place. Sunday school attendance for adults had waned because of a lack of congregational participation. The senior pastor, staff, and lay leaders decided to end Sunday school and embarked on a small group approach. Presently small groups are emphasized and are very important to leadership and congregants. Participation in small groups far exceeds the previous Sunday school attendance. The church had a traditional and blended service when the present pastor took over. TGP now has a well-done traditional service and has a thoroughly modern second service. Children's Sunday school happens during the modern service. During the second service, there is a Bible study to replace the adult Sunday school for those who come to the earlier traditional service. TGP has been a program-based church. The program emphasis has been scaled down some with a more intense focus on regular, special services, and small group ministry.

Programs continue at the church focusing on reaching out to the community for Christ. The children's outreaches of Center Shot and Upward happen at specific time frames in the year. This last year, the church opened its facilities to the Village of North Syracuse for the annual Family Festival and hosted Trunk or Treat in partnership with the village. The church has a food pantry and a clothing closet that offer their goods for free to anyone in the local community on a specific Sunday every month.

TGP has valued excellent biblical teaching, right doctrine, and missions throughout its history. There are support groups, Bible studies, and book studies offered on Wednesday nights at various time frames throughout the year. These replaced the Wednesday night prayer/teaching

meetings that were happening when the present pastor came on board. There were several different discipleship and evangelism training programs at different times implemented to equip the saints for the work of ministry. At the time of this researcher's resignation, small groups were happening throughout the year at people's homes and the church on various days of the week. Every other month on the first Wednesday in the worship center, an all-church Encounter night focused on prayer, worship, and a message.

The facilities have improved under the present senior pastor. They were dated and showed a severe need for maintenance and modification. There was remodeling done in all of the bathrooms, and the roof was replaced. The whole church got new carpeting and a new paint job inside and out. A large sign was installed at the entrance reflecting the name change from "North Syracuse Baptist Church" to "The Gathering Place." The parking lots were re-surfaced and lines repainted. The church library was removed and replaced with a café. The church got new lighting, and there were large screens and projectors added to the worship center and the lobby, along with a comprehensively more modern appearance. The stage in the worship center was raised, making the stage area two levels instead of three. A new soundboard was acquired and installed in the worship center, and classroom modifications were made to the children's wing. There was a sensory room added for special needs children in the children's wing. The church now has fobbed entrances to the building, preschool, and the children's wing. There are now off duty police officers and a newly formed security team on the premises for services.

These changes happened because of the leadership of the current senior pastor who worked with the deacon and trustee boards to help them to see that changes needed to be made to reach the next generation. Many pastors of churches in need of revitalization may not know or understand that they need to take bold steps of revitalization. Blackaby and son relate that often

struggling churches think they cannot afford to enlist strong leadership, causing them not to move forward with God's plan or to compromise with weak leadership.<sup>17</sup> Though TGP was successful in making major changes, this experience leads this researcher to a bias that the church could have had less attrition and more successful cooperation from established members if leadership was exposed to present-day resources in church revitalization.

### Present Context

There are now many more resources and connections for church revitalization available to pastors and church leaders from the academic world. When applied, this wealth of information can make the challenging calling of church revitalization a less overwhelming job. The Northside of Indianapolis seems to exhibit the need for resources and connection points to see its churches turn around. Some churches could now be in the same position that TGP was thirteen years ago.

The church situation in Indianapolis could be considered precarious for some mainline denominations on the wealthier Northside. Elfriede Wedam reports that some of the well-endowed Meridian Street congregations, on the Northside, have had decades-long arguments over the use of their money.<sup>18</sup> He also relates that some churches on Meridian Street are under pressure, notwithstanding their massive budgets and memberships. He notes that they need large memberships to support their infrastructure, and they look to the boom years of the 1950s and 1960s and the image they had then of institutional success. He also reports that though they are not at risk of closing, membership loss in recent years makes them vulnerable, reducing their liveliness and energy.<sup>19</sup> Wedam notes that this higher-class religious district on Meridian does

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<sup>17</sup> Blackaby and Blackaby, *Flickering Lamp*, chap. 5, Len Koster Walked by Faith.

<sup>18</sup> Elfriede Wedam, "The 'Religious District' of Elite Congregations: Reproducing Spatial Centrality and Redefining Mission," *Sociology of Religion* 64, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 54, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3712268>.



not draw a strong racially diverse membership, even though several churches are in or close to non-white neighborhoods.<sup>20</sup>

Richard Hoffman and Max Briggs report that the First Baptist Church on College Avenue and 86<sup>th</sup> Street peaked in membership in 1970 at 1,264, and in 2000 it was down to 613.<sup>21</sup> They also note that there has been a constant decline in members over the past thirty years. In 2003, the church found itself at the lowest number of members in the past one hundred years, and they have had a significant decline in adult conversions and baptisms.<sup>22</sup> Hoffman and Briggs cite reasons for the decline, noting that the church may have missed the mission from the Lord they once had to send out missionaries, start new churches, and to ordain people to gospel ministry.<sup>23</sup> Olsen affirms these possible reasons for the decline in a church by pointing out that established churches must focus on health and growth, actively parent new churches, and recognize that church planting is essential for their future health.<sup>24</sup>

This decline is not happening in all the churches in the Indianapolis area. Many have effective ministries and are seeing growth. One example is College Park Church in Carmel, just on the other side of Indianapolis' Northside. This church has focused on health and growth. Besides their other ministries, they have a ministry called Next Door Mission that has a strategy that includes starting new churches, church adoption, revitalization, and assisting other

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<sup>19</sup> Wedam, "The 'Religious District' of Elite Congregations," 55-56.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Hoffman and Max Briggs, *A Light in the Forest: A History of the First Baptist Church of Indianapolis, Indiana 1822-2003*, 2nd ed. (Camel, IN: First Baptist Church of Indianapolis, 2005), 76.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>24</sup> Olsen, *The American Church in Crisis*, 180-181.

churches.<sup>25</sup> Since 2015, they have launched four churches that have or are in the process of being rebirthed.<sup>26</sup> They are not birthing new College Park Churches, per say; they are birthing churches that are to be in the College Park Family of Churches. After being approached by the leadership of a dying church and approval is had, their strategy is to help the church close, adopt them, revitalize them, and then rebirth them as a new congregation with new leadership that is self-governed.<sup>27</sup> Churches like College Park give one a hope that things can turn around for other churches on the Northside of Indianapolis that may be at risk of closing.

### **Problem Presented**

The problem this project will address is that many pastors on Indianapolis' Northside may lack a connection point and resources to revitalize their churches.

Olsen agrees that when a church reaches forty years of age, it begins to decline. He notes that from 2004 to 2005, 57 percent of churches over forty years old declined, and 66 percent of older mainline churches declined.<sup>28</sup> Kent Hunter and Trace Swank observe that many churches are plateaued or declining, and they share that the median age is older than sixty in worship.<sup>29</sup> Congregants can get so comfortable with the familiar that they can lose sight of the lost and personal spiritual growth. Thom Rainer relates that some people are so comfortable that they stay in the same place spiritually for years, only seeing the same groups of people in a spiritual

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<sup>25</sup> College Park Church, "Next Door Mission," accessed September 10, 2020, [https://www.yourchurch.com/ministries/#page\\_/ministries/next-door-mission/](https://www.yourchurch.com/ministries/#page_/ministries/next-door-mission/).

<sup>26</sup> College Park Church, "Congregations," accessed September 10, 2020, <https://www.yourchurch.com/congregations/>.

<sup>27</sup> College Park Church, "The Next Door Mission: A Strategy for Reaching the Indy-Metro Area," accessed September 10, 2020, [https://256469dc8dd9b78e41a9-ba52a0b241f891ac68e37b761b226571.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/uploaded/n/0e5416221\\_1473348335\\_next-door-mission-strategy-booklet.pdf](https://256469dc8dd9b78e41a9-ba52a0b241f891ac68e37b761b226571.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/uploaded/n/0e5416221_1473348335_next-door-mission-strategy-booklet.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> Olsen, *The American Church in Crisis*, 84.

<sup>29</sup> Kent R. Hunter and Trace J. Swank, *Who Broke My Church: 7 Proven Strategies for Renewal and Revival* (New York: Hatchette Book Group, 2017), 3.

holding tank having the same commitment level.<sup>30</sup> The inward focus sometimes perpetuates itself at the expense of reaching out.

Glenn McDonald contends that in many local congregations, 99 percent of the energy is invested in the ninety-nine who are regularly attending. He observes that congregations should not be so concerned with security systems for people who are already safe.<sup>31</sup> McDonald concludes that only 10 to 15 percent of Christians in America have taken the step from an inward spiritual focus to an outwardly discipling lifestyle.<sup>32</sup> An inwardly focused church does not happen overnight. Rainer's research shows that a church with symptoms of sickness gradually moves to a very sick state, and the situation gets worse without intervention. He estimates that 40 percent of American congregations, which amounts to over 150,000, show signs of being very sick.<sup>33</sup> This reality can frustrate pastors, and some give up or burnout.

McIntosh relates that when pastors desire to give up, it stems from not understanding what it takes to succeed. He notes that when victories are few, the opposition is robust, and resources are limited, these things make it tempting to abandon the effort early.<sup>34</sup> Dying and closed churches do not give glory to God and happen because they become inwardly focused. Mark Clifton shares that neighborhood churches are reminders of who God is, and when they struggle, God's reputation within that community struggles. He claims that replanting dying churches reclaims God's glory as an act of worship, making much of Jesus. He adds that if the

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<sup>30</sup> Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006), 148.

<sup>31</sup> Glenn McDonald, *The Disciple Making Church: From Dry Bones to Spiritual Vitality* (Lima, OH: FaithWalk Publishing, 2007).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>33</sup> Thom Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church: Twelve Ways to Keep Yours Alive* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2014), 92-93, Kindle.

<sup>34</sup> Gary L. McIntosh, *There's Hope for Your Church: First Steps to Restoring Health and Growth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), chap. 12, Stay the Course, Wordsearch Bible.

church's primary goal is to make much of Jesus by giving Him glory, everyone involved will have the courage to keep striving forward.<sup>35</sup> The desire of pastors to give God glory, contrasting with the church's dire state at large, would lead one to assume that many pastors in Indianapolis do not know about the many resources and connections available to help them revitalize their churches.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry study is to provide a connection point and resources for pastors on the Northside of Indianapolis to revitalize their churches.

Networking will help pastors to learn how to be successful at revitalizing their churches. John Maxwell encourages his readers that they have an incredible opportunity to discover something they should know or do from others, and when this truth is accepted, then they will start asking others for connections. He believes that asking questions opens up opportunities and that leaders should not settle for what they already know.<sup>36</sup> Pastors benefit when they seek the experience and advice of other leaders. Rainer makes the point that in leading change, true leaders can become terrific resources. They have the experience, and they know what is required to bring meaningful change.<sup>37</sup> Putting to use the knowledge of others can help pastors avoid mistakes and put into action ideas that could be effective in their church.

Blind spots develop over time that only an outsider can see. Sherwood Patterson referenced Joshua's reformation of Israel. This revitalization happened when Joshua needed to

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<sup>35</sup> Mark Clifton, *Reclaiming Glory: Revitalizing Dying Churches* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2016), 15, 18-19, Wordsearch Bible.

<sup>36</sup> John C. Maxwell, *Leader Shift: The 11 Essential Changes Every Leader Must Embrace* (New York: Harper Collins, 2019), 122-123.

<sup>37</sup> Thom Rainer, *Who Moved My Pulpit: Leading Change in the Church* (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2016), 61-62, Wordsearch Bible.

remove pagan practices and institutions which had become commonplace and biblically re-orient Israel. He relates that a pastor today must biblically re-orient a church in need of revitalization. He adds that declining churches generally have leadership that is unaware, unwilling, or unable to correct mistakes made in the past and could benefit from outside consultants.<sup>38</sup> Sometimes churches do not see that they need help or think that they can turn their church around independently. McIntosh shares that a consultant is someone who borrows one's watch and charges to hear the time. The problem is that some churches look at their watch and are not able to tell the time, so they may need to consider getting outside help to analyze, see obstacles, and potentials.<sup>39</sup> This study seeks to be a consulting resource for pastors on the Northside of Indianapolis by being a catalyst for their further personal investigation about church revitalization.

### **Basic Assumptions**

There are some assumptions made in this DMIN project that have a bearing on this study's success. The researcher assumes a gap of knowledge by pastors in Indianapolis about church revitalization and that their connections related to this subject are few. The assumption is that pastors will be receptive to receiving resources and open to discussions that will facilitate making new connections to learn more about church revitalization.

The researcher will send emails of introduction to pastors on the Northside of Indianapolis with a short explanation of the DMIN study. The assumption is that few pastors will respond to emails, but the researcher will follow-up with phone calls and a visit to their church

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<sup>38</sup> Sherwood H. Patterson III, "Identifying Common Procedures for Revitalization Leaders When Initiating Turnaround Strategies in Declining Churches" (DMIN diss., Biola University, 2019), ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

<sup>39</sup> McIntosh, *There's Hope for Your Church*, chap. 13, Breaking Through.

offices. Presumably, some pastors will be receptive to these efforts. In the initial personal contact, the researcher will more thoroughly inform the pastor about the DMIN project and ask for their participation in a short questionnaire. The questionnaire will assess the pastor's knowledge of church revitalization. There is an assumption that once they hear about the study, pastors will share with the researcher the names and contact information of other pastors that might show interest in being involved with the study.

The researcher may be at a disadvantage in getting personal appointments with pastors because he just moved to Indianapolis. To combat this disadvantage, at any point in the course of the interactions, the researcher will make sure that the pastor receives a copy of his resume and proof of ordination if necessary. It is also quite possible that the researcher is at a disadvantage in getting personal appointments with pastors because of the coronavirus lockdown. The coronavirus could make it more challenging to make connections to churches and pastors in the area. When restrictions lift, an assumption is that some pastors will be open to appointments with the researcher and will participate in the study.

The consultation will consist of an initial appointment of no longer than one and one-half hours. This appointment will assure that the participant has taken the closed-ended ten-question Church Revitalization I questionnaire and a specially designed Pastoral Interview I Questionnaire to discern his areas of church revitalization need. The researcher will take careful notes but will not offer any advice nor share any resources in this initial visit. He will simply make another appointment with the pastor. An assumption is that the pastor will give honest and candid answers and that the answers to the questions and conversation will be invaluable to the DMIN study. There is the assumption that the pastor will be eager to make that appointment and receive input.

The second appointment will be no longer than thirty minutes. At the appointment, the researcher will share with the pastor the research he has done to find resources and connections related to his church's revitalization needs by giving him the Suggestions for Resources and Connections form. There is an assumption that the pastor will find the information helpful and engage in future personal investigation of these church revitalization resources and connections. The researcher will provide one vital resource in the form of a book to the pastor at the researcher's expense. There will be an expectation expressed to the pastor that he engages in an investigation, as much as possible, of the resources (especially the one vital resource) and connections suggested within two weeks. There is an expectation that, from the suggested resources, the pastor will acquire the resources he feels necessary at his own expense for further study.

The third appointment will be no longer than one hour. In appreciation for the pastor's time, the appointment will include a free breakfast or lunch and will be at the researcher's expense. The researcher will ask the pastor to retake the initial closed-ended questionnaire, titled Church Revitalization Questionnaire, and the researcher will ask the pastor to answer a specially designed open-ended Pastoral Interview II Questionnaire about his perception of how these resources and the connections have or will help him. An assumption is that the pastor will give honest and candid answers and that the answers to the questions and conversation will be invaluable to the DMIN study.

### **Definitions**

Davis defines the word *revitalize* as "to make alive again" and stresses that revitalization happens when God repairs a once-healthy church by changing its course, saving it from disease

and death.<sup>40</sup> In Ezekiel 37, God commands Ezekiel to speak God’s words to the dry bones and command them to live. In other words, He was telling Ezekiel to speak God’s words to the bones of people that were once alive but now are dead so that they would live again. Davis makes the point that God commands that the church act in the Holy Spirit’s power, bringing about a fantastic opportunity to bring revitalization.<sup>41</sup> He notes that in the evangelical church’s history when leaders defined revival, it had to do with massive evangelical fruit. He argues that *revival* and *revitalization* are words for the same thing.<sup>42</sup> In this study, the words *revival*, *revitalize*, and *revitalization* mean “making what was once alive and then dead or dying, alive again.” Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson define turnaround churches as those that have been in a bad situation, made some changes, and are now in a position of growing again through evangelism. He refers to them as “comeback churches.”<sup>43</sup> *Turnaround* and *comeback* churches will be used in this study to have the same meaning as *revitalize*. This study’s goal is for pastors to be better informed about resources available and help them make connections, which will help them lead their churches to a place of revitalization or new life.

The words *revival*, *revitalize*, *turnaround*, *comeback*, and *revitalization* will also mean a state of perpetual or continual revitalization. They will carry the idea that all Christian churches, growing or not, should be aware of the need for constant and continual revitalization. The biblical precedent for the previous two statements is the example given of the seven churches in the book of Revelation. No Christian church was in a state of perfection at the time of the church’s creation, and neither is any church without risk of decline.

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<sup>40</sup> Davis, *Revitalize*, chap. 2, What Is Revitalization?

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too* (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2007), 23-24.



Church revitalization in this study is defined as what it takes to make or keep a church spiritually healthy and growing numerically. Church revitalization is taking a church that was once spiritually healthy and growing numerically, and is now in a state of decline or maintaining spiritually and numerically, to the place of spiritual health and numerical growth. Church revitalization can also be called perpetual revitalization, where a church that is spiritually healthy and growing in numbers should compare itself to what the Bible says about what is a healthy church and take steps to be in a constant state of revitalizing itself to ensure spiritual health and growth numerically.

This DMIN project does not have its aim to educate pastors in the many approaches to church revitalization nor to bring out the many difficulties involved in church revitalization. In no way is this study going to be a course in church revitalization for these pastors. This study's purpose is to get area pastors on the right track for self-study about church revitalization. The researcher hopes this DMIN project will be a catalyst for introducing pastors to resources and connections that can help them to see different perspectives and ideas to revitalize their churches.

### **Limitations**

This study will have some limitations imposed on it that are out of the researcher's control. Because this researcher is new to the area, there is an inherent limitation in the number of personal contacts possible for adequate networking with area established pastors. The researcher will be relying on his God-given personal skills of communication and prayer for God to open doors. One obvious limitation is that interaction must happen in English. This researcher cannot interact with pastors that do not have a good command of the English language. There may be limitations imposed upon the various personal interactions projected in this study because of the coronavirus outbreak. If personal meetings are not allowed, or participants are

hesitant to meet because of fears of the coronavirus, the interactions could happen via internet video calling. It is also possible that the pastor may not want to meet for breakfast or lunch. The researcher will then offer to bring breakfast or lunch to the pastor's office, or the last personal meeting could happen without a meal.

### **Delimitations**

This study will impose the limitation of inviting the pastors of churches on the Northside of Indianapolis. There will be a minimum of ten or a maximum of twenty pastors able to participate in this study. This researcher will invite denominational and non-denominational churches. The study could also cross the boundaries of conservative, fundamental, charismatic, and Pentecostal churches. The evangelical church is a diverse group with different emphases; therefore, it is not the function of this study to focus on differences or engage in theological or methodological disputes. The researcher will invite church pastors with evangelical roots. All evangelical churches will be invited and are welcome, no matter their cultural or racial emphasis. Male and female pastors will be welcome to participate on an equal basis. Non-Christians will not be allowed to participate in this study.

### **Thesis Statement**

If a connection point and resources are provided for pastors to revitalize their churches on the Northside of Indianapolis, then there is a potential for mass church revitalization in the city.

God-inspired information is powerful, and when put into practice, this information can change a church for the better. The heart of this thesis statement is to bring change that will help churches to bring God glory and reach lost people. God wills that Christians change because Christians must be continually undergoing sanctification (Ephesians 1:4). Ephesians 5:16-17

shows the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit in the process of sanctification. This battle goes on just the same in the church as it seeks to be set apart for Him. There is only one way for a person to change, and the same goes for the church. Change happens in the power of the Holy Spirit. Darren Cronshaw relates that churches listening eagerly with discernment wanting to know what God is saying to them will likely be amazed by new ideas that will come to them.<sup>44</sup> Bringing area pastors connections and resources can bring them to the point of trusting more in Jesus and spurring them into action for Him that could bring revitalization.

Some things will be evident if revitalization does take place. Clifton notes two signs of success in church revitalization. People become disciples of Christ outside the church walls, and communities are affected.<sup>45</sup> Brian DeVries relates that in a healthy church situation the ministries' character, the ministers, and the church's leadership show evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence.<sup>46</sup> Revitalization in Indianapolis could bring a spark of life that would reflect God's will for the church as His body, hopefully inspiring churches in Indianapolis to do what is of first importance, which is to give the message of 1 Corinthians 15:3-4: "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures." Hopefully, the sharing of the gospel message will bring people to respond, bringing salvation and lasting life change.

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<sup>44</sup> Darren Cronshaw, "Revitalization Consultancy Models: Australian Church Case Studies," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 19, no. 2 (2015): 343, <https://www.doi.org/10.1515/ijpt-2014-0011>.

<sup>45</sup> Clifton, *Reclaiming Glory*, 112.

<sup>46</sup> Brian A DeVries, "Divine Empowerment: The Holy Spirit and Church Revitalisation/Goddelike Bemagtiging: Die Heilige Gees En Kerkherstel," *In Die Skriflig: Potchefstroom* 49, no. 1 (2015): 6-7, <https://www.doi.org/10.4102/IDS.V49I1.1955>.

## Chapter 2

### Conceptual Framework

#### Literature Review

##### Introduction

A pastor needs knowledge of the situation in his church and the church at large to lead a revitalization. In the forward of Brian Croft and James Carroll's book, Mark Clifton notes that more than 900 Southern Baptist churches close their doors every year. Ninety percent of those closed churches are in American cities. He notes that seven out of ten churches have plateaued or are declining and have not been in a winning season for many years.<sup>47</sup> Churches, generally, are not reaching people in a productive way all over the western world. Tim Keller argues that the church has not been able to connect with nonbelievers in order for them to understand the message of Christ, and he believes that this is the most significant problem for the church today.<sup>48</sup> Though the indicators can seem dismal, they must be faced, investigated, and prayed through to address the church's reality in today's world. A realistic look is necessary so that pastors can come up with God-ordained solutions to this enduring problem.

According to Davis, churches are in a decaying orbit all over the western world. He reports that the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), which has many flourishing affiliate churches, shows a general decline, and in the convention, many historically influential SBC congregations need revitalization.<sup>49</sup> Jeffrey Decker and Donald Griesinger's study of more than 230 United Methodist congregations in southern California from 1980 through 1993 shows a

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<sup>47</sup> Brian Croft and James B. Carroll, *Facing Snarls & Scowls: Preaching Through Hostility, Apathy, and Adversity in Church Revitalization* (Fern, Scotland, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2019), loc. 69. Kindle.

<sup>48</sup> Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 224.

<sup>49</sup> Davis, *Revitalize*, chap. 1, Revitalization in Our Generation.

peak of over eleven million members in the 1960s but was down to below nine million in 1997.<sup>50</sup> Simon Barrow reports that in England's established churches, out of a population of more than 50 million, only around 900,000 people attend a parish.<sup>51</sup> Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor of the Catholic church in England and Wales, warns that Christianity has been "all but eliminated" as a foundation of moral guidance in people's lives, mourning that people are "indifferent" to Christian values. He observes that alcohol, drugs, and pornography are where people seek happiness and that new age, music, and occult practices are what young people trust instead of Christ.<sup>52</sup> Jared Wilson shines a light on the American situation noting that young adults (18–20s) have decreased attendance at church. He claims that from 2005 to 2010, some estimate that there was a 70 percent dropout rate of young adults.<sup>53</sup> There truly is a decline in church interest throughout the western world that must grieve the Lord.

Olsen gives some dire statistics about the American church at large. In 2000, 27.9 percent of the membership attended American Catholic mass, but in 2005 only 24.1 percent attended mass.<sup>54</sup> In 2000, 9.1 million people attended mainline worship services, but by 2005 only 8.8 million attended.<sup>55</sup> The evangelical church was doing better, with 25.3 million people attending

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<sup>50</sup> Jeffrey N Decker and Donald W. Griesinger, "Mainline Churches in Decline: Turnaround Strategies for United Methodists," *Quarterly Review* 17, no. 2 (1997): 141, EBSCOhost.

<sup>51</sup> Simon Barrow, "From Management to Vision: Issues for British Churches Negotiating Decline and Change," *International Review of Mission* 92, no. 364 (March 25, 2009): 8, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-6631.2003.tb00376.x>.

<sup>52</sup> "Christianity 'Almost Vanquished in UK'," *BBC News*, last modified September 6, 2001, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/1527876.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/1527876.stm).

<sup>53</sup> Jared C. Wilson, *The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 66.

<sup>54</sup> Olsen, *The American Church in Crisis*, 51.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

weekend worship services in 2000, and in 2005 that number had grown to 26.9 million.<sup>56</sup> From 2004 to 2005, 57 percent of American churches over forty years old declined. When zeroing in on mainline churches over forty years old, the decline was 66 percent.<sup>57</sup> Olson notes that from 1998 to 2008, to keep up with the American population, there needed to be a yearly net gain of 3,205 churches. This number is ten times higher than the actual net gain of churches.<sup>58</sup> These are bleak statistics, and the coronavirus pandemic beginning in 2020 only intensifying the situation.

The Christian church's state is in peril in the western world, but it does not need to stay that way. Decker and Griesinger warn that it cannot be business as usual for mainline churches. They suggest two options. One is to batten down the hatches in insulation, focusing inward by running from a changing society to provide sanctuary for faithful attenders and deny its missionary call. Two is to struggle with change creatively by focusing on being a broad-based player to the advance Christ's kingdom.<sup>59</sup> Keller says that churches are institutions, and all of them lose flexibility, while some die, others stagnate for long spaces of time between revitalizations, while some endure because they are continually revitalized.<sup>60</sup> Keller notes the need for persistent prayer and recovery of the gospel, emphasizing being born again and salvation through grace alone.<sup>61</sup> The following literature review offers different perspectives that can help to bring revitalization to churches.

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<sup>56</sup> Olsen, *The American Church in Crisis*, 57.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>59</sup> Decker and Griesinger, "Mainline Churches in Decline," 154.

<sup>60</sup> Keller, *Center Church*, 362.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

## Pastoral Care

Some in a dying church's congregation probably remember past situations involving previous pastors. These memories may affect how a revitalization pastor is received and hinder his effectiveness. McIntosh relates that some church members will not get involved and have passive attitudes in a revitalization because they were hurt or felt taken advantage of too many times in the past.<sup>62</sup> They are focused inward because they are hurt. On the other hand, Rainer claims that the one item that affects dying churches more than anything else is that they focus on their own needs instead of others' needs.<sup>63</sup> Robert Martin relates that a traditional church community often focuses much energy on preserving itself. They have an inherited institutional style, purpose, shape, and ethos.<sup>64</sup> Trust needs to happen between the congregants and the leadership to make it possible for people to look outward. Building this trust is especially important in the ministry of the senior pastor. He needs to show his people how much he cares for them by listening to their concerns, showing sincere interest in them, and only then will they follow him.

A pastor must stay in a church because this is what a congregation needs to be willing to revitalize, but there are differing views on the length of a pastor's tenure. Bill Henard notes that the Ephesian church was planted, grew, stagnated, and was dying. He points out that no one individual pastored the church during that time. He claims that before Timothy was its pastor, the church needed revitalization.<sup>65</sup> McIntosh claims that a pastor should commit to staying at a church a minimum of seven years, insisting that the majority of churches need this staying

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<sup>62</sup> McIntosh, *There's Hope for Your Church*, chap. 3, Passive Attitudes.

<sup>63</sup> Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, 22.

<sup>64</sup> Robert K. Martin, "New Ways of Being Church: The Promise of Fresh Expressions," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 23, no. 2 (2019): 303, <https://doi.org/0.1515/ijpt-2019-0040>.

<sup>65</sup> Henard, *Can These Bones Live?* chap. 6, The Church at Ephesus.

power, or they will not be revitalized, but on the other hand, he warns that after ten years, the average pastor's ministry tends to lose impetus. He relates that an average pastor can only maintain a ten-year ministry because this is the skill, knowledge, and energy he can give.<sup>66</sup> Lyle Schaller contradicts this view by generalizing that it is rare to see a congregation growing for years without the leadership of a long pastorate. He maintains that midsized to large Protestant congregations see their size reduced when pastors only stay for two to ten years.<sup>67</sup> In their United Methodist California-Pacific Conference study from 1980 to 1993, Decker and Griesinger maintain that pastor turnover was the most significant factor in these churches. They claim that as a result of pastor turnover from 1980 to 1993, churches lost about 8 percent of their membership.<sup>68</sup> The significance of pastor tenure cannot be understated.

From the perspective of diligence in preaching, Croft and Carroll emphasize that revitalization comes through pastors who persevere over time in the pulpit ministry in the face of opposition.<sup>69</sup> They insist that nearly every pastor has unrealistic expectations and pride which fight against their resolve to persevere.<sup>70</sup> They also insist that a litmus test for a pastor's diligence in preaching is if he can endure adversity, hostility, and apathy.<sup>71</sup> Brian Croft and Tim Beougher make the point that the critical key to a pastor's survival is patience, which will help

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<sup>66</sup> McIntosh, *There's Hope for Your Church*, chap. 2, The Right Timing.

<sup>67</sup> Lyle E. Schaller, *A Mainline Turnaround: Strategies for Congregations and Denominations* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 90.

<sup>68</sup> Decker and Griesinger, "Mainline Churches in Decline," 143-144.

<sup>69</sup> Croft and Carroll, *Facing Snarls & Scowls*, loc. 101.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. 1436.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. 117.



him wait when he needs to and have a long-term view of his ministry.<sup>72</sup> There can be intense opposition from a congregation to the gospel-centered preaching necessary for church revitalization. Pastors must not give up and stay true to the calling to preach the truth in love, even when opposed.

Clifton believes the main problem with dying churches is not related to attendance, baptism, or giving; they need discipleship.<sup>73</sup> He adds that discipleship is not about the classroom; it happens when two people hang out.<sup>74</sup> It is impossible for a pastor to disciple his people if he does not stay in his church long enough to build solid relationships. McDonald cautions that church leaders do not neglect to invest in self-replicating relationships with people in their congregations. He warns church leaders not to put their calendars and natural frailties above their flock's potential for spiritual growth and the Great Commission's fulfillment.<sup>75</sup> These different perspectives show the need for a pastor to stay long enough to shepherd his people to accomplish needed changes to revitalize a dying church.

The pastor will need to be sensitive to what gives the best possibility for success in implementing the changes needed to turn around a church culture. Chip and Dan Heath relate that change is hard, not because people are lazy, but because they are exhausted.<sup>76</sup> Church members have many wonderful personal experiences in their memories, causing the idea of change to exhaust them. They get used to how things have always been in their church culture

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<sup>72</sup> Brian Croft and Tim Beougher, "A Roadmap to Revitalization: Pursuing Faithfulness and Survival," in *A Guide to Church Revitalization*, ed. Albert Mohler Jr. (Louisville: SBTS Press, 2015), 5.

<sup>73</sup> Clifton, *Reclaiming Glory*, 7.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>75</sup> McDonald, *The Disciple Making Church*, 12.

<sup>76</sup> Chip Heath and Dan Heath, *Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard* (New York: Crown Publishing, 2010), 17, Kindle.

and do not want it to change. Olsen relates that it is sometimes difficult to discern where culture stops and the church begins because Christianity tends to become intertwined with a host culture.<sup>77</sup> He cautions that to bring a strategy for change, church leaders must first understand the shifts transpiring within church and culture.<sup>78</sup> Keller warns that adapting to culture too much does not encourage people to change because change is not expected. On the other hand, he notes that people will not change if Christians do not adapt the appropriate amount to culture. He theorizes that people will not listen to Christians because if they do not adapt to some degree, they become offensive, confusing, or unpersuasive.<sup>79</sup> Keller insists that pastors must discern how and where to confront or affirm culture, which will have an enormous effect on how they disciple, preach, organize, evangelize, lead, and shepherd people.<sup>80</sup> There needs to be a delicate balance when a pastor considers his approach to culture when shepherding a church.

Croft points out that the best approach for implementing change is for a pastor simply to be “a pastor” to the people.<sup>81</sup> Jesus says in John 10:27, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” Iorg relates his experience attempting to lead towards a significant change in his congregation as a young pastor. He was doing too much preaching to his congregation about what should happen rather than merely communicating with them. His people did not oppose his ideas; they resisted his insistence on getting on board with what he

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<sup>77</sup> Olsen, *The American Church in Crisis*, 161.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>79</sup> Keller, *Center Church*, 24.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>81</sup> Brian Croft, *Biblical Church Revitalization: Solutions for Dying and Divided Churches* (Fern, Scotland, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2016), 35, Wordsearch Bible.

wanted. He states, “Christian followers want to be shepherded, not stampeded.”<sup>82</sup> Dever warns pastors not to think like CEOs, but to think more like shepherds, not to be looking for more significant opportunities and more prominent platforms, but instead, think about their member’s sanctification. He claims this will change a pastor’s approach entirely.<sup>83</sup> Being an example by showing love, empathy, and respect will help the congregation be transparent about the past and present situation at a church and be on the road to revitalization.

Pastoral care requires an honest appraisal of the situation at a church and must start with an assessment of the pastor’s walk with Christ and convictions to live a life set apart for Him, as 1 Peter 1:15 says, “But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.” Gene Getz notes that when a spiritual leader is out of God’s will, especially morally, he can hide his sin by preaching the moral and ethical teachings in Scripture using this as a smokescreen to cover up his sins.<sup>84</sup> Klaas Runia suggests a return to the heart of the gospel and repentance from self-opinionated ideas, self-righteousness, self-willed works. He encourages a return to the first love of Revelation 2:4 and the first works of Revelation 2:5 to renew the fire within for the Lord, expect everything from Him, and be willing to give oneself fully to Him.<sup>85</sup> The pastor will also need to take a sobering look and assess if his wife’s call matches his call. People will often project upon a revitalizer and his wife some of the hurts and expectations from their previous

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<sup>82</sup> Jeff Iorg, *Leading Major Change in Your Ministry* (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2016), 112, Wordsearch Bible.

<sup>83</sup> Mark Dever, “The Revitalization of Capital Hill Baptist Church,” in *A Guide to Church Revitalization*, ed. Albert Mohler Jr. (Louisville: SBTS Press, 2015), 69.

<sup>84</sup> Gene A. Getz, *Elders and Leaders: God’s Plan for Leading the Church* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003), chap. 17, Public or Private Discipline? Wordsearch Bible.

<sup>85</sup> Klaas K. Runia, “The Renewal of the Church,” *Evangelical Review of Theology* 3, no. 36 (2012): 204, EBSCOhost.

pastors and wives.<sup>86</sup> This situation can cause considerable difficulty in the marriage and family of the pastor. Personal assessment is a must for all pastors and no different in a church revitalization effort.

When evaluating the situation at a church, Henard relates that in the case of a pastoral search process, it is like a marriage courting relationship, in that both parties present themselves at their best. The search committee will often sweep the dirt under the rug to present the church as desirable.<sup>87</sup> The past and present in a church are not always readily shared. A pastor needs to heed the advice given the disciples in Matthew 10:16, “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.” Quick warns that a delicate dance needs to be made into the church’s history as one attempts to climb into the founders’ heads and hearts. He says that God’s purposes were revealed to them through their burden, calling, and vision in the early days.<sup>88</sup> In contrast, McIntosh does not focus on the past but suggests that the pastor take opportunities in classes and small groups to ask various leaders questions.<sup>89</sup> If the pastor takes this approach, he needs to remember that sometimes people point out problems to have him spend time and effort solving them by himself. McIntosh suggests a strategy that combats this mentality can be, “When people approach you with a problem, ask them to come back later with three possible solutions.”<sup>90</sup> Just as having a good marriage takes godly wisdom, the evaluation of a church requires godly wisdom to shepherd the congregation effectively.

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<sup>86</sup> Davis, *Revitalize*, chap. 7, He Must Have Spousal Support and Clarity of Call.

<sup>87</sup> Henard, *Can These Bones Live?*, chap. 2, The Big Lie.

<sup>88</sup> Quick, *Healing the Heart of Your Church*, 58.

<sup>89</sup> McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, chap. 6, Ask Direct Questions.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 6, Change the Rules.

A group of people to seriously consider related to pastoral care is the longtime members of the church. These are the people who remember the glory days and still think that the church needs to stay the same or go back to the way it was. Clifton reminds pastors that they are not only a pastor to the young and upcoming people, but they must also love the older members of the church.<sup>91</sup> Pastors must not assume that the chosen forms of communication will meet everyone's needs in the church. Communication is a significant issue, and Clifton clarifies that these older people can get left behind because of new communication methods.<sup>92</sup> A patient spirit of accommodation will go a long way in building trust and extending ownership and worth to these older saints, opening them to revitalization efforts.

Older saints need to be brought along in revitalization efforts with loving patience. They need to be paid careful attention to, but not to the expense of getting out the relevant, Bible-inspired message of salvation. Hunter and Swank point out that many Christians perpetuate styles as sacred, gripping them like a prized antique. They tend to hold on to outdated worship styles, pews, language, and architectural forms freezing faith in another period of history, giving non-Christians ammunition to say that Christianity is not relevant and God is old and out of date.<sup>93</sup> A pastor must keep his focus on propagating the Great Commission and not only on accommodating those who cannot see past a specific timeframe in history.

### Leadership by Example

An essential need in the effort to lead a church revitalization is prayer. Davis claims that Spirit-led, Scripture-based, regular, passionate prayer by church members is how God ordains a

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<sup>91</sup> Clifton, *Reclaiming Glory*, 56.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>93</sup> Hunter and Swank, *Who Broke My Church*, 143-144.

church revitalization.<sup>94</sup> In church revitalization, Patterson points out that all future decisions are built upon prayer as a foundation because it is through an essential rhythm of prayer that God does His extraordinary work. He notes that revitalization leaders who prioritize personal and congregational prayer accomplish the great work of church renewal.<sup>95</sup> DeVries relates that pastors should confess in prayer that it is only God through His Holy Spirit that can bring revival. He relates that this confession reflects a belief in the sovereignty of God, revealing a pastor's weakness to preach the Word and witness for Christ.<sup>96</sup> When the church sees prayer modeled by transparent leadership, it will respond and pray for the Lord's guidance in revitalization and renewal.

A congregation needs to see prayer modeled by the leaders to catch a heart to pray for God to turn their church around, and an essential aspect of that is how church boards operate. Charles Olsen claims that there is little attention to discernment, prayer, decision making, and acting in ministry urgency in church board meetings. Because of this, he advocates for ongoing preparation for these things in the course of board meetings.<sup>97</sup> Olsen insists that prayer is an essential discipline for boards and individual board members, but it is not always welcome.<sup>98</sup> He points out that as the board seeks Christ's mind in prayer, specific fruits and behaviors will be apparent to bring God's graces in the development of the entire church as a community.<sup>99</sup> In church revitalization, the Senior Pastor and ministry leaders are an example to the church and

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<sup>94</sup> Davis, *Revitalize*, chap. 7, The Mystery of Prayer.

<sup>95</sup> Patterson, "Identifying Common Procedures for Revitalization Leaders," 34.

<sup>96</sup> DeVries, "Divine Empowerment, 3.

<sup>97</sup> Charles M. Olsen, *Transforming Church Boards into Communities of Spiritual Leaders* (Herdon: The Alban Institute, 1995), 136.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

church boards in prayer mobilization. Davis insists that unless pastors become men of prayer and call the Godly together for fervent prayer, the church will not be revitalized.<sup>100</sup> The pastor of a church needing revitalization needs to look to Luke 22:32 as a motivation. Jesus told Simon that He prayed for him so that his faith would not fail. Sharing with leaders and people in the congregation regularly that the pastor is praying for them provides a powerful example, promoting intercession and cooperate prayer.

Reliance upon Scripture is a crucial component to the Christian life and church revitalization. Getz cautions that the way to come up with biblical principles on a particular subject is to look to the totality of Scripture.<sup>101</sup> One way for a revitalization pastor to model reliance on Scripture is to take Paul Kaak, Gary Lemaster, and Robert Muthiah's advice to bring in Scripture at meetings, which reminds the group members that what they are doing in their meeting is Christian. They explain that it is good to have meeting participants repeat back what is said, as they dwell on the Word, and this opens them up to be part of the process and trains them in listening. They also point out that bringing Scripture into meetings is centered on the idea that the Spirit will speak.<sup>102</sup> DeVries emphasizes the Word of God as the primary means of the Holy Spirit's work, noting that the Word of God is communicated by evangelism, teaching, preaching, and counseling.<sup>103</sup> David Prince insists that church revitalization demands that church

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<sup>100</sup> Davis, *Revitalize*, chap. 1, Fourteen Lessons in Revitalization.

<sup>101</sup> Getz, *Elders and Leaders*, chap. 3, Guidelines.

<sup>102</sup> Paul Kaak, Gary Lemaster, and Robert A. Muthiah, "Integrative Decision-Making for Christian Leaders: Prudence, Organizational Theory, and Discernment Practices," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 12 (2013): 165, EBSCOhost.

<sup>103</sup> DeVries, "Divine Empowerment," 5.

members are gospel-agitators, not custodians of the congregation's status quo.<sup>104</sup> This love for Scripture modeled by the pastor and other leadership will go a long way to creating an environment for perpetuating a healthy church renewal.

The pastor must be painfully aware of his tendencies to fall into sin. Most of the time, a pastor's worst enemy is himself in his quest to be a model for others because of the battle he has with his sinful nature. Pastor Croft confesses that when encountering adversity from the inside, because of his inadequacies and failures when tempted to sin, temptations come in two particular ways. The first is to go about life in his own strength, and the second is to seek ideas for an escape from his pastoral ministry.<sup>105</sup> In a resource not specifically focused on church revitalization, Brian Croft and Cara Croft agree that it is the pastor's sinful nature that causes him to disobey Scripture by neglecting his wife and family.<sup>106</sup> The stress that it is repeatedly emphasized in the Bible that the qualifications for pastoral ministry include the importance of a man's relationships with others, especially his family relationships.<sup>107</sup> Congregants look to the pastor to be an example of Christian living.

To effectively reach out to their family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers in a revitalization, Christians need to ask the Holy Spirit to bring the conviction promised in John 16:8. Davis notes that some church members of dying churches, with stench of hidden sin, are vocal in their antagonism to clear and biblical preaching.<sup>108</sup> Dealing with antagonism against

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<sup>104</sup> David E. Prince, "Lead from the Front: The Priority of Expository Preaching," in *A Guide to Church Revitalization*, ed. Albert Mohler Jr. (Louisville: SBTS Press, 2015), 36.

<sup>105</sup> Croft and Carroll, *Facing Snarls & Scowls*, loc. 1648.

<sup>106</sup> Brian Croft and Cara Croft, *The Pastor's Family: Shepherding Your Family through the Challenges of Pastoral Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 42.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>108</sup> Davis, *Revitalize*, chap. 5, Arrogance and Despair: Two Sides of the Same Coin.



good gospel-centered preaching and sin in the church must not be avoided. Davis notes that revitalization pastors and leaders need to commit to applying discipline faithfully because it is essential not to have unrepentant sinful and corrupt members. He claims that practicing church discipline is something mostly unheard of in a dying church.<sup>109</sup> The idea is that applying discipline as Paul did in Galatians 4:16-20 will help Christians in a congregation to be formed into Christ's image. Good leadership requires the pastor to ask the Holy Spirit to bring conviction of sin in himself and his flock and courage to discipline church members when biblically warranted.

Embarking on promoting evangelism is an important area that pastors and leaders need to show leadership by modeling an outward focus. Eric Bancroft relates that the goal is for people coming to church to respond to the gospel in their lives so tremendously and so convincingly that they cannot contain their tongues. He says that, over time, congregants will need to see and hear that same passion in the preaching pastor's life, and they will need to be encouraged even when their efforts leave something to be desired.<sup>110</sup> Some pastors do ministry with the idea that if spiritual formation is encouraged in their people, they will naturally reach out and evangelize. Not all writers agree with the notion of concentrating on spiritual formation as a foundation for evangelism. McIntosh makes the point that many church leaders are focused on their attendees' spiritual formation, thinking they will intuitively evangelize. He notes that from his experience, when churches focus inwardly, they never reach out.<sup>111</sup> There is truth to both perspectives, and possibly a balanced approach is in order, but a pastor of a church revitalization must

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<sup>109</sup> Davis, *Revitalize*, chap. 2, What Are Marks of a Healthy Church.

<sup>110</sup> Eric Bancroft, "Are We There yet? Indicators of Success," in *A Guide to Church Revitalization*, ed. Albert Mohler Jr. (Louisville: SBT Press, 2015), 61.

<sup>111</sup> McIntosh, *There's Hope for Your Church*, chap. 4, Revitalization.

continuously focus on reaching others for Christ.

Acts 1:8 is explicit in saying that the Holy Spirit gives the Christian power to witness for Christ. The pastor of a dying church needs to model being guided by the Holy Spirit in his witness for Jesus. DeVries claims that reliance on the Holy Spirit is the framework of the Spirit's normal means for church renewal. He encourages that capable church revitalization leaders should seek consistently to operate grounded on this principle.<sup>112</sup> Sanders points out that there is a great need for the Holy Spirit's anointing, as seen in Isaiah 42:1, and that the leadership qualities of approval, dependence, empathy, modesty, or optimism are not sufficient for the task without this anointing.<sup>113</sup> He warns that many gifted servants drop out of the ministry because they have large areas of their lives not controlled by the Holy Spirit.<sup>114</sup> To model a Spirit-filled and focused life reaching out for Christ, pastors, church leaders, and congregants must be controlled and guided by the Holy Spirit.

### Vision Directed

Leading a church in need of revitalization requires the vision to see where resources are needed to have an outward focus in the congregation's everyday life. In sharing insight related to the Roman colony at Pisidian Antioch in Acts 13:14, F. F. Bruce points out that it seems that Paul attached importance to the evangelizing of such places because the gospel would be able to radiate out into the neighboring country.<sup>115</sup> Mark DeYmaz notes that people in his Mosaic Church scatter after the services on Sunday to work, live, and to fellowship with other Christians

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<sup>112</sup> DeVries, "Divine Empowerment," 4.

<sup>113</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership: Principles for Excellence for the Everyday Believer* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007), chap. 3, Anointing, Wordsearch Bible.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 8, Discipline.

<sup>115</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), 251, Kindle.

in virtually every section of Little Rock, Arkansas. The places his people interact with other people are where the homeless are, in rural areas, barrios, and urban neighborhoods.<sup>116</sup> DeYmaz encourages his church to get away from the bridge mentality. That is the idea of “us” (the church) and “them” (the community), which creates separation.<sup>117</sup> This attitude creates a separation in the congregation’s mind and heart and is not biblical, nor does it promote evangelism. Jesus puts it this way in John 17:15-19, “I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.” Church members cannot reach a lost world with the notion of “us versus them.”

Church members, especially in a revitalization, need to be rubbing shoulders with the lost in their community, being an active and engaging part of their society. DeYmaz gives more insight into this point by saying that a church that seeks to “be the community” will know their needs and problems and take ownership of them.<sup>118</sup> Clifton warns to watch out for church members because they might blame the community for lack of response showing resentment of it for not being as receptive as it was in the past. He says that this attitude gives one a vital clue that they are using primarily attractional methods to reach out and suggests a change may need to occur in their approach.<sup>119</sup> Churches that do not view community engagement as intrinsically motivated do not engage the community; they look at outreach as merely a program, not as their

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<sup>116</sup> Mark DeYmaz, *The Coming Revolution in Church Economics: Why Tithes and Offerings Are No Longer Enough, and What You Can Do About It* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2019), 125.

<sup>117</sup> Mark DeYmaz, *Disruption: Repurposing the Church to Redeem the Community* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2017), 63.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Clifton, *Reclaiming Glory*, 2

identity.

Rainer notes that dying churches do not realize that the Great Commission's clear command should be the "vision centerpiece" of a thriving church.<sup>120</sup> Henard relates that a church will lose its vision if it has a misunderstanding of the Great Commission. He notes that sometimes this loss of emphasis is a theological problem because of deficient teaching, and sometimes it is an internal problem because people are distracted by anger and unforgiveness.<sup>121</sup> Clifton points out that a pastor needs to shepherd the people's hearts toward God's vision for the church and communicate it if he expects them to cooperate and own it. He warns that sheep need a leader. They will follow because they trust, and trust comes with time spent with them as a shepherd, loving them, discipling them, and caring for what concerns them.<sup>122</sup> As a pastor focuses on the Great Commission and interacts with his congregation, they will hopefully make it the vision centerpiece of their church.

Deficient teaching, anger, and unforgiveness can lead to a pessimistic attitude that will kill vision. Sanders points out that the pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity, but vision involves hope and an optimistic outlook. He notes that pessimism tends to hold back visionary people from pushing ahead even though caution has some role. He relates that vision cannot be inspired in others if one sees difficulties "so clearly" that one does not discern the possibilities.<sup>123</sup> Unless a dying church has a vision for the Great Commission and lets go of a pessimistic destructive attitude, it will never turn around to give God glory.

McIntosh cautions pastors, that when building a coalition in a dying church, not to preach

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<sup>120</sup> Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, 40-41.

<sup>121</sup> Henard, *Can These Bones Live?* chap. 10, The Primary Function of the Church.

<sup>122</sup> Clifton, *Reclaiming Glory*, 119.

<sup>123</sup> Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, chap. 8, Vision.

about his vision from the pulpit at first. He gives the following abridged instructions: A pastor should recruit a small group of forward-thinking, committed people and begin regularly meeting with them individually. The pastor should ask these individuals to share what their vision is for the church, and when they finish, he should sensitively ask if it is okay to share with them his vision from God through prayer and his thought process. Then the pastor should talk about how things should change, and after finishing, ask the individuals if they could see themselves participating in this vision. The pastor should then get the people together who agree with him (his newly formed coalition) for prayer, planning, and instruction.<sup>124</sup> In this approach, the church is brought along into unity under his vision through personal interaction as he builds a coalition among a small, committed group of people he recruits.

Croft and Carroll bring a different emphasis for turning around a church. They insist that what makes dead men come to life is biblical preaching and that biblical preaching can bring a dead church back to life.<sup>125</sup> They insist on a diet of expository preaching.<sup>126</sup> They report that a heartbreaking number of dying evangelical churches need faithful biblical preaching. They make the bold inference that even though some churches seem to be thriving because of their large numbers, they produce emaciated disciples.<sup>127</sup> The inference is that a lack of expository preaching is the primary reason for a church's decline.

There is support in church revitalization literature for expository preaching and little to nothing for topical preaching. Davis agrees that the most significant force in the revitalization of churches is the continuing ministry of God's Word from the pulpit through expository preaching.

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<sup>124</sup> McIntosh, *There's Hope for Your Church*, chap. 6, Developing Your Coalition.

<sup>125</sup> Croft and Carroll, *Facing Snarls & Scowls*, loc. 833.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. 835.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. 1019.

He believes that following the expository line by line, chapter by chapter, book by book preaching can bring solid doctrine that will enable the church to flourish. He cautions that topical sermons can lead to difficulties because pastors can ride a “hobby horse” of topics justifying them with Scripture instead of letting Scripture lead the points he is making.<sup>128</sup> Wilson brings up one dissenter to expository preaching. According to Wilson, Andy Stanley insists that verse-by-verse preaching through books of the Bible is too easy and that it is cheating. Stanley asserts that expository preaching is not how people grow and claims that there is no example of this type of preaching in the Bible.<sup>129</sup> Bancroft insists that most of a pastor’s preaching should be expository because it helps to guarantee the congregation will hear God’s whole counsel and allows God to speak to His people. He advocates pastor led topical sermons only to address something the entire congregation is facing.<sup>130</sup> Dever claims that expositional preaching encourages Christian growth.<sup>131</sup> He also feels that expositional preaching is not just a commentary of a passage, but rather it makes “the point” of a sermon the point of a specific passage of Scripture, thus unfolding God’s Word for the people of God.<sup>132</sup> The overwhelming emphasis for church revitalization preaching is a steady diet of expository preaching.

The Word of God is emphasized as the driving force of church revitalization by many authors. As he refers to the Word of God, Clifton encourages pastors to preach it, teach it, and model it. He reminds pastors that the older members know the Word of God, but it is the pastor’s

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<sup>128</sup> Davis, *Revitalize*, chap. 6, *The Pulpit: The Word Alone Unleashed a Line at a Time*.

<sup>129</sup> Wilson, *The Prodigal Church*, 73.

<sup>130</sup> Bancroft, “Are We There yet? Indicators of Success,” 58.

<sup>131</sup> Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, 216.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

job to help them revive it in their hearts.<sup>133</sup> Dever believes that parking, pews, greetings, nursery, music, programs, and the preacher is less important than the Word of God preached. He uses Matthew 4:4 to prove his point, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”<sup>134</sup> Clifton makes the point that a church replanter must start and end with the Bible and must have a passion for biblical preaching while having a Christ-centered love for preaching that is doctrinally rich.<sup>135</sup> Prince relates that faithfulness in this battle of church revitalization is to understand that the preacher is engaged in a spiritual war. He notes that the Galilean crowds pleaded with Jesus in the Gospel of Luke to heal people and exorcise demons, but Jesus reminded them that His purpose was to preach the good news of the kingdom of God (Luke 4:43).<sup>136</sup> The battle for church revitalization needs to be rooted in a firm focus on God’s Word.

The gospel message is emphasized as a focus of successful church revitalization by some authors. Keller claims that preaching general doctrine and ethics from Scripture is not preaching the gospel of the good news of salvation through Christ, proper relationship with Him, and victory over the results of sin in the world.<sup>137</sup> Davis believes that preaching lesser doctrines is needed, but the gospel of Christ must be an overriding emphasis.<sup>138</sup> Wilson suggests that not preaching the finished work of Christ is not to preach a Christian sermon and that one might as

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<sup>133</sup> Clifton, *Reclaiming Glory*, 57.

<sup>134</sup> Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, 62.

<sup>135</sup> Clifton, *Reclaiming Glory*, 117.

<sup>136</sup> Prince, “Lead from the Front,” 35.

<sup>137</sup> Keller, *Center Church*, 31.

<sup>138</sup> Davis, *Revitalize*, chap. 6, Revitalization Comes by Hearing.

well be preaching in a Mormon temple or a Jewish synagogue.<sup>139</sup> McIntosh notes that in the Word of God, the Holy Spirit has anointed Jesus three times to preach and proclaim in Luke 4:18-19, and in Luke 4:43, it says that the primary priority of Jesus and His disciples was to preach the good news of salvation.<sup>140</sup> The good news of salvation by faith in Christ's death on the cross for sin, His burial, and His resurrection should be a primary focus for all Christian churches and no less for bringing church renewal and revitalization.

### Addressing Opposition to Change

One of the biggest reasons for a church to change is to reach young people in emerging generations. Kricher shares that people in his church did not feel that changes were needed because they wanted young people to come to the church as it was. Young people were the receivers of complaints rather than welcomed with open arms.<sup>141</sup> Various changes need to occur to get young people interested in an established church, but building a relationship with them is primary. Clifton relates that he made it a priority to invest in the younger people in the church at Wornall Road Church. As he shared Christ with and disciplined new people, he focused on young men grooming them for leadership.<sup>142</sup> Young people are the church's future, and church members must be open to making relationships with them to deliver the gospel's unchanging message.

Change may need to come in the form of leaders and congregants, taking a new approach to reach young people in the community. Maxwell relates that people who believe change is

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<sup>139</sup> Wilson, *The Prodigal Church*, 80.

<sup>140</sup> Gary L. McIntosh, *Growing God's Church: How People Are Actually Coming to Faith Today* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), 45.

<sup>141</sup> Kricher, *New Generation*, 38.

<sup>142</sup> Clifton, *Reclaiming Glory*, 90.



essential are pre-emptive, and they will make change happen for the team's good.<sup>143</sup> Maxwell also points out that change does not happen unless transformational leaders are committed to inviting people to make a difference in their community.<sup>144</sup> Heath and Heath suggest that leaders shrink the change (make small incremental changes) to motivate people to action. He suggests that leaders break up the massive change into small enough changes, so people will sense that they are winning when the change happens.<sup>145</sup> The idea is for the pastor to plan baby steps for his people to accomplish a more significant change.<sup>146</sup> Maxwell claims that every transformational movement follows this pattern: influence filters down from the top, mass movements start with a few people, and one's values govern one's behavior.<sup>147</sup> There must be a well thought out strategy for change if it is going to be successful. That is why a pastor must think ahead and plan for the best approach to implement change that will produce the fruit of salvation in his church and community.

People oppose change because they like how things were in the past and are not willing to try a new approach. Jeff Iorg relates that, like the Pharisees, people see no need for change because they assume God got it right the first time.<sup>148</sup> They may think they need to use the same method to reach people they did thirty years ago and are not open to new ideas. They want to preserve the past rather than pursue the future with passion. DeYmaz notes that when purpose and passion are lost, the perpetuation of the status quo becomes the primary goal, making

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<sup>143</sup> Maxwell, *Leader Shift*, 91.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>145</sup> Heath and Heath, *Switch*, 133.

<sup>146</sup> Maxwell, *Leader Shift*, 135-136.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>148</sup> Iorg, *Leading Major Change in Your Ministry*, 27.

resources available toward that end, while people rationalize why things are no longer the same.<sup>149</sup> They have forgotten what it says in 1 Peter 2:12, “Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.” They let their inward focus and self-preservation blind them. Rainer implores pastors that they must help their congregations by communicating the reality that they must change or die, and this needs to happen with a sense of urgency.<sup>150</sup> Opening the people in the congregation, with God’s help, to the idea that they are stuck in patterns that are not bringing the fruit of salvation to the lost will free them to reach people for Christ.

Opposition to change comes in the form of conflict, hostility, and complacency. Davis points out that being humble and loving to those in opposition is what God desires, and that transformation will come through His Word.<sup>151</sup> Alfred Poirier relates that conflicts come in “people packages.”<sup>152</sup> Croft encourages pastors to face a hostile congregation, not growing weary in doing good because His harvest is coming in His time.<sup>153</sup> Rainer notes that complacency is the most common congregational response to successful change, and complacency comes from not having a clear vision. He cautions that pastors must deal with complacency urgently just as it pops up.<sup>154</sup> These realities must be faced, even though dealing with them will be difficult.

McIntosh warns that conflict happens when frustration is so incredible that moving on is

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<sup>149</sup> DeYmaz, *Disruption*, 12.

<sup>150</sup> Rainer, *Who Moved My Pulpit*, 52.

<sup>151</sup> Davis, *Revitalize*, chap. 1, Fourteen Lessons in Revitalization.

<sup>152</sup> Alfred Poirier, *The Peacemaking Pastor: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), chap. 3, The Heart of Conflict. WordSearch Bible.

<sup>153</sup> Croft and Carroll, *Facing Snarls & Scowls*, loc. 466.

<sup>154</sup> Rainer, *Who Moved My Pulpit*, 120.

impossible until dealing with it.<sup>155</sup> He informs pastors that one never really solves conflict entirely and encourages pastors to manage conflict so that it benefits the revitalization.<sup>156</sup> There is nowhere to hide from the fact that there will be opposition. Some try to isolate themselves to avoid it but will still have to deal with internal opposition. James 1:4 states, “What causes quarrels, and what causes fights among you? Is it not this that your passions are at war within you?” McIntosh relates that change and transition cause conflict because people experience losses. He suggests that pastors watch for loss of identity, control, meaning, belonging, and a future.<sup>157</sup> When change comes, people have emotional responses that differ depending on the individual’s life experiences. When voicing these differences, it can cause friction and conflict that bring about the opposition.

Matthew 5:9 says, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” DeYmaz points out that when Christians advance peace, they are never closer to Jesus’ message and mission.<sup>158</sup> Poirier claims that, of all of the Christian virtues, making peace is a defining characteristic that most reflects the meaning of being a son or daughter of God.<sup>159</sup> One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22 is peace. If one has the Lord’s peace, then it follows that one could be a conduit of peace to others that may be in opposition. Ephesians 6:15 shows that Christians individually and corporately need to have shoes fitted with the gospel of peace. Pastors need to guide those under their shepherding care who oppose their leadership to peace.

Rainer calls avoiding conflict “coasting.” He insists that coasting is when a leader gives

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<sup>155</sup> McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, chap. 11, Manage Conflict and Criticism.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., chap. 11, Steps for Managing Conflict.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., chap. 11, Deal with Resistance.

<sup>158</sup> DeYmaz, *Disruption*, 172.

<sup>159</sup> Poirier, *The Peacemaking Pastor*, chap. 5, Theology of Sonship.

up, is burned out, or longing for retirement, they expend no effort, avoid conflict, and stop leading.<sup>160</sup> Henard suggests that being proactive by meeting with people before a proposed change offers a way to avoid opposition and ungodly arguments.<sup>161</sup> Croft notes that unresolved conflicts always worsen into divisions and complacency. He shares that such a church that overlooks sin and has no accountability or expectation for its members eventually causes the situation to evolve such that there is no godly standard of living whatsoever.<sup>162</sup> A pastor needs to remember that it is never a good idea to avoid church-related conflict.

A necessary admission in confronting opposition is acknowledging that there is opposition and using it to bring about positive change. Henard insists that the only way for a church to adjust and allow the leader to introduce corrective action is for the congregation to acknowledge conflict.<sup>163</sup> Heath and Heath share the idea of leading an organization to have an identity crisis by permitting an “us versus them” struggle.<sup>164</sup> In other words, one might need to expose a conflict that will cause people to take sides. One example is that there is always tension in a church between being inwardly focused and outwardly focused. Usually, people in churches do not realize they are inwardly focused. Exposing this fact to them and developing a like-minded coalition would create a positive opposition force that could turn a church around. One should not be afraid of conflict and use it to confront opposition to advance a revitalization.

## Discovery

Gaps in the literature are apparent in the resources reviewed on the topic of church

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<sup>160</sup> Rainer, *Who Moved My Pulpit*, 40.

<sup>161</sup> Henard, *Can These Bones Live?* chap. 4, Talk with Some of the Key Opposition Leaders in Advance.

<sup>162</sup> Croft, *Biblical Church Revitalization*, 80.

<sup>163</sup> Henard, *Can These Bones Live?* chap. 9, External Factors.

<sup>164</sup> Heath and Heath, *Switch*, 247.

revitalization. The topic of home life is one of these areas in books directed specifically at church revitalization. Croft and Carroll mention that it is challenging when there is adversity outside the church, but the intensity gets worse when that opposition comes to the home.<sup>165</sup> In the same book, Croft admits to having marriage problems about ten years into his ministry, saying that his wife was in a dark place and that he had run his family into the ground.<sup>166</sup> Carroll shares a struggle his family had of his son's diagnosis with epilepsy in the midst of being made aware of a slanderous letter wrote against him.<sup>167</sup>

Other authors touch on the subject of the home life and give limited suggestions for the marriage and family life of a revitalization pastor. Rainer reports that a pastor who left a law practice shared that his wife had to remind him that he had not taken one vacation since he became a pastor.<sup>168</sup> McIntosh shares a story about a discussion of a potential relocation at a church that went sour when the opposition started attacking the pastor's wife and children.<sup>169</sup> Davis notes that, as in other ministry callings, one's wife needs to agree with the call, but he warns that his wife needs to be onboard entirely in the case of a replanting pastor.<sup>170</sup> The problem is reported but not addressed to any extent in the church revitalization literature. There are various other essential topics discussed, but some guidance for a pastor's relationship with his wife and children is needful in a revitalization situation.

As opposition to church revitalization, the topic of apathy is a theme where one could

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<sup>165</sup> Croft and Carroll, *Facing Snarls & Scowls*, loc. 1560.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., loc. 1595.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, loc. 1605- 1616.

<sup>168</sup> Rainer, *Who Moved My Pulpit*, chap. 6, Become a Voice and Vision for Hope.

<sup>169</sup> McIntosh, *There's Hope for Your Church*, Case Study 14 Managing Conflict.

<sup>170</sup> Davis, *Revitalize*, chap. 7, He Must Have Spousal Support and Clarity of Call.

notice a gap in the literature. There is some mention by Croft and Carroll of congregational apathy being a source of opposition to preaching. They mention the historical fact that the great preacher Jonathan Edwards faced apathy to his preaching as he was leaving the pulpit.<sup>171</sup> They also note that sometimes there are no battles to fight or enemies to come against, but to faithful preaching, there is the apathy that leads some to leave a church and others to leave the faith.<sup>172</sup> Slow erosion in a dying church, Rainer says, is the worst type of church decline.<sup>173</sup> Rainer also notes that complacency is always present in churches and that it is dangerous.<sup>174</sup> The answer to the fight against apathy is missing, with one exception in Rainer's statement that apathy is a result of a church lacking a clear vision.<sup>175</sup> In other literature, the topic is not addressed to much extent, though, in church life, apathy is a regular occurrence.

Another area of a gap in the literature is the area of discipleship. Though there is a lot about leadership and godly practices by pastors that congregants can emulate, which will help the pastor in church revitalization, the idea of making disciples could use a little more exposure. Clifton shares that if a pastor wants his congregation to become a congregation that makes multiplying disciples, he must find ways to get people into discipling relationships.<sup>176</sup> Maxwell, referring to mentoring, points out that, "Leadership should always be about others."<sup>177</sup> He also

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<sup>171</sup> Croft and Carroll, *Facing Snarls & Scowls*, loc. 484.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., loc. 1444.

<sup>173</sup> Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, 14.

<sup>174</sup> Rainer, *Who Moved My Pulpit*, 120.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Clifton, *Reclaiming Glory*, 74

<sup>177</sup> Maxwell, *Leader Shift*, 129.

points out that a successful mentor shares his weaknesses and his strengths.<sup>178</sup> Rainer and Henard stress a broader view of discipleship in pointing out the importance of the Great Commission in casting vision. The area of personal disciple-making or leading individuals to Christ and teaching Christians what Christ commands them to do while going about their life is not addressed extensively.

There is an adequate amount of information related to conflict, hostility, and change, but little information about transitions. A church that makes changes will have an extended time of transition to a new normal. McIntosh shares that people suffer a loss when transitioning out of a crisis zone and step toward a new way of doing things. He says that pastors and other church leaders tend to hurry through this part to start a new vision without allowing for feelings of loss and proper endings.<sup>179</sup> Foresight on how changes will affect people on the other side is a required quality of a good leader. Maxwell puts it in two words, “before and more.” He relates that great leaders pave the way for others by seeing things before those they lead. He points out that these great leaders act before others and do more than others, which brings them moral authority.<sup>180</sup> Revitalization pastors must know how to lead people through change by transitioning them and keeping their flock in the new revitalized church. There is little on this subject in the sources reviewed.

One last area that exhibits a gap in the literature has to do with the researcher’s thesis statement: “If a connection point and resources are provided for pastors to revitalize their churches on the Northside of Indianapolis, then there is a potential for mass church revitalization in the city.” Pastors need a connection point for resources and consultants could help with that.

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<sup>178</sup> Maxwell, *Leader Shift*, 130.

<sup>179</sup> McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, chap. 10, Making a Transition.

<sup>180</sup> Maxwell, *Leader Shift*, 68-69.

Hunter has a consulting ministry, and he promotes the idea of getting a consultant to help a church toward revitalization, especially promoting his own ministry. Cronshaw has the only other material that gives consultation options for pastors.<sup>181</sup> There is little to nothing in these resources that encourage pastors to seek outside counsel to help in their efforts to revitalize their churches. Proverbs 15:22 states, “Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers, they succeed.” Isaiah 16:3a states, “Give counsel; grant justice; make your shade like night.” This fact may be because resources are limited in the area of consultation, or they may be too expensive for the pastor of a small congregation to afford. In any case, more emphasis in this area could be helpful.

## **Theological Foundations**

### **Introduction**

A leader will inspire people to follow when they hear his voice and know they can trust him. Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10:27). R.C.H. Lenski shows that it is significant that Jesus used the term “my voice” instead of “my word.” He notes that “word” implies the contents of what is said, while “voice” connotes something more lovely, attractive, delightful, and has a personal particularity.<sup>182</sup> People have different voices, yet they can say the same words. Some have a sweet and inviting sounding voice, and some have a more coarse and demanding sounding voice. Some people have a more monotone and neutral sounding voice. It is a reasonable assumption that Jesus’ voice was extremely inviting, even more than an ordinary shepherd’s voice, yet the sheep will follow an

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<sup>181</sup> Cronshaw, “Revitalization Consultancy Models,” 325, 329, 331, 333, 337, 338.

<sup>182</sup> R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 753.



ordinary shepherd's voice. A pastor needs to be aware of his tone of voice and not only his words.

Sheep follow a shepherd because sheep know the shepherd's voice, know him personally, and trust him. Christians follow Jesus because He knows them. Lenski points out that it is an inward act to hear a shepherd's voice, but it is an inward and outward act to follow the shepherd. He notes the emphasis brought out by the use in verses 27 and 28 of "and" twice, having the meaning of "I myself know them" and "I myself give them eternal life."<sup>183</sup> Jesus is the perfect Shepherd because He Himself knows His sheep perfectly with the result that they follow Him, and He gives them eternal life. The pastor of a church cannot perfectly know his people like Jesus, nor can he give eternal life, but he can make every effort to know his sheep as a foundation for his ministry.

God became flesh in the form of His Son, Jesus, and dwelt among humanity (John 1:1,14). Jesus connected to people by becoming man and living among His creation, thereby showing His desire to be close to humanity, allowing them to get to know Him. This study's theological foundation is the mandate in Scripture that a pastor is a compassionate shepherd who attempts to know his sheep. Getting to know his congregation takes an ability to relate to people. It seems very appropriate that a pastor of a church demonstrates the people skills that Jesus possessed, to get to know his congregation. There are many examples in the Scripture that demonstrate godly people skills, but this study cannot fully cover them all; therefore, this study will concentrate on seven critical characteristics of a pastor in his attempt to shepherd and to know His people. The pastor shepherd needs to have moral character, be affirming, aware of mutual need, be caring, a promoter of kinship, loving to everyone, and approachable. These

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<sup>183</sup> Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel*, 754.

characteristics are essential traits from a biblical and cultural perspective and form the foundation for a pastor called to revitalize a church.

### Moral Character

Dever feels so strongly about a leader's character that he discourages looking for leaders with secular qualifications. He suggests searching for people who have good character and are reputable. They should be capable of handling the Word, and they should demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.<sup>184</sup> In Galatians 5, Paul explains what one's character is like when one is walking in the Spirit, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law" (Gal. 5:22). In the previous four verses, Paul explicitly describes the works of the flesh or the old self before one is born again. Timothy George notes an intentional contrast between the works of the flesh from the old sinful nature and the fruit of the Spirit that results from God transforming and remaking the person.<sup>185</sup> The old nature is seen in the secular world where leaders are frequently perceived as successful without regard to moral character because the organizational outcomes of profits and/or numbers are the measure of success.

Joseph Stowell defines outcome-driven leaders as those that attempt to motivate people with the goal of amazing organizational results. He contrasts that with character-driven leaders, defining them as influencing and empowering people through their exceptional lives to have pronounced results spiritually, personally, communally, and organizationally.<sup>186</sup> Stowell shares that outcome-driven leaders will be self-consumed in both success and failure because their self-

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<sup>184</sup> Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, 243.

<sup>185</sup> Timothy George, *Galatians*, vol. 30, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 400.

<sup>186</sup> Joseph M. Stowell, *Redefining Leadership: Character - Driven Habits of Effective Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 24.

worth is in their success. He contrasts this with the idea that character-driven leaders, when encountering difficulty, can experience disappointment, but they have balance in their souls. He notes that they see their leadership as a stewardship of the situation where God has placed them, for His glory and gain, and they do not focus on self-advancement, but focus on the favor of God and His gifting in themselves and others.<sup>187</sup> Character-driven leadership is a reminder that God has changed people's character for His glory to make them into the person God wants them to be and to do His will His way, not the world's way.

God's transforming power needs to be a foundational thought for a revitalizing pastor as he seeks to influence people and revive their hearts, inspiring them to let God help them have the moral character He desires. It is pertinent that a pastor should exemplify moral character to connect to others in his church to bring revitalization. Moral character is a result of God transforming a person's life bringing him from a worldly way of thinking and acting to a person guided and directed by the Holy Spirit, thus giving him moral authority. Stowell relates that a leader's moral authority leads to a trusting and not a fear-filled relationship with his congregation. Stowell notes five things that leaders with moral authority do: One, they are not guilty of hiding things because they are transparent. Two, they seek wise counsel. Three, they take criticism as a chance to examine themselves so they can grow. Four, they have no trouble admitting they are wrong, and five, they look to affirm others liberally.<sup>188</sup> Putting into practice these five-character traits can help a revitalizing pastor guard his heart so that he can influence his church attenders to have the moral character that can transform their church.

Stowell notes that Jesus influenced the masses because He was patient, transparent, courageous, and above any accusation, a truly authentic person. Stowell states, "His teachings

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<sup>187</sup> Stowell, *Redefining Leadership*, 34.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

resonated with the listener's deepest longings, and his compassion and love made even the outcast feel welcome and safe with Him."<sup>189</sup> Moral authority resonates with people and is needed to facilitate open communication that can bring the pastor and the congregation closer to revitalizing their church. Iorg makes the point that both leaders and followers need to have the freedom to express themselves both positively and negatively, and they will decide if they will remain in the leading or following relationship. He reminds pastors that followers in a church are volunteers.<sup>190</sup> A revitalization pastor must seek the Lord's help to be an honest, moral person that is transparent and demonstrates godly character as an example for volunteers to follow. This example lived out will facilitate trust and help congregants see that God will work in their church and community.

A revitalization pastor's moral character is also recognizable in his right relationship with his wife and family. The Crofts warn that pursuing success in the pastorate predictably leads commonly to the sacrifice of a pastor's family.<sup>191</sup> They state, "What if God evaluated the faithfulness and greatness of a pastor, not simply by the successes of his local church ministry, but by how well he cared for and pastored his own family — his wife and his children?"<sup>192</sup> Pastors will not be perfect husbands, and if a pastor's family is ever in disarray, he needs to work to correct this situation (1 Tim. 3:5). Ironically, the pastor's family is the target of much spiritual warfare. Croft points out that much of his consulting effort is trying to keep a pastor's family from crumbling in the chaos of church life.<sup>193</sup> There will be problems in the home, for the enemy

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<sup>189</sup> Stowell, *Redefining Leadership*, 73-74.

<sup>190</sup> Iorg, *Leading Major Change in Your Ministry*, 11.

<sup>191</sup> Croft and Croft, *The Pastor's Family*, 33.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>193</sup> Croft, *Biblical Church Revitalization*, 39.

never stops trying to ruin a pastor's family life. In Ruth 2:1-7, Boaz singled Ruth out of a crowd and made her feel pursued. The Song of Solomon 1:15 gives a clue of how to make one's wife feel special, "Behold, you are beautiful, my love; behold, you are beautiful; your eyes are doves." Song of Solomon 4:10-11 says, "How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much better is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your oils than any spice! Your lips drip nectar, my bride; honey and milk are under your tongue; the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon." Though culturally, these verses may not apply, these verses show a need for the husband to make his wife feel special.

In contrast, McDonald shares a story that should touch any pastor's heart. He admitted that he felt threatened by being at home since walking into his own house reminded him that he was not the person God had called him to be at home.<sup>194</sup> At one point in his interaction with his wife, he took a step up the stairs and assertively growled to his wife Mary something like, "I just want to know one thing: What happened to the beautiful woman I married?" Mary Sue lowered her voice and said, in effect, 'Oh that woman. She died. But you were very busy at church and you didn't see it happen'.<sup>195</sup> Moral character begins at home, and a pastor has to make every effort with his time, prayer, and supplication to ask God to keep his marriage and family together. A revitalization pastor needs to remember that his wife should be a priority before his church's needs. After a pastor's time serving at a church, he will have his relationship with his wife for the rest of his life.

#### Affirm

Everybody wants to be recognized and be affirmed whether they are upfront or in the

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<sup>194</sup> McDonald, *The Disciple Making Church*, 8.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

background. People who are visible to all need encouragement, and people who prefer to be in the background need to know that they are essential. Jesus had a way of affirming people. When the seventy-two returned to Jesus so happy that the demons were subject to His name, He encouraged them with these words, “And He said to them, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven’” (Luke 10:18). When Mary chose to sit at Jesus’ feet, Jesus affirmed her in front of her sister Martha with these words, “Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:42). The church pastor and revitalizer must have a positive approach to bring about the changes that the Lord is directing him to implement in a church. Heath and Heath make an interesting point when they encourage people to pursue bright spots by asking the question, “What’s working, and how can we do more of it?” instead of asking something more problem-focused, like “What’s broken, and how do we fix it?”<sup>196</sup> An affirming attitude and positive interactions with people can change a church’s whole landscape, resulting in a Christ-like attitude and will help them follow the pastor and other leadership. Christ had an affirming attitude, and His actions, words, and voice resulted in people following Him.

To affirm people as Jesus did, a pastor needs to have his identity in Jesus through operating in the power of Christ’s Holy Spirit as his foundation for ministry. The Holy Spirit indwells all who receive Christ. This fact is evident in John 14:16-17, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” A keyword in these verses is *Helper*. The ESV translates the Greek word *Parakletos* as Helper, and both verses together clearly identify the Holy Spirit as that Helper and that He indwells believers. Fredrick Danker defines *parakletos* as, “One who is called

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<sup>196</sup> Heath and Heath, *Switch*, 45.

to someone's aid."<sup>197</sup> Gerald Borchert notes that in the context of John 14:16-17, the *Parakletos* functions to replace Jesus on earth as a companion who strengthens the believer as a kind of alter ego for Jesus. He points out that Jesus had been empowering the disciples, advising them, leading them, teaching them, and critiquing them.<sup>198</sup> The Holy Spirit gives a pastor the ability to aid and affirm his people. Croft makes the point that if a pastor's worth and identity are in Jesus, he can lovingly lead people who struggle to follow, knowing that the Good Shepherd is helping him to lead in His strength.<sup>199</sup> If the Holy Spirit is indeed a sort of alter ego of Jesus, then the more one is filled with the Holy Spirit, the more one will have his identity in Christ to affirm his flock.

Being ignored, discounted, and unheard is not the right environment for affirmation. Jesus never gave that type of example. People benefit when they are encouraged and affirmed, but sometimes aiding people involves affirming correction. An important thing for a pastor to remember at all times, and especially when correcting, is to show love, empathy, and respect. Paul encourages believers to show love to one another in Philippians 2:1-2, "So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind." Jesus can empathize with men because He was a man and experienced human temptation, as seen in Hebrews 4:15, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." All Christians are to treat everyone with honor or respect as commanded in 1 Peter

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<sup>197</sup> Fredrick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 766.

<sup>198</sup> Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12-21*, vol. 25b, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002). Wordsearch Bible.

<sup>199</sup> Croft, *Biblical Church Revitalization*, 40.

2:17 “Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.” All interactions with others need to be with love, empathy, and respect as a foundation for pastoral ministry, and if one does these things in the power of the Spirit, it will affirm others. The church pastor and revitalizer must draw on the Holy Spirit to affirm his people as a constant example to his congregation.

### Aware of Mutual Need

The pastor must “need” to shepherd the people, which must be done with a heart of compassion. He must feel compassion deep in his heart for his people, and he must demonstrate that to his congregation. He must see a need and genuinely feel that he wants to fill a need and do so in a transparent way. Jesus felt compassion for people’s needs and demonstrated that compassion to the disciples around Him. The feeding of the four thousand in Matthew 15:32 is an excellent example of this, “Then Jesus called His disciples to Him and said, ‘I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way’.” Jesus was motivated by compassion to meet the need by miraculously producing the food for the hungry people, and then in the following verses, He included the disciples in His ministry by having them distribute the food to the crowd. On another occasion, when the disciples wanted to send the people away in Luke 9:13a, Jesus said, “You give them something to eat.” After the disciples tell Him this is impossible, Jesus miraculously produces food for the multitude and then has the disciples pass out the food. These two extraordinary events are good examples for a pastor to follow as he includes and encourages people at church to be in ministry in the congregation and their community. As he compassionately prays for God to meet needs in his congregation and community, he should have a corporate mindset to make a game plan that facilitates the church



as a body to meet needs through giving and physical ministry. The church revitalizer needs a heart of compassion to inspire his congregation to do the work of ministry.

A crucial aspect of church revitalization is the idea of people at church needing one another. The pastor must realize that he needs the sheep. The people must realize that they are sheep in need of an earthly shepherd and not only Jesus as a Shepherd. They need to help each other, especially in church revitalization, because there are often not enough people and resources in a dying church. Ecclesiastes 4:12 makes it clear that life is better together, “And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him, a threefold cord is not quickly broken.” First Corinthians 12:18-21 shows that God gives church members different functions in the church as He chose to do. Lenski points out that the aorist tenses of the two words “arranged” (ἔθετο) and “he chose” (ἠθέλησεν) in verse eighteen are specific statements of fact. “But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose” (1 Cor. 12:18). He points out that, in creation, God made the human body of many members in their assigned places. He notes that in verse eighteen, the plural “members” (μέλη) have the single distributive meaning of “each of them” (ἕκαστον αὐτῶν), which has an apposition meaning or that they are close together.<sup>200</sup> This explanation gives a double emphasis proving that the church members “each of them” are close together in the church just as the body members “each of them” are close together in the human body. The eye and the hand need each other, and the head and the feet need each other. The congregation needs to understand that everyone in the congregation is placed in their positions by God, needed and valued as individuals. They need to know that their ministry work is necessary for a cohesive church family and a team atmosphere.

Everyone has his place in a church, and trust is a crucial component of effective

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<sup>200</sup> R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of I and II Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), 523.

leadership. Building trust is not an overnight thing. It takes time to build a team effort for a church to be a comeback church. The congregation must see the need to work together, through preaching and visionary leadership, but a pastor must also listen to the people in his church. Dever cautions pastors that the congregation will have its opinion. He notes that in their nature, every church is congregational. He says that people vote with their funds and feet whether there is a congregational vote or not, and the leaders of the congregation do not have to agree with them, but they must listen.<sup>201</sup> Davis relates that the pastor must model visionary leadership to help his people see false doctrine, sin, weakness, and unbelief that has undermined them. They must learn to trust and follow him to build a new church that reflects health and fruitfulness.<sup>202</sup> The turnaround pastor must genuinely listen and lovingly lead his church to see what is undermining and preventing them from having an openness for the changes that God has for them to accomplish.

Trust building must be done with love, empathy, and respect, especially on the part of the pastor as he is the example to be followed. First Timothy 4:12 says, “Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.” Even though Timothy was young, Thomas Lea notes that Paul wanted Timothy to be an “example” or “model” of godliness to the people of Ephesus.<sup>203</sup> A godly example instills trust, but it must be shown repeatedly, tried, and tested to be effective. Young Timothy had his whole young life ahead of him to be an example. A pastor of a church in need of revival has his pastorate’s duration to be an example and build trust with his flock.

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<sup>201</sup> Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, 237.

<sup>202</sup> Davis, *Revitalize*, chap. 8, Visionary Leadership Inspires Hope-Filled Sacrifice.

<sup>203</sup> Thomas D. Lea, *1,2 Timothy, Titus*, vol. 34, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), (2) Demonstrating Christian Behavior (4:11–16), Wordsearch Bible.

As a pastor shows love, empathy, and respect, he must help the congregation, through biblical teaching and caring shepherding, to see that he is worthy of esteem and respect. Getz points out that Paul had rebuked lazy Christians in Thessaloniki, but Paul's leaders did the same and were not well received. Paul then wrote the Thessalonians that they were to respect, esteem, and hold their leaders in the highest regard in love because of their work. Getz notes that it is challenging to admonish Christians living outside of God's will and results in criticism and resistance.<sup>204</sup> The reality of the presence of criticism and resistance must be faced and confronted prayerfully and lovingly. If the critics transform and cooperate, then the victory of a healthy church is much closer. The synergy that results from the revitalizer's example and the congregation's cooperation in the Spirit's power can bring new life to a church.

#### Care

Maxwell claims to have adopted the guiding principle that no one cares how much anyone knows until they know how much they care, but he also clarifies that caring should never suppress candor.<sup>205</sup> The four Gospels show some of the knowledge that Jesus possessed. His wisdom, understanding, and knowledge are evident in His interactions with His disciples, Jewish leadership, and the people. He was also very candid, but His motivation and delivery were rooted in His concern to save the lost and to serve people. He exhibited many proofs through His ministry of care for people, but the most convincing evidence of this loving care and service to men was His death for sin on the cross. Jesus gave His life to save lost sinners, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). In Mark 10:45, He says, 'For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many'." Greg

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<sup>204</sup> Getz, *Elders and Leader*, 81.

<sup>205</sup> Maxwell, *Leader Shift*, 101.

Gilbert notes that an authentic Christian performs works that show that they have repented and show the same kind of love, goodness, and compassion that characterized Jesus Himself. He quotes Paul in Acts 26:20, who says, “Each tree is known by its own fruit.”<sup>206</sup> A pastor must show his care for people by serving them and sharing the gospel message of salvation with them.

When a pastor values people, he will be an example to share the message of Christ as Paul did to the Ephesians. In Acts 20:19-21, Paul did not shrink from declaring in public and from house-to-house practical teaching about repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He reminded the Ephesians about how much he cared for them with these words, “Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears” (Acts 20:31). Pastors must care enough to pray for the Holy Spirit’s conviction for himself and his church. DeVries relates that churches where there is the confession of deeply rooted sins reduce racial prejudice, complacency, self-reliance, and an attitude of superiority to those outside in the community, which facilitates needed revitalization.<sup>207</sup> People need to know that their pastor is focused on the gospel and values them enough to intercede for them in prayer.

Moses was an example of a leader that cared for his people as he pleaded for the Israelites when God had enough of their idolatry (Exodus 32:7-12). God was going to inflict Israel with His wrath and make a new nation from Moses’ posterity because the Israelites corrupted themselves, turned away from God’s commandments, and worshiped the golden calf. Moses pleaded to God for another chance for the Israelites instead of embarking to lead a new nation. C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch share a fascinating possibility. They suggest that this might have been a test for Moses to see if he would forsake his people as a price for his exaltation as a founder of a new kingdom. They point out that God chose Moses to be a mediator for his people,

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<sup>206</sup> Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Gospel?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 82.

<sup>207</sup> DeVries, “Divine Empowerment,” 5.

and he was such a mediator.<sup>208</sup> A pastor should always follow Moses' exceptional example as a mediator for his people. He should never exalt himself as a domineering leader ruling over his congregation because the pastorate is not a competition of wills between congregation and pastor, nor is it a kingdom with him as the king. The pastor's relationship to his congregation is to be a caring, sacrificial, and loving relationship between a shepherd and his sheep. Sanders highlights Moses as a humble intercessor with altruistic nobility, concerned for God's glory, and caring toward the imprudent Israelites. He notes that his leadership was without personal ambition.<sup>209</sup> The pastor needs to show his people how much he cares for them and show God how much he is concerned for their wellbeing. If he does this from his heart, they will follow him, giving weight to what he knows and accept candid loving criticism.

The people in a revitalization pastor's church must feel valued to bring congregants to commit to working towards revival. Maxwell stresses that one never knows if people are really on board until one asks for a commitment.<sup>210</sup> Maxwell also thinks that valuing others starts with valuing one's self.<sup>211</sup> Maxwell states the following:

If you feel that you are worthy of opportunity, you will give others opportunities. If you feel that you are worthy of being developed, you will be willing to develop others. If you see yourself as a 9 (out of 10), you will be more likely to value others highly. If you devalue yourself you will probably devalue others too. And that's critical because you cannot devalue others and be a good leader.<sup>212</sup>

The excellent pastor gets his value from the Lord, his call from the Lord, and will lead his flock by being true to the gospel message by showing his people that they are cared for, valued, and

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<sup>208</sup> C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch*, vol. 1, *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1978), 224.

<sup>209</sup> J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, chap. 17, Ambition.

<sup>210</sup> Maxwell, *Leader Shift*, 86.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

loved.

### Promote Kinship

The word *kinship* has to do with family ties and family relations. A pastor must bring a sense of belonging to the church. Promoting a family-type atmosphere is one of the hardest things to do nowadays because of the severe lack of loyalty common in families and church congregants in the United States. There are many choices in any given city where one can easily find another church if one is not happy with one's church situation. The church pastor needs to encourage and promote a feeling of loyal kinship in his congregation. The church is not a social club; the church is to be a family. Matthew 12:50 makes that clear: "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." As such, a pastor must entreat God's help to create an environment of kinship in his church. Getz notes that New Testament writers used the words *disciples*, *brothers*, and *saints* almost exclusively to describe the church as God's people in fellowship.<sup>213</sup> In Matthew 6:9, Jesus taught His disciples to pray to God the Father. In 1 Timothy 3:5, the church is called the household of God, and those in the household of God were to learn from Paul how they should behave. In Colossians 2:2, Paul shows his struggle for those in Laodicea desiring that their hearts be knitted together in love. Being knit together implies a familial devotedness or a committed gathering with purpose.

A pastor should stress that the church is God's family and that those in the family belong to each other. Ephesians 2:18-19 drives the point home and should be the glue that holds a church together, "For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." Knowing Jesus means something more than just salvation; it is a family

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<sup>213</sup> Getz, *Elders and Leaders*, 49.

affair. Lenski notes that Jews and Gentiles, in Christ, have the same position and blessed relation as God's household members. They can approach Him as His children with all associated rights and gifts.<sup>214</sup> Shifting people in a church to a family perspective calls for much wise encouragement from the leader. Heath and Heath observe that one must provide crystal-clear direction to help people to change. They give the example that if one desires to help a person to eat better, one should not just tell him to "act healthier," one should give him specific instructions. The instructions could go something like this: when one chooses a carton of milk in the grocery store, one should choose the 1% carton instead of whole milk.<sup>215</sup> The pastor of a church in need of revitalization must give clear instructions and applicable illustrations in his sermons, giving examples from Scriptures and illustrations from his interactions with other congregants to continually reinforce a family atmosphere.

The church members, as the family of God, are the bride of Christ. In the book of Revelation, it says that the bride is to make herself ready for the wedding to Christ, "Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure'— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints" (Revelation 19:7-8). John Walvoord notes that in that hour, the church's righteousness and holiness are to be the clothing and that clothing is to be the saints' righteous deeds. He relates that the word for righteous (*dikaiōmata*) is plural and concludes that the phrase "bride has made herself ready" means that the righteous works of the saints individually, yet together, as the church are what will make the bride ready for the

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<sup>214</sup> R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians to the Ephesians and the Philippians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 448.

<sup>215</sup> Heath and Heath, *Switch*, 16 -17.

marriage to the Lamb.<sup>216</sup> Davis says that the godly pastor must make deliberate efforts in preaching and leading to make the bride ready. He relates that the pastor does this in service to Christ, the bridegroom, bringing the church toward revitalization.<sup>217</sup> A dying church with individuals in it that are not doing the works of righteousness is a church that is not making itself ready for the marriage of the Lamb.

### Love Everyone

Jesus loved people, no matter how they responded to Him. Croft and Beougher caution that there are hurting, broken, discouraged sheep in many churches that need revitalization, and they need a caring shepherd to rear them back to health.<sup>218</sup> Many times it is the long-term members that have the most difficulty with revitalization. Croft and Beougher point out that to be faithful in church revitalization, one must love and accept these saints where they are and find ways to celebrate them.<sup>219</sup> They may not always be receptive or cooperate, but they need to be listened to and loved. In Mark 10:21-22, Jesus is the example, “And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, ‘You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.’ Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.” Even though Jesus knew this man could not give up his possessions to follow Him, Jesus looked at Him and loved Him. Lenski observes that Mark used *agape* for the word love in verse 21, which has the meaning of a love that comprehends

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<sup>216</sup> John F Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1996), 272.

<sup>217</sup> Davis, *Revitalize*, chap. 3: The Bride Belongs to the Bridegroom.

<sup>218</sup> Croft and Beougher, “A Roadmap to Revitalization: Pursuing Faithfulness and Survival,” 48-49.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.



everything, is involved, and has an elevated purpose to help.<sup>220</sup> A pastor may think it is easier to work with new people who come into the church rather than reach out to long-term members. This idea is a grave mistake that does not exhibit a Christ-like attitude.

God is love, and He loves everyone wishing that none should perish and that all would come to repentance (1 John 4:16, John 3:16, and 2 Pet. 3:9). The pastor of a church in need of revival can never discriminate because God never discriminates. Matthew 28:19 makes it clear that the Christian is to reach out and make disciples of all people groups. Revelation 7:9 shows that heaven will have a population of humans from every people, tribe, and language. In Galatians 3:28, it says that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free. James 2:1-13 demonstrates that the Christian must not discriminate based on social status, partiality, wealth, and power. Every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord (Rev. 14:11). In Acts 15:14, James shares, “Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name.” Bruce notes that in Amos 9:11-12, the prophets foretold that God would visit the Gentiles and save some of them. Salvation and acceptance of the Gentiles were explained during Peter’s preaching when he shared about God’s Spirit coming on Cornelius and his household.<sup>221</sup> Pastors should celebrate diversity because heaven will be diverse. Therefore, God celebrates diversity in the world, desiring, in Christ, to bring people together as a family of saved individuals on earth and later in heaven. The logical conclusion related to race, culture, and class is that Christ commands that His followers make disciples of all people no matter their background showing that discrimination based on race, culture, or class in

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<sup>220</sup> R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark’s Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 436.

<sup>221</sup> Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 239.

society should not happen. All have the same value, and all can have salvation. There is no room for discrimination in the family of God.

God made all people groups and all, once saved, give a valuable contribution to the family of God and the Great Commission. Maxwell relates that good leaders look at diversity as a great way to build a fantastic team. He counsels that a diverse leadership team can have very positive results if adequately led, motivated, and unleashed.<sup>222</sup> A pastor of a struggling church would do well to be open to various inputs from a diverse group of people. He would do well to introduce the biblical idea of intentionally inviting all people groups into a segregated congregation. Bringing the idea of diversity into a congregation would need to be done with much prayer and care over an extended period, but if done right, it could have positive overall kingdom results.

### Approachable

People in a congregation do not react well to a leader that is not approachable. In Mark 6:34, Jesus saw the people as sheep in need of a shepherd, “When He went ashore, He saw a great crowd, and He had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And He began to teach them many things.” James Brooks points out that Jesus could have been angry with the people for interrupting His rest, but Jesus had compassion on them. Brooks relates that Jesus is the only one that uses the word “compassion” in the New Testament and that He is the only one that the word is “used about” in the New Testament. These facts highlight that the word compassion implies tangible help, not just mere pity; it suggests real help, especially with

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<sup>222</sup> Maxwell, *Leader Shift*, 175.

people's lostness.<sup>223</sup> When a sheep is lost and in need of help, it seeks guidance from the shepherd. Rodney Cooper reveals the dependence of sheep to the shepherd as like no other animal to a human. Sheep wander about aimlessly looking for food or water, falling into danger from wolves without the shepherd's guidance.<sup>224</sup> This strong dependence on the shepherd results in sheep unafraid of the shepherd and very much willing to hear his guiding voice. A loving, compassionate shepherd will always receive his sheep when they approach. A loving and compassionate pastor will always receive his church attenders when they approach.

There are many instances in the Gospels where a variety of different people approach Jesus. He did not turn them away nor minimize them. Jesus set His disciples straight when His disciples rebuked parents who brought their infants to Jesus for Him to bless them: "But Jesus called them to him, saying, 'Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it'" (Luke 18:16). Trent Butler says that this verse shows that God's ways are not men's ways in that He receives the unknown, children, and the powerless. He notes that people of the world pursue politics, wealth, power, influence, and military expectations, but God populates His kingdom with those that lack power, have no pretension, and have the childlike characteristics of trust, love, and innocence, making these children into His disciples.<sup>225</sup>

Pastors must always be approachable by demonstrating Jesus' people skills.

To be trusted as an approachable shepherd, the pastor of a church revitalization must let his people in on and be a part of the revitalization process instead of telling them what to do

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<sup>223</sup> James A. Brooks, *Mark*, vol. 23, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1991), chap. 15, 6:34, Wordsearch Bible.

<sup>224</sup> Rodney Cooper, *Mark*, vol. 2, *Holman New Testament Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), Mark 6 - The Good, the Bad, and the..., 6:32-34, Wordsearch Bible.

<sup>225</sup> Trent C. Butler, *Luke*, vol. 3, *Holman New Testament Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), Luke 18 - Dedication to Persistent, Childlike Faith, 18:16. Wordsearch Bible.

without properly guiding them with a compelling transparent vision. Decker and Griesinger point out that scholars today believe that energizing participants by revealing to them a clear vision and letting them be involved in the planning will increase organizational success and is much better than constraining their initiative and creativity by keeping them in the dark.<sup>226</sup> The church people need to feel ownership and be heard and invited to be a part of what is coming. Inviting them into the process is a must, or they will be reluctant to interject their opinions, feeling that only the pastor or other leaders have a say. Pastors should not fear people's opinions and will only do so if they are insecure in their leadership or set in their ways, feeling like they are the only one who knows what God wants for their church. Keller warns that the dynamic of cooperation is needed for a movement to succeed, noting that people of different perspectives and temperaments should be encouraged to come together around common goals and vision.<sup>227</sup> Rainer and Geiger suggest that walking around reminding people that they are a vital part of the body will result in them being more likely to unite.<sup>228</sup> Encouraging words of inclusion need to be a standard part of a pastor's interaction with the people in his church if he wishes to be approachable.

The seven critical characteristics covered in this paper will help the revitalizing pastor answer his call to bring life to his church. The church revitalizer needs to be affirming, aware of mutual need, caring, a promoter of kinship, loving, and approachable to accomplish the goal of church revitalization.

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<sup>226</sup> Decker and Griesinger, "Mainline Churches in Decline," 148.

<sup>227</sup> Keller, *Center Church*, 368.

<sup>228</sup> Rainer and Geiger, *Simple Church*, 187.

## Theoretical Foundations

### Introduction

Different theoretical applications are used for pastors to determine how they should lead their congregation in church revitalization. An analysis of pastors' theoretical foundations is brought out in this study and measured against this study's theological foundations. Scholars and church leaders sometimes use personality evaluations, and various other means to describe the character traits and leadership approaches needed for a church revitalization pastor. An argument will be forthcoming that shepherding is one of the primary theoretical foundations that a pastor should use to lead a church revitalization.

### Leadership Approaches

The DISC survey is a secular personality profile that many people use to identify a person's personality so that workers and individuals can know how they might react in different situations. Companies use it as a team-building tool in a corporate situation. Using the DISC personality test, McIntosh highlights a pastor's essential personality characteristics to lead a church revitalization. He claims that pastors should preferably score as a "D" or an "I" on the DISC scale to lead a church revitalization. McIntosh says that "D" personalities have decisive, demanding, and directive leadership styles taking control of situations. He describes them as task-oriented Type-A personalities. McIntosh also relates that "I" personalities do not demand; they take the initiative to influence people into action. They create a positive environment generating enthusiasm, entertaining people, and sharing a compelling vision. McIntosh claims that if one is an "S," he cares for others, is supportive, and steady. He notes that a "C" is a detail person who does things correctly, with quality, and uses critical thinking. He claims that a pastor

with an “S” or a “C” score can be a revitalizer if he can amass a strong team.<sup>229</sup> The key to a more certain success in McIntosh’s mind seems to be for the pastor to be a “D” Type-A personality with a take-charge attitude or an “I” personality with a charismatic leadership style, motivating people into action.

Scholars have done studies that explore senior pastors’ leadership styles that have a direct bearing on pastors who seek to revitalize a church. Knowing the pastor’s leadership style preferences gives insight into pastors’ theoretical practices that can produce healthy churches. Jackson Carroll has categorized the dominant leadership style of pastors, especially in leading their church’s direction. His research used a benchmark of four different styles of pastoral leadership.<sup>230</sup> Carroll describes the survey used in his book from the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) in which they telephoned, interviewed, or arranged an appointment with 883 Catholic and Protestant clergy for forty-five-minute interviews.<sup>231</sup> A particular result of Carroll’s survey notes the different leadership styles and how pastors view them. Style one is a Type-A sort of leadership style in which the pastor makes all the decisions; 3.7 percent of pastors preferred this style. Style two is when the pastor collaborates with and inspires the laity to act, but he will act alone when it is necessary; 75.3 percent of pastors preferred this style. Style three is when the pastor works to complete the goals of the laity; 10.7 percent of pastors preferred this style. Style four is when the pastor empowers the laity to make most of the decisions; 10.3 percent of pastors preferred this style.<sup>232</sup> This study clearly shows that a less dominant leadership style is more effective in these pastors’ opinions.

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<sup>229</sup> McIntosh, *There’s Hope for Your Church*, chap. 2, *Revitalization Leaders*.

<sup>230</sup> Jackson W. Carroll, *God’s Potters: Pastoral Leadership and the Shaping of Congregations* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), loc. 1607-3729, Kindle.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. 2917.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. 1659.

The study by Carroll also included focus groups of clergymen and women from a variety of denominations.<sup>233</sup> Carroll insists that these groups confirmed the previous prevailing emphasis in the reports of the pastors. They received repeated input that good pastoral leadership includes the will to share decision making with the laity.<sup>234</sup> He notes that style one or Type- A is more prevalent in conservative Protestant churches and Black churches because of a long tradition of charismatic and regular autocratic leaders. He points out that the Type-A leadership style has been declining in these churches as the level of laity and clergy education has risen, leading to the desire for shared leadership roles.<sup>235</sup> Carroll relates that the pastors' dominating choice is style two (pastor collaborates with and inspires the laity to act, but he will act alone when necessary), and the third and fourth styles were distant choices, but all three emphasized some form of leadership and shared decision-making.<sup>236</sup> Commenting on Carroll's pastoral leadership styles, Jason Wollschleger relates that pastors who are collaborative with their congregations and are decisive (Carroll's style 2) have a higher expectation for congregational vitality. He also claims that those pastors who encourage their congregation to make the decisions (Carroll's style 4) adversely affected the congregation's vitality.<sup>237</sup> This study clearly shows that a less-dominant and more-interactive leadership style is more effective in the eyes of the laity studied.

Some scholars note that there must be differences in how a church is led administratively based on its size. According to Tim Keller, there are different leadership requirements for the senior pastor, depending on each church size. He notes that a smaller church will have 20 to 200

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<sup>233</sup> Carroll, *God's Potters*, loc. 2935.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. 1638.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. 1614-1621.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. 1614.

<sup>237</sup> Jason Wollschleger, "Pastoral Leadership and Congregational Vitality," *Review of Religious Research* 60, no. 4 (December 2018): 576-577, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13644-018-0352-7>.

people in attendance. He insists that a pastor of a smaller church needs to be a shepherd to everyone.<sup>238</sup> Keller notes that in the smaller church, the lay leaders run the church. The pastor and staff do the ministry under the direction of the officers. He insists that in a medium-sized church with an attendance of 200 to 400, the officers do more of the ministry in partnership with the staff. The senior minister shifts from a shepherd to a trainer and organizer of lay people to do ministry, and decisions are made through key committees and teams.<sup>239</sup> Keller claims that in a large church with an attendance of 400 to 800, the staff members become more specialized, and the senior pastor must do less administration and concentrate more on casting vision, strategizing, and preaching.<sup>240</sup> In a very large church, the senior pastor must be a delegator, casting vision and concentrating on preaching. He notes that many churches and ministers think it is wrong to make this shift in thinking based on church size. Keller stresses that a very large church's senior pastor should not become a CEO. He advises that he should not try to engage in pastoral care or oversight because that responsibility should go to others.<sup>241</sup> It seems he is saying that a senior pastor of a very large church should not be a CEO or a shepherd. The question is, should different qualifications for the senior pastor be needed based on the church's size?

The human philosophies of church growth have impacted how a pastor will lead his church to revitalization. Henry Reeder notes that to grow a church, some believe that applying business principles is the desirable option. He shares that others think it essential that staff provide an environment where the people worshiping in church service are entertained, calling it worship. Lastly, he says that others take a therapeutic self-help approach to provide

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<sup>238</sup> Tim Keller, "Leadership and Church Size Dynamics: How Strategy Changes with Growth." *Senior Pastor Central*. <https://seniorpastorcentral.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Tim-Keller-Size-Dynamics.pdf>.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.



psychological and emotional support.<sup>242</sup> Though these seem like the right option to some, Reeder notes that there is no business model, no entertainment model, or no therapeutic model in the Bible. He found other ways to describe the church, such as “family,” “army,” and “body.” He also found practical, helpful examples of church revitalization in the Word with leadership philosophies to bring revitalization, some of which do not match the prevalent human-made methods.<sup>243</sup> This advice can cause pastors to have second thoughts about whom God wants them to be and how they should run a church to bring vitality and growth.

Poirier observes that pastors can get paralyzed by differing messages of what they should be. They can be expected to be a CEO hired to run a profit and market-driven corporation, a fascist dictator against the world, a feel-good stand-up comedian, a professor for his congregation, an overseer publishing the failures of the evangelical and other churches, a mystical ritual creator, and wordsmith for Sunday morning and Wednesday night. Poirier relates that the call is to be anything but a shepherd.<sup>244</sup> These human-made qualifications are not proved by the Scriptures. They involve leading the church with the use of human-made techniques and controls.

### Shepherding

Human-made expectations, management skills, and/or characteristics will not bring revival to a dying church. Wilson Hunter states, “Revivals, great moves of God, are characterized by lack of human control.”<sup>245</sup> John 21:15 says, “When they had finished breakfast,

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<sup>242</sup> Henry L. Reeder III, *From Embers to Flames: How God Can Revitalize Your Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2008), 28.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>244</sup> Poirier, *The Peacemaking Pastor*, chap. 12, *With a Shepherd’s Heart*.

<sup>245</sup> Hunter and Swank, *Who Broke My Church*, 89.

Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’” Wilson gives this Scripture verse to pastors for an example to follow Jesus’ lead as a shepherd personally caring for His sheep. He relates that Jesus did not have a sign on His office door saying, “Messiah for Preaching and Vision,” but spent time with His disciples doing everyday things while encouraging, correcting, and counseling them.<sup>246</sup> Using the principles that Jesus modeled in the Scripture of a loving shepherd could have the result of expanding Christ’s kingdom.

Nathan Gunter shares that scholars have contended that one should understand the shepherd language in John 10 as archetypal for future pastors in the church and that this argument mostly centers on John’s use of the Greek word for “Good” as the adjective before the word Shepherd.<sup>247</sup> In the account in John 10:1-18, when Jesus proclaims that He is the Good Shepherd, He explains what a Good Shepherd does and what the sheep do. Gerald Borchert points out that the word “Good” here implies “genuine” or “authentic,” and so, it takes the meaning near to the word “true” and self-giving.<sup>248</sup> The implication here is that the word “Good” used with the word “Shepherd” holds the understanding that the pastor emulates Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

Gunter contends that there are later appearances of the shepherd language in the New Testament, proving that Jesus intended that the description of Himself as the Good Shepherd in John 10 is to serve as a model for pastors.<sup>249</sup> An example of the idea of emulating Jesus

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<sup>246</sup> Wilson, *The Prodigal Church*, 144.

<sup>247</sup> Nathan H. Gunter, “The Shepherd-Leader Motif as a Pastoral Model for a Globalizing Church,” *Perichoresis* 16, no. 3 (2018): 95, <https://doi.org/10.2478/perc-2018-0018>.

<sup>248</sup> Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11*, vol. 25a, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), chap. 4, 10:11-15, Wordsearch Bible.

<sup>249</sup> Gunter, “The Shepherd-Leader Motif as a Pastoral Model for a Globalizing Church,” 95.

occurring later in the New Testament is in Philippians 2:4-7, “Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant.” Paul here encourages Christians to empty themselves by serving others just as Jesus emptied Himself and looked to other’s interests by serving them. The Good Shepherd, Jesus, wants pastors to have His shepherding heart for the church and the lost. Jesus wants pastors to have Him as the shepherding example so that they will be shepherds that have true love and care for their sheep.

Gunter describes a shepherd-leader profile of leadership consisting of content, character, and competence, indicating that numerous exegetical and theological works have added to this profile’s development.<sup>250</sup> He notes that content has to do with the pastor’s theological education and pragmatic preparations for ministry, giving 2 Timothy 2:2 and Titus 1:9 as supporting verses. He also uses Jeremiah 3:15, where God promises to provide shepherds for Israel that will teach them, but he emphasizes John 10 as the most appropriate example.<sup>251</sup> Character, Gunter notes, is the second component, which has to do with the attitude and affections a pastor has for God and his congregation. He uses Psalm 23 and Ezekiel 34 and relates that God shows Himself in these chapters as a shepherd with care for His people.<sup>252</sup> The third practical component that Gunter points out is competence, which has to do with a pastor’s ministry skills. He notes that in John 10, the Good Shepherd knows His sheep by name, guiding them in and out of the pen, saving them from robbers, having a close relationship with them, and giving up His life for

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<sup>250</sup> Gunter, “The Shepherd-Leader Motif as a Pastoral Model for a Globalizing Church,” 97.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 97-98.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 98-99.

them.<sup>253</sup> The shepherd-leader motif follows the biblical example of pastoral leadership because its focus is the care and encouragement that Jesus showed to His disciples.

Stowell observes that Jesus did not use the existing management philosophy to choose His disciples and did not use the DISC test to see who was most qualified. He points out that Jesus did not set the disciples up into management teams where everyone had equal input. Stowell rather contends that Jesus omitted management theory altogether and looked to His disciples' core character by asking the question about drinking His cup: "Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" (Matt. 22:20).<sup>254</sup> Jesus was looking for leaders who had a heart for His sheep and would minister as He did even if they faced opposition. He was looking for shepherds that would lead others to do the ministry's work the way He dictates. Reggie Ogea connects "pastor" with "leader" in Psalm 78:72's description of David, contending that these two words define two of the prominent biblical images of pastoral leadership. Ogea notes that "pastor" is translated in both Hebrew and Greek as "shepherd" and observes that "shepherding" is the most visible biblical model for pastoral leadership. He cautions that the prophet Jeremiah reprimanded the leaders (shepherds) of Israel because they were not doing their job (Jer. 10:21, 23:1).<sup>255</sup> Being a shepherd in church revitalization is an important and challenging calling which requires that the one called has biblical qualifications to do the job and not secular management skills or characteristics.

The Bible needs to define what sort of person a pastor must be to facilitate vitality and revival in church revitalization. The shepherd of the church is Jesus, and His under-shepherd in

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<sup>253</sup> Gunter, "The Shepherd-Leader Motif as a Pastoral Model for a Globalizing Church," 100.

<sup>254</sup> Stowell, *Redefining Leadership*, 51.

<sup>255</sup> Reggie R. Ogea, "Critical Issues in Church Revitalization," *Journal of Christian Ministry* 1, no. (October 4, 2009): 6-7, <https://journal.dmineducation.org/2013/10/04/critical-issue-in-church-revitalization/>.

each church is the pastor God calls to the church. They are to emulate Him as a Good Shepherd, and the pastor chosen for each church needs to exhibit the biblical characteristics laid out for pastors in the Scriptures and not a personality profile or any other criteria. The theoretical foundation of a pastor as a shepherd who emulates the Good Shepherd is the approach that best lines up with the theological foundations of this study. The pastor-shepherd needs to be a person with moral character, affirming, aware of mutual need, caring, a kinship promoter, loving to everyone, and approachable. These characteristics are foundational traits and form the basis for a pastor called to revitalize a church.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

This study will use qualitative research to address the problem that many pastors on Indianapolis' Northside may lack a connection point and resources to revitalize their churches. The sampling method for this study is "purposive sampling." Tim Sensing defines purposive sampling as selecting people who know the situation, know the topic, and meet the study's criteria.<sup>256</sup> The use of questionnaires and one-on-one personal interviews are this researcher's method of data collection. The secondary mode of data collection will be video or phone interviews. The modes for gathering data are pre-prepared closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires.

#### **Intervention Design**

This intervention centers on the thought that pastors are interested in information related to church revitalization. Uninformed pastors cannot shepherd their churches effectively to facilitate an environment for new ideas to their churches. A variety of issues can cause an unwillingness for a pastor to learn about bringing change to his church. A pastor may feel no need to change or is afraid of the potentially harmful things involved with implementing change in the people's lives in his church. Knowing more about how others have approached church revitalization and implemented change can help pastors to feel more comfortable attempting changes that may be needed. The design of this intervention is to help pastors be good stewards of their congregations. Stetzer and Dodson point out that revitalization is an issue of stewardship,

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<sup>256</sup> Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 83.

recalling that many stagnant churches have people, resources, and buildings but do not recognize that God has also given them a calling and wants them to be more than galleries of their past glory days.<sup>257</sup> Schaller shares that many of the methods used by denominations effective in the 1950s have become outmoded. He points out that new ways of farming, selling groceries, mining, transportation, communicating, raising money, and touching people with the gospel have replaced the old ways.<sup>258</sup> Shepherding a church with fresh ideas is essential to having a healthy and growing congregation.

This study's design aims to show participant pastors what it will take from them and others in their churches to revitalize. Stetzer and Dodson insist that if a church wants to make a comeback, the pastor and congregation must understand what it would take.<sup>259</sup> They add that there are at least three elements necessary for a church to comeback. One is that the people exhibit the kind of lives where revival fuels spiritual renewal. Two is to reorganize the church around its purpose and mission. Three is to realize the church needs to be committed to long-term change.<sup>260</sup> This study holds the hope that change will happen if pastors are actively seeking new approaches to shepherding their flocks.

This intervention increases pastors' knowledge about ways to shepherd a church revitalization and advances the academic world's knowledge about the state of church revitalization on the Northside of Indianapolis. This study could also have a long-term impact as churches in need of revitalization on the Northside of Indianapolis act to revitalize their churches. There could be a surge of churches revitalized in Indianapolis that could result in a

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<sup>257</sup> Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 19.

<sup>258</sup> Schaller, *A Mainline Turnaround*, 81.

<sup>259</sup> Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 31.

<sup>260</sup> Schaller, *A Mainline Turnaround*, 54-55.

revival of sorts in this community and the Great Commission's advancement through more people getting saved in Indianapolis.

The researcher designed this study hoping that every pastor that participates will have the motivation to seek out more resources and contacts to revitalize his church. The combustion chamber is the power source in a car engine. It is where fuel, air, pressure, and electricity unite to produce the small explosion that moves the car's pistons up and down. Cars sometimes need to have the carburetor primed with gasoline before they will start. This researcher hopes that this study will be the gas used to prime the pump of church revitalization in the participants in this DMIN project and everyone who reads this dissertation.

### **Implementation of the Intervention Design**

#### **Recruitment**

Pastors were recruited for this study in two ways. They participated through personal invitation and a cold-call strategy, which used emails, phone calls, and visits to church offices. Participants were eighteen years of age or older and pastoring evangelical churches on the Northside of Indianapolis. The participants were assured that this study is safe and worth their time and attention if they agreed to join the study. According to Sensing, if ethical standards and the appropriate oversight of the project are present, it will go far to abate the participant's fears and concerns and provide an environment to build trust.<sup>261</sup> To assure the study participants of the researcher's ethical standards and to ensure that they understood what they agreed to do the participating pastors signed the DMIN Project Consent Form (Appendix D) as a condition to enter the study. The researcher prepared forms for consent, recorded church information, questionnaires, recruitment, and conducted interviews. What follows is the explanation of the

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<sup>261</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 32.



intervention design's implementation, including the appropriate references to the forms in the appendix. There were two phases to the intervention consisting of the recruitment process and the appointment process.

The recruitment process for this study was a two-part contributor detection process. The first part was to discover contacts through personal interaction with the researcher's present and future acquaintances, referrals, prayer, and divinely orchestrated appointments using the In-Person Recruitment Script (Appendix A), the Recruitment Email (Appendix C), or a visit to a church office using the Follow-Up Script (Appendix F). The second part of the participant detection process was a cold-call strategy where the researcher discovered church pastors to contact on the Northside of Indianapolis using the following cold-call strategy procedure:

1. Church Discovery - The researcher collected information about each church before recruiting the church pastor to participate in the study. The church information came from searching the internet for evangelical churches on the Northside of Indianapolis. Information was gathered for each church from its website and recorded on the Church Information Form (Appendix B). The churches that did not have a website required a drive-by or a Sunday visit to record information obtained by observation. Information on this form is not a part of the evaluation or reporting process. Its purpose was to determine the pastor's possible eligibility for the study.
2. Initial Email - After discovering church information and determining if the pastors were possibly eligible to participate, the researcher sent the Recruitment Email (Appendix C) and the DMIN Project Consent Form (Appendix D).

3. Follow-Up Call – One week after the pastors got the Initial Recruitment Email, the researcher made a follow-up call using the Follow-Up Call Script (Appendix E), giving the deadline of two weeks.
4. Office Visit - If there was no response within one week after the follow-up call, the researcher made a personal visit to the church office and used the Follow-Up Script (Appendix F) giving him the deadline of one week to decide to participate.

The personal interaction and cold-call strategies created the possibility of forty-five evangelical pastor participants from various church persuasions. Twenty-four African American majority and twenty-one Caucasian majority church pastors were invited to participate in the study. The study was populated by seven African American majority and seven Caucasian majority church pastors. Four participants were a result of personal interaction through referrals from other people. The researcher used either the Recruitment Email (Appendix C), the Follow-Up Call Script (Appendix E), or a visit to the office using the Follow-Up Script (Appendix F). No pastor participated through a personal acquaintance with the researcher as the researcher is new to the area and the Covid-19 virus limited opportunities for fellowship. Ten of the pastors that participated in the study were a result of the cold-call strategy above.

The above-mentioned scripts were followed as a format. Out of necessity, there were variations to the scripts based on the personal interaction and the circumstances of each encounter, but the general form was followed. Also, deadlines were extended out of necessity, because of each pastor's varying schedules and demands.

### Permissions

As a senior/lead pastor has the primary responsibility to represent the church, there was no need for written permission to be obtained for him to participate in this study. If the

senior/lead pastor wanted to delegate the responsibility of participating in this study, or there was no senior/lead pastor, there was a need for permission. The Permission form (Appendix G) permits an associate pastor to represent the church if the senior/lead pastor has delegated this responsibility or there is no senior/lead pastor.

### Appointments and Individualized Research

The second phase of the intervention with each pastor consisted of three personal appointments using a questionnaire, interview questions, and individualized research by the researcher for each pastor. The interactions happened either at the pastor's church or through video calls.

The first appointment was an appointment of discovery. First, the pastor signed the DMIN Consent form (Appendix D) if he had not already done so. This appointment lasted one and one-half hours in most cases and started with the participant taking the ten-question (one minute) Church Revitalization Questionnaire (Appendix H) to discover the pastor's knowledge of the topic of Church Revitalization and its possible value to him. The researcher then interviewed the participating pastor using the open-ended ten-question Pastoral Interview I Questionnaire (Appendix I) in the remaining time. The Church Revitalization Questionnaire and Pastoral Interview I Questionnaire are meant to discover the pastor's church revitalization knowledge, its importance to him, and areas of revitalization need. The interviews were audio and video recorded. In this appointment, the researcher did not offer any advice nor share any resources. He recorded information and made another appointment with the pastor.

Before the next appointment the researcher determined the perceived main revitalization need and perceived secondary revitalization need. These needs were determined through prayer, reviewing the answers on the Church Revitalization Questionnaire, notes taken by the researcher,

and answers given through the Pastoral Interview I Questionnaire. From the bibliography of this dissertation and the researcher's personal experience the researcher chose at least two vital resources in the form of books and purchased them. The following two books are not in the dissertation's bibliography and were given to certain pastors:

Sjogren, Steve. *Conspiracy of Kindness: A Refreshing New Approach to Sharing the Love of Jesus*. Bloomington, IN: Bethany House, 2003.

Tomberlin, Jim, and Bird Warren. *Better Together: Making Church Mergers Work, Expanded and Updated*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2020.

The original plan was to give only one book as a vital resource, but after the first two interviews, the researcher decided to give at least two books, .pdf files of one dissertation, and .pdf files of three articles because of the varying needs. The researcher highlighted relevant information about church revitalization in each .pdf and on the Suggestions for Resources and Connections Form (Appendix J) provided specific quotes. On the Suggestions for Resources and Connections Form (Appendix J), the researcher also specified topics, page numbers, chapter numbers, and paragraph headings to direct pastors to areas of perceived revitalization need and to make it easy for them to get a good understanding of the book without reading the whole thing. Each pastor received .pdf files of the previously mentioned resources: "Critical Issues in Church Revitalization" by Reggie R. Ogea, "Identifying Common Procedures for Revitalization Leaders When Initiating Turnaround Strategies in Declining Churches" by Sherwood H. Patterson III, "The Renewal of the Church" by Klaas K. Runia, and "From Management to Vision: Issues for British Churches Negotiating Decline and Change." The researcher provided bibliography citations and quotes from other books that he felt would be helpful to address the pastor's perceived revitalization needs. He also provided links to websites about church revitalization, podcasts, church revitalization consultants, and online chat opportunities for

church revitalization. Some of the pastors shared websites, podcasts, and consultants, that the researcher had not found in his research. The following includes the researcher's original list with the added resources from pastors:

#### Websites About Church Revitalization:

- URL: <https://revitalizenetwork.org/>
- URL: <https://churchanswers.com/>
- URL: <https://practicalshepherding.com/cohort>
- URL: <https://edstetzer.com/blog/4waysfordenominationsorevitalize>
- URL: <https://www.futureforwardchurches.com/free-resources>
- URL: [https://thecrg.org/resources/congregational\\_vitality?page=1](https://thecrg.org/resources/congregational_vitality?page=1)
- URL: <https://careynieuwhof.com/start-here/>
- URL: <https://centerforcongregations.org/>

#### Podcasts/Videos Related to Church Revitalization:

- URL: <https://churchanswers.com/podcasts/revitalize-and-replant/>
- URL: <http://whobrokemychurch.com/blog/>
- URL: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/podcasts/>
- URL: <https://www.namb.net/podcasts/>
- URL: <https://stetzerleadershippodcast.com/>
- URL: <https://www.9marks.org/tag/pastors-talk/>
- URL: <https://thecrg.org/resources/media?page=1>
- URL: <https://careynieuwhof.com/mypodcast/>

#### Church Revitalization Consultants:

- URL: <https://revitalizenetwork.org/need-help/>

- URL: <https://churchdoctorministries.com/>
- URL: <https://blessingpoint.org/>
- URL: <https://edstetzer.com/coaching>
- URL: <https://www.emberstoafame.org/coaching/>
- URL: <https://www.3dmovements.com/our-vehicles>
- URL: <https://missionalchallenge.com/category/disciplemaking/>
- URL: <https://www.thepillarnetwork.com/home>
- URL: <https://www.fishhook.us/>
- URL: <https://ccl.network/>
- URL: <https://theunstuckgroup.com/church-consulting/>

#### Online Chat for Church Revitalization

- URL: <https://churchanswers.com/join/church-answers-central/>
- URL: <https://ccl.network/ministers-roundtable/>

A combination of the above information was compiled, based on the perceived revitalization need determined by the researcher, recorded on the Suggestions for Resources and Connections Form (Appendix J), and given to each pastor at the second appointment.

The second appointment was no longer than thirty minutes. Before the appointment, the researcher sent the Suggestions for Resources and Connections Form in an attachment to the pastor and sent him the .pdf files. The researcher asked the pastor to look over whatever resource attracts his interest. The researcher asked the pastor to complete his investigation of the resources (especially the free vital resources) in two weeks stressing that whatever he does not get to he will have time later to investigate. They then made an appointment for the second interview. The two-week timeframe rarely worked for the pastors, so the researcher needed to be flexible.

The third appointment was no longer than one hour except in a few cases. This appointment started with the participant taking the one-minute Church Revitalization Questionnaire (Appendix H) a second time to note any changes in responses after reviewing the resources given to him. In the remaining time, the researcher interviewed the pastor using the open-ended three-question Pastoral Interview II Questionnaire (Appendix K). The interview was audio and video recorded. In appreciation for the pastor's time, the appointment included a breakfast or lunch at the researcher's expense.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

#### **Introduction**

The pastor assessment results are composed of four parts. First, the interview data from the first appointment created a baseline for ascertaining the pastor's revitalization knowledge and its importance. The researcher made observations from the Initial Church Revitalization Questionnaire and the Pastoral Interview I Questionnaire and recorded them along with a list of the resources and connections the pastor is familiar with under the paragraph titled "Revitalization Knowledge." Second, in the section titled "Perceived Revitalization Needs and Resources Provided," the researcher records the perceived revitalization needs of the pastor/church and the books given to the pastor with a brief explanation of why they got these particular books. Third, in the section titled "Value of Receiving Suggestions for Resources and Connections," there is an assessment of the Pastoral Interview II Questionnaire answers that show the opinion of the value of the resources and connections given to the pastor at the second appointment and the value of the interactions with the researcher. Fourth, tables of the pastor's answers to the Church Revitalization Questionnaire's from the first and second interviews are found in the Illustrations section of this dissertation.

The section titled "T-test" analyzes the change in the answers to the questions from the first to the second interview of the entire group and the individual pastors. The Church Revitalization Questionnaire questions are designed to measure the increase in a pastor's knowledge of church revitalization, the value of church revitalization as a discipline, and the value of church revitalization principles in the intervention.



## **Assessments**

Pastor # 01

### **Revitalization Knowledge**

Pastor # 01 feels “called” as a revitalization pastor as opposed to a church-planting pastor. He was invited to Indianapolis by a mother church to pastor an adopted church in need of revitalization and received extensive training and mentoring from the adopting church. In preparation, Pastor # 01 read the books, *Don't Fire Your Church Members* by Jonathan Leeman (2012), *The Compelling Community* by Mark Dever and Jamie Dunlop (2015), *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* by Mark Dever (2013), and *The Rule of Love* by Jonathan Leeman (2018). He also gained needed knowledge by listening to 9 Marks Pastor's Talk podcasts and attended Gospel Coalition conferences that had seminars on church revitalization. He regularly interacts with other pastors in the area on the subject of church revitalization. He appreciated the connection with the researcher.

### **Perceived Revitalization Needs and Resources Provided**

Perceived Main Revitalization Need: A Longing for an Excitement for Spiritual Growth in the Congregation

Perceived Secondary Revitalization Need: Young Adult Ministry

Book One - *The Disciple Making Church* by Glenn McDonald

The best way for a person to grow spiritually, young or old, is to catch the passion for living like Christ by learning about Him in His Word and have that knowledge reinforced in fellowship and ministry with other Christians. A discipling church focuses on a relationship with God, other Christians, and sharing the gospel. Implementing some of the advice in this book could help a congregation to be excited to grow spiritually.

Book Two - *There's Hope for Your Church* by Gary McIntosh

This book focuses on leadership in church revitalization. All churches need some revitalization, whether new or old. The best examples of this are the seven churches in Revelation and Paul's epistles to the churches. Each church has its own specific need. This book has a comprehensive and insightful approach to revitalization.

### **Value of Receiving Suggestions for Resources and Connections**

Pastor # 01 read most of *The Disciple Making Church* and appreciated refocusing on the Great Commission and the gospel. He mentioned that he liked the reminder of various people types and the book's context in Noblesville, IN. He will not be implementing anything new due to the resources and connections given to him but felt that it confirmed a plan he has for leadership development.

Pastor # 02

### **Revitalization Knowledge**

Pastor # 02 has attempted to do revitalization at his church since he was called to the church. The church went through eight or nine pastors since the nineties. He has made some significant changes noting that the church was in a do-or-die situation. He notes that his primary exposure to church revitalization is the Indianapolis Center for Congregations. He also has resources associated with his denomination and through initiatives launched by them. The books and journals he noted as resources for revitalization were *Good to Great* by Jim Collins (2001), *The "It Factor"* by Mark Wiskup (2007), *Who Moved My Pulpit* by Thom Rainer (2016), and the Harvard Business Review. He also mentioned theologian James Cone, not as a resource on the linear process of revitalization, but from a theologically associated perspective focusing on

justice and engagement themes.

### **Perceived Revitalization Needs and Resources Provided**

Perceived Main Revitalization Need: To Have a Vibrant City Ministry

Perceived Secondary Revitalization Need: Reaching Young Professionals

Book One - *Disruption* by Mark DeYmaz

The heart for the community and especially the urban Black community came out in the interview. Mark DeYmaz has implemented some amazingly innovative ideas for city ministry. This book emphasizes reaching those in the community by being a part of the community and improving it. The ideas of community impact in this book could apply to target areas of the city that a church would like to reach.

Book Two - *A Guide to Church Revitalization* edited by R. Albert Mohler Jr.

This book provides the best bird's eye view of church revitalization literature out there. It contains short essays from many of the authors that this researcher has read.

### **Value of Receiving Suggestions for Resources and Connections**

Pastor # 02 appreciated a review of how to implement change in the church from the resources he received. He also loved the access to understandable resources and the rich bibliography that the Suggestions for Resources and Contacts Form gave him. He has plans to investigate more of the resources and connections in the future. He loved the Great Commission's emphasis but comes from the perspective of personal engagement and shepherding the community. The new thing that Pastor # 02 will implement from this study in the future is that he will buy *Leader Shift* by John Maxwell and work through it with his leadership team.

### **Revitalization Knowledge**

Pastor # 03 defined revitalization as the idea of starting fresh with an existing church and distinguished it from church planting. He expressed that church revitalization is the idea of revival in the church's congregants and ministry renewal. He also defined it as a renewal of a relationship with the Lord. He has learned about church revitalization by participating in seminars at conferences and interacting with other pastors. He has done courses with the online resource 24todouble.com, focusing on church growth and revitalization.

### **Perceived Revitalization Needs and Resources Provided**

Perceived Main Revitalization Need: Combating Apathy in Serving

Perceived Secondary Revitalization Need: General Information About Church Revitalization and Interest in Merging Churches

Book One - *The Disciple Making Church* by Glenn McDonald

The best way for a person to get motivated is to catch the passion for living like Christ by learning about Him in His Word and have that knowledge reinforced in fellowship and ministry with other Christians. A disciple making church focuses on a relationship with God, other Christians, and sharing the gospel. Implementing some of the advice in this book will help to motivate a congregation to be excited to serve Him more.

Book Two - *A Guide to Church Revitalization* edited by R. Albert Mohler Jr.

This book provides the best bird's eye view of church revitalization literature out there. It contains short essays from many of the authors that this researcher has read.

## **Value of Receiving Suggestions for Resources and Connections**

Pastor # 03 was most touched by the article *The Renewal of the Church* by Klaas K. Runia because it stressed a match between the believer's spiritual renewal and purposeful organizational renewal. He liked that Runia focused on the Holy Spirit as the source of power to transform a person's heart and mind because it is not within the ability of any human or in their plan.

Pastor # 03 read most of *The Disciple Making Church* and appreciated that it focuses on the Great Commission and fits with his leadership development plans. He mentioned that he liked the context of the book being in Noblesville, IN, and agrees with McDonald that many churchgoers and churches are in the state of "dry bones." He liked points made in the book that people fear that God might not come through for them, people will let them down, people do not want to seem inadequate, and being out of control holds people back.

When asked if he would implement anything new, he expressed plans to encourage personal and congregational renewal. He hopes this will result in transparency in his leadership team and an environment of multiplying disciples in established ministries to facilitate building into others, resulting in ministry disciples taking the leaders' positions. He has purchased *The Disciple Making Church* for those on his leadership team. He did not think the method of discipleship and evangelism proposed in the book fit with his congregation but wants his leaders to focus on the first eighteen pages because he believes it will encourage personal and congregational renewal in his leadership team. He prepared these Action Steps: An Open and Declared Initiative: 1) We turn to God in prayer. 2) We worship God and praise. 3) We serve God in life and ministry 4) We focus on God as we impact others. – Love does what is good (reflecting his love) – The gospel is of the highest importance. – Disciple-making is the worthy

lifelong pursuit.

Pastor # 04

### **Revitalization Knowledge**

As a teenager, Pastor # 04 was in a church in decline that made a concerted effort at revitalization, which was very successful. He shared that his denomination has a committee that resources their churches for revitalization. The committee has observed that the churches that say they do not need revitalization need it the most. He shared that he has read books by Julius Kim, a professor at Westminster Seminary in California, that address revitalization issues. The other books that he cited as his revitalization resources are *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church* by John C. Miller (1999), *Raising the Roof* by Alice Mann (2001), *The Shepherd Leader at Home* by Timothy Witmer (2010), and *Vital Churches* by Wendell Faris McBurney (2020).

He was not sure if this evidenced experience in revitalization, but he shared that there were mostly baby boomers with the younger generations notably absent when he took over his church. He also shared that the church's vision and the general attitude was on a downslope. Now they have more younger people, a more defined vision, and a more positive attitude. He notes that a pastor, as a "church planter" or in some other type of role, is not as important as his good relationships with his elders (lay leaders) and that all must focus on God's Word.

### **Perceived Revitalization Needs and Resources Provided**

Perceived Main Revitalization Need: Encouragement to Elders and Congregation that God Wants to do Even More Extraordinary Things Through this Church

Perceived Secondary Revitalization Need: Practical Ways to Reach Out to a Local Neighborhood

Book One - *There's Hope for Your Church* by Gary L. McIntosh

This book focuses on leadership in church revitalization and has a comprehensive and insightful approach to revitalization. It emphasizes that revitalization is possible through prayer, example, and positive leadership.

Book Two - *Conspiracy of Kindness* by Steve Sjogren

Pastor # 04 mentioned that he and his leaders had tried many things to reach out to the church's immediate community. The great thing is that his church has many people from the immediate community that are members. One possible way to build relationships in order to share the gospel is to do servant evangelism. This book gives some great ideas on reaching a community with acts of kindness while bringing them the message of salvation.

### **Value of Receiving Suggestions for Resources and Connections**

Pastor # 04 read *There's Hope for Your Church* from cover to cover and noted that the chapter on discerning God's vision was profitable for him. They have seen an increase in new families come to the church during the pandemic, and the book reinforced their current vision and practices to address this while making him think about what Jesus wants his church to do in the future to meet these needs. He also mentioned the author's thoughts about dealing with old-timers, welcoming people, pulling old-timers and new people together, and building coalitions to affect change. He observed that he read through the whole book, saying, "Yeah, went through that, went through that."

Pastor # 04 was able to read enough of the book *Conspiracy of Kindness* to get the book's gist. He enjoyed the stories of how they were entering into malls, did car washes, and such to open up an opportunity to share the gospel. He shared that the church is in a residential neighborhood without stores or other avenues to meet people but thought there might be an

opportunity to serve the neighborhood.

When asked if he would implement anything new, he mentioned that he would like to explore *Conspiracy of Kindness* further to try some things in that book because it has fresh ideas, and as a church, they have been thinking of how they can reach the community. They have been doing a congregational leaf rake at the property, but they now have a leaf blower and somebody who does it. His idea was to possibly do a leaf raking in the surrounding neighborhood as a church outreach.

Pastor # 05

### **Revitalization Knowledge**

Pastor # 05's church is a recent church plant. He does not have any knowledge of church revitalization and has read nothing about it. The researcher gave him the definition of church revitalization and encouraged him to think about perpetual revitalization for his new and flourishing church. He agreed to participate in the study.

### **Perceived Revitalization Needs and Resources Provided**

Perceived Main Revitalization Need: Have a Constantly and Consistently Reviving and Alive Congregation.

Perceived Secondary Revitalization Need: A Strong Desire to Continue to Be a Healthy Church  
Book One - *Can These Bones Live?* by Bill Henard

Pastor # 05 expressed a desire for his congregation to be regularly and consistently in a state of personal revival. This book has a comprehensive and insightful approach to revitalization with that very emphasis.



Book Two - *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church* by Mark Dever

Pastor # 05 leads a church plant that is healthy and growing. He shared that his staff is getting along well, and it seems that he and the church have a very positive attitude. Pastor # 05 would like his church to be “the church” and a healthy church. This book gives tangible biblical examples that show what it takes for a church to be healthy. This book reinforces the desire to continue to be healthy. Reading about what Mark Dever views as a healthy church might reinforce and expand a healthy church’s perspective.

### **Value of Receiving Suggestions for Resources and Connections**

Pastor # 05 read through the Suggestions for Resources and Connections, exploring the topics in the books he received and examining the quotes provided for him. He was not able to thoroughly examine anything because of time constraints. He felt that what he briefly explored assured him that his church plant is on the right track to stay healthy.

There was nothing he read that would cause him to change anything or add anything, but he thought that the resources could help one know what priorities to have in leading and pastoring a church. What he read brought him back to the basics of having a vital and alive faith. He liked that the resources were not about being the most relevant church in town. He also mentioned the resources had a good balance between the importance of a pastor’s character and the strategic secular ideas of management and leadership skills. When asked if what he read might help his church advance the Great Commission on the Northside, he shared that if Christians have the right biblical priorities, the natural result will be to do what God wants. He brought up the possibility of pastors, from the study, networking together after the researcher completes the dissertation as something that might interest him.

## Pastor # 06

### **Revitalization Knowledge**

Pastor # 06 shared that church revitalization is the idea that the church must continue to be relevant in the community in which it serves. He notes that the gospel is always relevant, but a church must help the community recognize that the only hope is Jesus Christ. He feels that revitalization is the congregation taking the Scriptures they learn about on Sunday and making them work Monday through Saturday.

The resources on church revitalization that Pastor # 06 has benefited from came primarily from Southern Baptist Convention seminars. He also gets input about revitalization from the 9 Marks Ministries website and singled out Mark Dever as a resource. He visits websites provided through the North American Missions Board and The Gospel Coalition.

### **Perceived Revitalization Needs and Resources Provided**

Perceived Main Revitalization Need: Applying Scripture to Everyday Life and Reaching People Ten to College Age

Perceived Secondary Revitalization Need: Reaching the Community Around the Church.

Book One - *For A New Generation* by Lee Kricher

Pastor # 06 hopes to reach people from ten to college age. This book has a comprehensive and insightful approach to revitalization, mainly focused on the coming generation.

Book Two - *Conspiracy of Kindness* by Steve Sjogren - Why This Free Resource?

Pastor # 06 mentioned that he would like to do door to door ministry in the immediate community. One way to approach this is serving people as church teams and as individuals targeting the community around a church. This book gives some great ways to reach a

community with acts of kindness while bringing them the message of salvation.

### **Value of Receiving Suggestions for Resources and Connections**

Being in the pandemic atmosphere, Pastor # 06 thought that this study is very relevant because, though his church only shut down for one week, so many churches in this area have shut down for almost one year. He felt the study's interaction was vital because it reminded him that the church needs to revitalize its understanding of the Old and New Testament. He enjoyed the focus on the Great Commission, disciple-making, and the focus on the gospel. He was appreciative of an interaction with a pastor colleague. When asked if he planned to implement anything from the Suggestions for Resources and Connections, he said that he would supplement his preaching on Revelation by emphasizing the necessity for church revitalization in these last days.

Pastor # 07

### **Revitalization Knowledge**

Pastor # 07 shared that church revitalization for him and his church is internal within the church's polity. The people in leadership roles look for ways to do things better and how what is out there on the horizon is impacting what they do. He also noted that revitalization has to do with the physical growth of facilities and spiritual growth. He has done some sessions where pastors get together with the Indianapolis Center for Congregations, which teaches them how to do new things. These interactions give networking opportunities between pastors to see what works and address the challenges that come up. He considers his church to be healthy, gospel-focused, and community-focused.

## **Perceived Revitalization Needs and Resources Provided**

Perceived Main Revitalization Need: Making Change for the Older Members Less Difficult

Perceived Secondary Revitalization Need: A Strong Desire to Continue Reaching the Community in and Around the Church

Book One - *Reclaiming Glory* by Mark Clifton

Pastor # 07's church is not dying by any stretch of the imagination. On the contrary, he shared that the church plays a vital role in reaching the community for Christ. This book focuses on replanting a church and affecting a church's community for Christ. Church revitalization is much the same as a church replant having most of the same issues. This book does an outstanding job at addressing how to approach older members with changes.

Book Two - *Disruption* by Mark DeYmaz - Why This Free Resource?

Pastor # 07's heart for the community and especially the urban Black community came out in the interview. Mark DeYmaz has implemented some amazingly innovative ideas in inner-city ministry. This book emphasizes reaching people by being a part of the community and improving it. It shows how a church could target areas of the city that it would like to reach.

## **Value of Receiving Suggestions for Resources and Connections**

Pastor # 07 felt that it was very refreshing to speak with somebody who has put a lot of time and research into this subject so that the church can survive and be effective in the twenty-first century. He pointed out that Mark Clifton stresses that the church is there for the community, not the community for the church. He feels that Clifton's book reinforced the idea that they are on the right track believing that a community focus is vital for spiritual success in ministry. He also commented on the relevance of *Reclaiming Glory* and how it addresses many of the problems and situations they have been through as a church, especially in encountering

resistance to change. After reading the book, it affirmed for him that his church has been revitalizing for years. He felt that the book is a good book for all churches, not just revitalization churches. He looks forward to investigating more of the resources.

Pastor # 08

### **Revitalization Knowledge**

Pastor # 08 thought he would be a church planter, but over time realized his heart was in church revitalization and thinks a church planting mindset helps in revitalization. He has not done much reading on the subject. He relies on his personal experience. He shared the need to pray and have spiritually and emotionally healthy leaders and congregants for church revitalization. He feels that his church is ready, knows what it takes to revitalize, and is excited at the prospect of turning around. His denomination has weekend training sessions, and at these sessions, there are revitalization training opportunities and opportunities to get input from the church revitalization director. He also mentioned that listening to Emotionally Healthy Discipleship podcasts has helped in his revitalization efforts.

### **Perceived Revitalization Needs and Resources Provided**

Perceived Main Revitalization Need: Reaching the Next Generation of the Families in His Church and this Multicultural Community

Perceived Secondary Revitalization Need: To Continue to Implement Change with a Strong Focus on Reaching the Community

Book One - *For A New Generation* by Lee Kricher

Pastor # 08's heart for reaching the next generation kept coming out through the whole interview. This book has a comprehensive and insightful approach to revitalization, mostly

focused on the next generation. It also touches on multicultural concerns and discipleship.

Book Two - *Who Moved My Pulpit* by Thom Rainer

It is clear that Pastor # 08 has been and continues to desire to bring Holy Spirit-filled change to his church, bring along the older members, and reach the next generation. Thom Rainer has an excellent community focus integrated into this book. Rainer focuses on building a coalition with an outward-focused vision. Pastor # 08 has an excellent grasp of leading change, but it could help to see what Rainer has to say about it.

### **Value of Receiving Suggestions for Resources and Connections**

Pastor # 08 felt that the information he got from the resources was not new because he has had experience with church revitalization since 2000 but expressed that the reminders were necessary. Through the books he received, he was reminded of the need for leadership to have a deep relationship with the Lord, the importance of prayer, the importance of pastoring and caring for his family, and how he needs to reread the section on the vision matrix to gain new traction in reaching the community. He commented that the section about prayer in leading change from *Who Moved My Pulpit* was impactful. Pastor # 08 stressed that the resources are great, but it is also valuable that this researcher intentionally reaches out to listen to and coach pastors.

When asked if he will implement anything new in the future due to this study, Pastor # 08 mentioned three things: The first was to have more prayer in leadership meetings instead of reports that leaders could read later. The second was to consider how they could expand on the distribution of goods to the area's immigrant community. The third was that he felt the resources pointed him to the importance of pastors making friendships with other men for accountability and prayer. He plans to be more intentional in making friendships.

## Pastor # 09

### **Revitalization Knowledge**

As a formal discipline of study, Pastor # 09 said that he has very little knowledge of church revitalization, but he has availed himself of many different resources. He cited these online resources: Emotionally Healthy Discipleship, Transforming Center, Covenant Connections, and the book *Unhindered* by Charity Byers and John Walker. He cited the church consultants Nick Blevins and Blessing Ranch as being a help. At the beginning of their process of revitalization, a local pastor came alongside them. He also had a retired pastor from Florida that he knew personally coaching him and his staff. They consistently are assessing their situation, where they are right now, and where they want to go in the future. He noted the importance of them getting to the point of having a holy discontent about their dysfunctional situation and how this brought them to their knees and caused them to seek help from outside. He is in a pastor's covenant group that focuses on soul care.

### **Perceived Revitalization Needs and Resources Provided**

Perceived Main Revitalization Need: Reaching the Next Generation

Perceived Secondary Revitalization Need: Applying Expository Preaching to a Revitalization

Book One - *For A New Generation* by Lee Kricher

Pastor # 09 has the heart to reach the next generation. This book has a comprehensive and insightful approach to revitalization primarily focused on the coming generation.

Book Two - *Facing Snarls and Scowls* by Brian Croft and James B. Carroll

Pastor # 09 feels called to do more expository preaching. Croft and Carroll come across strongly against topical preaching and give reasons why.

## **Value of Receiving Suggestions for Resources and Connections**

Pastor # 09 could not read the books because of a death in the family, a pastor's retreat, and church leadership demand, but he did look over the articles and the Suggestions for Resources and Connections Form. He has plans to read the books and articles very soon. Pastor # 09 felt the interaction was very encouraging and helpful because he did not realize his church has gone through a revitalization since he started pastoring there. He is now able to put terms to what they went through. He also feels that the resources will be very beneficial to him in the future. Pastor # 09 also feels that the study and the dissertation that will be published will have a ripple effect with churches and pastors that will be positive for Christ.

When asked if he will implement anything new in his church due to participating in the study, Pastor # 09 said that he plans to do an executive summary of the information in the two books and articles that he received. He wants to use it to bring training to his staff and elders. They have a ministry and staff development plan that they use throughout the year and at the retreats. He plans to sprinkle the church revitalization information he gleans from the resources given him in his ministry and staff development process. He also feels that revitalization training upfront when planting a church could be significant. His church plants other churches, and he thinks that church planters would benefit by exploring church revitalization principles and teaching.

Pastor # 10

## **Revitalization Knowledge**

Pastor # 10 had never heard the words "church revitalization." His first thought was revitalizing and restoring the community. He did not make the connection to revitalization for a church. The way he described the beginnings of his church is better defined as a church replant.



A congregation was in the building before they started this new church. He cited five different organizations that have helped his church start. These organizations are New Thing, Underground Church, Christ Together, Association of Related Churches, and The Indianapolis Center for Congregations.

### **Perceived Revitalization Needs and Resources Provided**

Perceived Main Revitalization Need: The Church is a Replant. There may be a Need to Explore the Idea of Replanting from Another Perspective.

Perceived Secondary Revitalization Need: To Continue to Implement Change with a Strong Focus on Leading Members to Reach Out into the Multicultural Community

Book One - *Reclaiming Glory* by Mark Clifton

This book focuses on replanting a church and affecting a church's community for Christ. A church revitalization is much the same as a church replanting having most of the same issues. This book does an outstanding job at addressing how to approach people to change their actions. It gives valuable leadership ideas and explores how to engage the previous church's people to join the new mission and vision.

Book Two - *Who Moved My Pulpit* by Thom Rainer

Pastor # 10 desires a Holy Spirit-filled and directed change in his church and a deep-rooted heart to reach the broken in his community. Rainer has an excellent community focus integrated into this book. Thom Rainer focuses on building a coalition with an outward-focused vision. Pastor # 10 has an excellent grasp of leading change, but it might help see what Rainer has to say about it.

## **Value of Receiving Suggestions for Resources and Connections**

When Pastor # 10 started this study, he had low to no expectations but participated to be courteous. When he started to listen to the books on audio CDs, he realized that God had arranged his participation. He felt that what he was hearing gave him confirmation, direction, and multiple “aha” moments. He shared that he will be listening to both books again and especially liked these topics: ways to motivate different kinds of members, how to love members differently but the same, the importance of prayer, inward versus outward focus, picking low hanging fruit (implementing small changes that bring small victories), focusing on the gospel, discipleship, the affirmation of the Great Commission, and how the authors coached the reader from their personal experience.

Pastor # 10 was very excited about the books he read and said that they motivated him to implement some new ideas immediately. He will start with more deliberate prayer. He will then take what he is learning from the books to his leadership team and discover what sort of culture to create with the people in the previous congregation and the people they are trying to reach in the community. He started by calling all of the former members (who were no longer coming and had not pursued) and made appointments to encourage them to come back and be a part of this new church. He was blessed to find many of them receptive. He discovered that the people he called felt that they had failed their church and community. He encouraged them that they did not fail because God has a plan and asked them to come back and be a part of this new thing God is doing. One of the couples even came back the next Sunday after he called them.

Pastor # 11

## **Revitalization Knowledge**

Pastor # 11 described church revitalization as helping Bible-believing churches that have

grown stagnant or in decline to grow and build an infrastructure to move back into a place where they are revitalized. He showed the books that he has read about church revitalization. These books are *Dynamics of Church Growth* by Ron Jenson (1981), *Natural Church Development* by Christian A. Schwarz and Robert E. Logan (1996), *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church* by John Miller (1999), and *From Embers to a Flame* by Harry L. Reeder III and David Swavely (2002). Pastor # 11 and the church's other pastor are presently working together to develop a revitalization plan using principles from these resources, especially *Natural Church Development*.

### **Perceived Revitalization Needs and Resources Provided**

Perceived Main Revitalization Need: Successful Reorganization of Operational Issues

Perceived Secondary Revitalization Need: Helping People to Accept and Invite Change

Book One - *Who Moved My Pulpit* by Thom Rainer

Pastor # 11 desires to bring Holy Spirit-filled change in the operational structure of his church. Rainer does a great job of bringing out possible areas of resistance to change, and he is also very focused on reaching individuals and communities for Christ. He makes a case for communicating an urgency for change. Rainer emphasizes building a coalition for change by encouraging like-minded people to come on board with the leaders' ideas. He accentuates the need to lead with a love for the people and hope instead of a "follow me" or leave attitude.

Book Two - *Switch* by Chip Heath and Dan Heath

In planning for operational change, it could be useful to develop strategies for change to help the people jump on board. This secular book addresses ways to bring change to an organization.

## **Value of Receiving Suggestions for Resources and Connections**

Pastor # 11 finished *Who Moved My Pulpit* and skimmed over *Switch* and plans to read it. He is excited to look into the other resources and connections in the future. He appreciated being encouraged by the study to examine where they are and where they could go as a church. He feels strongly that the church needs to be more outwardly focused and shared that this study's materials encourage the outward focus of sharing the gospel and the Great Commission. He liked that *Who Moved My Pulpit* was a quick read and cut straight to the point on issues. He connected the title to the idea that a pastor can have an idea in his mind, but the congregation is not in the same place. He shared that he plans to implement the idea of building a coalition to "own" a change and leading this coalition to influence others to get on board. He also liked the idea of picking low hanging fruit (introducing easy steppingstones of change to lead to more significant changes that bring little victories) and plans to implement that idea. He also feels that God, through this study, is reminding him and calling him by His sovereign grace to take seriously the idea of reaching out and having a heart for the lost. He appreciated the personal interaction with a pastor colleague.

Pastor # 12

## **Revitalization Knowledge**

Pastor # 12 was on staff at a church for nine years that was attempting a turnaround. Then he was on staff at a megachurch that was flourishing, and now he is at a church in need of revitalization. He thinks that formerly, leaders speaking and writing about revitalization were teachers; therefore, they wrote about "the how-to" and shared principles. Church revitalization was about how to "do things," how to live this out, and make effective change. He stressed that about fifteen years ago, church revitalization focused on the lay leadership movement with

emphasis put on “be a leader” and “raise-up leaders” (John Maxwell), the five purposes of a church (Rick Warren), and the seeker-sensitive movement of getting them saved (Bill Hybels - Leadership Network). He noted the rise of the megachurch and that medium-sized churches were striving to be megachurches using these three models. He finds that it has been tough to find useful resources that say how to revitalize in the last two to three years.

He believes that now church revitalization is not being talked about hardly at all. He mentioned that Thom Rainer has been carrying the torch of revitalization more recently. He believes that the attention is on growing big churches and starting movements in the last seven to ten years. He relates that there is much value put in things like how many churches one plants, how many campuses one starts, how cool is one’s weekend, and how cool the pastor is. “If your pastor is cool, then your church is cool. If your church is cool, then your church will grow.” He says that in Christendom, revitalization now means finding out what that cool church is doing and mimic them. He has been very disheartened about the church’s situation but hopes to revitalize by not building a better church than others, but by building the right church. He wants to do things that are right, not better, but finds himself, as do other younger pastors, with the desire to revitalize, but in a position of living in the shadow of pastors that have retired and churches that have lost numbers without the tools to remedy the problem.

### **Perceived Revitalization Needs and Resources Provided**

Perceived Main Revitalization Need: The Church to be Right Before God, Each Other, and the Community and Not the “Better Church”

Perceived Secondary Revitalization Need: To See His Congregation Shine the Light of Jesus on Social Media and with Political Issues

Book One - *The Prodigal Church* by Jared C. Wilson

*The Prodigal Church* examines the attractional church's pragmatic and consumer church models. It looks at how the church can be too legalistic or consumer focused. It contrasts this with a gospel-centered Christ-focused church giving examples of shepherding the flock while reaching the lost. Pastor # 12 and the researcher talked about the various programs for discipleship and small groups and the fact that a program that works in one church may not be appropriate for another church. This book focuses on Spirit-led discipleship and a different measurement of success than some churches may incorporate.

Book Two - *Redefining Leadership* by Joseph M. Stowell

Pastor # 12 would like to see a positive biblical change in his congregation in the arenas of a more scriptural social media presence and a more compassionate expression of political preferences. He wants his congregation to capture the notion that individually they are a light for Jesus, especially in these two areas. Being hostile or unloving on social media, of course, is a sin issue, and the right biblical character would go a long way to effect change in this area. Everyone needs to examine their character and see if it is in line with the character of Jesus. *Redefining Leadership* focuses on character, not on leadership skills. It encourages leaders' transparency as a mark of their excellent character and lays out how good Christian leadership character can positively affect followers. If church leaders, with the help of the Holy Spirit, lead with the right biblical character, the church will come in line, and leaders and congregants will be shining the light of Jesus honestly, transparently, and effectively.

### **Value of Receiving Suggestions for Resources and Connections**

Having read *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis, *Humility and Absolute Surrender* by Andrew Murray, and *Spiritual Leadership* by Oswald Chambers, Pastor # 12 felt

*Redefining Leadership* combined what these books were saying into one book. That was exciting to him because he had given his staff *The Imitation of Christ* and *Humility and Absolute Surrender* to read, but they found them difficult to relate to because they were not in the context of today. He thinks that *Redefining Leadership* brings these concepts together in the language and context of today.

It was shocking to him that *The Prodigal Church* was bringing up the same points, the same language, and almost the same illustrations he has been using in his conversations in the last few years, and he had not even read this author. He especially related to the point that churches today are at either end of a pendulum swing, either all about sin or all about grace, when they need to be someplace in the middle. The pendulum's middle point is where people see how awesome and holy God is, are convicted, and receive His grace and forgiveness. He compares that middle point to Isaiah 6 when the prophet says that they will go wherever and do whatever God wants because they have transformed. He is making the point that when a person sees how awesome and holy God is, it will change their character to be more like Jesus.

He confessed that he would not have found nor read these books independently and would not have received this help. He did not read anything new but got validation from authors that connected his thoughts to deep biblical truths, stats, and research. He feels that the church has turned disciples into church shoppers instead of disciples of Christ. He applied ideas in both books and his thinking to the pandemic situation, theorizing that the church has suffered in a big way from the pandemic because churches have not disciplined well enough for many of the people to stay. He points out that if one looks at the New Testament model of church growth under persecution, the church should be in a state of revival because disciples of Christ should exhibit the character of Christ when opposed, resulting in revival. He notes that in the most significant

church savviness era of modern times, the church had its first persecution, and it failed. The choice now is to keep doing church as before making weak disciples or change by making disciples with the character of Jesus, which will take longer. He notes that this starts with the character of the pastor.

When asked if he will implement anything new in the future due to the resources or contacts, he related that he will not implement anything so soon but will be giving *Redefining Leadership* to his staff to read. He will also possibly copy specific chapters that apply to them in *The Prodigal Church*. He also has a relaunch team that he put together that is meeting to answer the question, “Are all the programs and ministries in our church based on keeping people or discipling people?” This relaunch team will read both *Redefining Leadership* and *The Prodigal Church*.

Pastor # 13

### **Revitalization Knowledge**

Pastor # 13 has been to a few workshops at the Indianapolis Center for Congregations and the Center for Church Leadership in Cincinnati, where church revitalization was the topic, but he does not consider himself an expert. He related that church revitalization is about engaging the community and having the community be a part of churches’ renewal in the local neighborhood. He is a part of a text group of pastors born out of the Center for Church Leadership and meets monthly to discuss revitalization issues, including how to get grants.

### **Perceived Revitalization Needs and Resources Provided**

Perceived Main Revitalization Need: Reaching the Next Generation, The Community, and Helping his Church Members to Do “The Great Commission.”



## Perceived Secondary Revitalization Need: Leading Instead of Managing the Congregation

### Book One - *For A New Generation* by Lee Kricher

From Pastor # 13's interview and from listening to his preaching, it is evident that he has the heart to reach the next generation, the community, and a desire to see his church "doing" the Great Commission. The book has an emphasis on vision and planning. While in the undesirable Covid-19 situation of reduced outreach, it is a great time to research and plan for the future.

### Book Two - *Who Moved My Pulpit* by Thom Rainer

Pastor # 13 wants to reach the broken in his community. Rainer has an excellent community focus integrated into this book. To reach out in a community and bring change to a church, all involved need a shared vision. Thom Rainer focuses on building a coalition with an outward-focused vision.

### Book Three - *Leader Shift* by John C. Maxwell

Pastor # 13 stressed that he would like to be a better leader. John Maxwell has come out with another excellent book on leadership. It has a team leadership approach. The ideas in this book of recognizing qualities in others and encouraging them, combined with the idea of building a coalition in Rainer's book, are a winning combination for leading a church. He instructs leaders to sow positive seeds in others' lives, leading them to advance in their skills. This leadership style helps the leader think and act more like a conductor and less of a soloist. This style matches the idea that Pastor # 13 mentioned that the pastor should not do everything.

## **Value of Receiving Suggestions for Resources and Connections**

Pastor # 13 felt the study benefited him by introducing him to a new friend and rich conversation. The dialog with the researcher initially inspired him to act on some things he planned on doing in the past but had not completed.

He read some of *Who Moved My Pulpit* and some of the articles given to him. *Who Moved My Pulpit* caused him to reflect in hindsight on some of the past decisions he made, which negatively affected some of his church's older members. Pastor #13 confessed that if he had read the book before starting his pastorate, he probably would not have done certain things that he did or would have done differently. He was convicted and compelled through prayer to change some things in his church, and he thinks he could have communicated better before implementing specific needed changes. He thinks that some people felt hurt because of some of his changes. He theorized that they probably had deep-seated feelings connected to the past that he might not have considered in his zeal to make the needed change to reach new people. Reflecting on past initiatives of attempted change, he liked what Rainer suggests about raising a coalition of like-minded people before proposing a change to the larger group because if the key people in the church are not on board with the vision, then it is not going to happen.

After some of his attempts at change, some in his church decided to leave rather than change. He has not seen one of those people regularly for a long time, but he needs to interact regularly with this person through circumstances beyond his control. He thinks the Lord brought this about to get answers to his unanswered question of why this person left or to face the problem. He says that God might call him to attempt to reconcile and possibly invite this person back.

When asked if he would implement anything new as a result of the study, he answered by saying that he will attempt a personal renewal. He says that he gets too tired too often. He has a hard time seeing how to revive his church when he has not revived himself. He just got off vacation and has a kind of dread of being back. He remembers when he was so excited for years at a stretch to do ministry. He expressed that pastors need to be excited and pumped up to do

ministry, but he does not feel that way right now. He expressed the desire to have a sabbatical to take a spiritual journey, pray, fast, listen to the Lord, soak in the Word, hear testimonies, be inspired, and get hope. He says that revitalization needs to start with the pastor. The two words “church revitalization” are just two empty words if the person saying them is not himself revitalized. He does not feel there is a way to inspire others in his congregation to revitalize if he is not revitalized himself.

Pastor # 14

### **Revitalization Knowledge**

Pastor # 14 looked up church revitalization on a Southern Baptist website and read about it before the interview but did not define it. He has the books *Leading Turnaround Churches* by Gene Wood (2002), *I Am A Church Member* by Thom Rainer (2013), *Autopsy of a Deceased Church* by Thom Rainer (2014), and *Who Moved My Pulpit* by Thom Rainer (2016).

### **Perceived Revitalization Needs and Resources Provided**

Perceived Main Revitalization Need: To Investigate the Prospect of Merging with Another Church

Perceived Secondary Revitalization Need: Leading in Such a Way That Encourages Dedicated Service

Book One - *Better Together* by Jim Tomberlin and Bird Warren.

A church merger is an excellent choice to revitalize a church. However, most of this study’s research centers on keeping a church whole and in the same location. A significant percentage of churches have seen a turnaround when they have merged with another church. Another church merged into the church of one of the pastors in this study, and it turned out very

well. The two pastors co-pastored for some years until the older pastor retired. *Better Together* is the latest on church mergers, gives a biblical analysis, and gives many examples of successful church mergers.

Book Two - *Leader Shift* by John C. Maxwell

John Maxwell has come out with another excellent book on leadership. It focuses on a team leadership approach. The ideas in this book of recognizing others' potential and encouraging them are qualities we all need to incorporate as pastors. He instructs leaders to sow positive seeds in others' lives, leading them to advance in their skills and gifting. This approach can help others to take the initiative in service and serve with passion. In *Leader Shift*, Maxwell advocates that the leader act more like a conductor and less of a soloist.

### **Value of Receiving Suggestions for Resources and Connections**

Pastor # 14 expressed that "church revitalization" is a harsh word and does not consider his church as declining, but after evaluating resources, he sees church revitalization as necessary, especially after the pandemic. He feels that this study has helped him see that maybe they need to go back to the drawing board and make some adjustments. He explored *Better Together* and commented that it and other scholars note that a merger can be significant to advance the kingdom, but dealing with the new culture that results creates the most formidable challenge.

As a result of doing this study and especially after reading through the Doctor of Ministry Dissertation suggested to him titled *Identifying Common Procedures for Revitalization Leaders When Initiating Turnaround Strategies in Declining Churches* by Sherwood H. Patterson III, this information solidified his resolve to start small groups as a form of discipleship in his church. He liked the argument on the importance of pastor tenure to build trust in church revitalization.

### T-test - Paired Sample Statistics

	Before	After	Difference
N	Valid	14	14
	Missing	0	0
Mean	40.79	43.79	3.00
Std. Deviation	3.378	3.786	2.961

### Paired Samples Test

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Before - After	-3.000	2.961	.791	-4.710	-1.290	-3.791	13	.002

Effect Size:  $d = 1.013$

A paired-samples t-test indicated that pastors' scores on the Church Revitalization Questionnaire after the researcher's intervention ( $M=43.79$ ,  $SD=3.786$ ) were significantly higher than scores prior to the intervention ( $M=40.79$ ,  $SD=3.378$ ),  $t(13) = 3.791$ ,  $p=.002$ ,  $d=1.014$ .

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

#### Introduction

This chapter compares the research from the thesis project proposal with the results of this research project's implementation. An examination of the problem presented, the purpose statement, and the thesis statement compared to the results will be expounded in this chapter. A discussion of the relevance and efficacy of the study occurs throughout this chapter.

The section titled "Evaluation of Collective Revitalization Knowledge" includes the researcher's subjective assessment of the participating pastor's church revitalization knowledge. This knowledge helps to conclude the validity of the problem presented and reveals useful knowledge about church revitalization in some churches on the Northside of Indianapolis.

The section titled "Themes that Stand Out" reveals trends from the church revitalization questionnaire's answers and answers to the pastoral interviews revealing various themes and specific conclusions. Sensing notes that it helps to include raw data and interpretation, which helps readers make their interpretations.<sup>262</sup> The researcher shares interpretation and various thick descriptions of answers to questions from the intervention. Sensing explains that a "thick description" is more than simple narration because it uncovers the hidden and deep meanings behind what the researcher observes in his project's people.<sup>263</sup> These trends will explain what the pastors and the researcher learned in the intervention.

The section titled "Possible Future Impact for Participating Churches" will examine the intervention's impact on each pastor and their communities. For context, there will be a brief

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<sup>262</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 195.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

account of each pastor's perceived revitalization needs, a record of the resource or resources that impacted him the most, and a brief of the proposed implementation resulting from the study. Then thoughts will be shared about the possible hypothetical impact this study could have in each pastor's church and community if the pastor follows through with implementation. The T-test result will report the significance of the intervention and the conclusions drawn from this result. There will also be an assessment of this intervention's possible impact in Indianapolis' Northside towards the Great Commission's advancement.

The section titled "Possible Further Applications of this Study" will investigate if the subject of informing pastors about church revitalization needs further research and what could follow this study in the area of research and application.

### **Evaluation of Collective Revitalization Knowledge**

This project addresses the problem that many pastors on Indianapolis' Northside may lack a connection point and resources to revitalize their churches. Addressing the problem required the researcher to ascertain each participating pastor's knowledge of church revitalization, connection points, and resources. This study defines church revitalization as what it takes to make a struggling church or keep a healthy church (perpetual revitalization) spiritually healthy and growing numerically. Most of the pastors articulated some form of this baseline definition of church revitalization, but few referred to it as perpetual revitalization.

In the Initial Church Revitalization Questionnaire responses, four pastors indicated that they were extremely familiar with church revitalization, one was very familiar, seven were somewhat familiar, and two were not so familiar. In Pastoral Interview I, the answers to the questions gave the researcher a better idea of what each pastor knew about the subject. Half of the pastors indicated that they connected with other pastors about the subject of church

revitalization. Ten of the pastors could articulate some general definition of church revitalization, two had minimal knowledge, and two did not know at all. This information gives credence to the idea that there is a general understanding of church revitalization among most participating Northside pastors.

Most of the pastors shared things that they and their church did to stimulate numerical and spiritual growth before the Covid-19 pandemic and expressed sadness about the pandemic's difficulties. In the initial Church Revitalization Questionnaire, three pastors indicated that their churches needed a great deal of revitalization, four recorded that they needed a lot, six a moderate amount, and one recorded no need at all. All of the pastors talked about the pandemic challenges in communicating with congregants and in getting their services restarted. Three of the churches were still meeting online only. At some point in their interviews, every pastor expressed a fear that some people may not come back to their churches after the pandemic. One would think that this fear would have made each of them answer that their churches need a great deal of revitalization. This observation could lead one to believe that most of the pastors believed their churches did not require much revitalization before the pandemic. The fact that seven of the fourteen pastors, in the initial Church Revitalization Questionnaire, indicated that their churches needed a moderate amount, a little or no revitalization gives weight to the notion that half of the pastors did not see a great need of revitalization when they started this study.

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry study is to provide a connection point and resources for pastors on the Northside of Indianapolis to revitalize their churches. It was abundantly clear that each pastor enjoyed and benefited from a reflection on and increased knowledge of the subject of church revitalization through pastoral interviews I and II. However, the revitalization questionnaire indicated that Pastor # 05 and Pastor # 09 did not show an



increase in revitalization knowledge and a more favorable opinion of its benefit to the church in this intervention. One reason for this is that they did not investigate the resources or connections given to them.

When it came to personal study about church revitalization through books and articles, the initial Church Revitalization Questionnaire forms indicated two pastors were very familiar with books and articles about church revitalization, eight were somewhat familiar, three were not so familiar, and one not at all familiar. In their first interviews, only five pastors had read one or more books related to church revitalization written in the last ten years. Nine pastors had never read any books related to church revitalization. Out of these nine pastors, seven read articles online or got input through any one or a combination of the following sources: podcasts, websites, denominational conferences, two through paid or unpaid consultants, while two had no input at all. Podcasts, websites, denominational conferences, and paid or unpaid consultants are beneficial, but there is common wisdom to the notion that an extended look at a subject through study in books can yield positive results.

The fact that nine of these pastors had not read a book about church revitalization is significant. There are great advantages to taking an extended time to soak in a subject by reading a book. It gives one an opportunity to think, ponder, and come to conclusions about a subject. The Bible is the best example of that, but there is also value in a biblically focused book on a subject related to a pastor's work and calling. This study definitively shows that pastors that investigated one or more of the books given them or delved deeply into one or more articles gained more knowledge of the subject. Some of the pastors who had not read books knew about church revitalization through online articles, podcasts, websites, denominational conferences, and paid consultants, as was previously mentioned. There was a need for resources and

connections in the participating pastors on the Northside of Indianapolis, especially books and scholarly articles.

Pastor # 05's church is a church plant and admitted that it was still in the honeymoon stage. He did not know anything about church revitalization. He was concerned for his congregation to stay healthy and in love with Jesus and saw value in the resources in that respect. He related to the idea of perpetual revitalization but had not experienced the challenges of a church that has had some longevity or was in decline. He was only able to inspect the Suggestions for Resources and Connections Form. There was no increase in change from the Church Revitalization Questionnaire, which reinforces the idea that limited interaction with the resources brings minimal to no change in revitalization knowledge or favorable opinion of church revitalization teachings.

By no means was Pastor # 09 negative through Pastoral Interview I and II. He expressed a great desire to dig into the resources and was very optimistic about the personal interaction. Pastor # 09 showed an overall decrease from the Church Revitalization Questionnaire because of extenuating circumstances that made him unable to delve into anything on the Suggestion for Resources and Connections form. Nonetheless, he plans to investigate and incorporate both of the books given him into his staff team development. Pastor #09 proves this study is valid by showing that no examination of the church revitalization resources equates to no increase in knowledge about church revitalization or an increase in the favorable opinion of church revitalization teachings.

More evidence that this study provided a connection point and resources was the number of pastors who expressed the desire to further explore The Suggestions for Resources and Connections form, two books, and four scholarly articles provided to them. The Suggestions for

Resources and Connections form had at least twelve pages of descriptions of resources and connections especially designed for their perceived revitalization needs. This information is enough material to keep them busy for a while if they take advantage of it.

### **Notable Themes**

Because the researcher's church revitalization experience in his former church came about without the many resources now available, he was sure that the resources would make the difference in his interaction with the pastors. He found it surprising that all the pastors enjoyed the interaction with another colleague about this subject. Most found that they enjoyed the challenge to evaluate their present situation or ponder again about things that they hoped to embark upon in the future in their church. Some reflected in hindsight on decisions or actions done in the past. Many of the pastors shared things with the researcher that they did not feel free to share with people in their congregation. Some pastors said that the resources were not as important as the personal interaction.

This insight that pastors desired interaction is not surprising. Many pastors have few people to openly talk to in their churches about the various challenges they face. Pastors can receive counsel against confiding in anyone in their churches from other pastors and in leadership material they trust. Of course, a pastor cannot and should not confide in just anyone. He must find safe and confidential confidants. A team of trusted confidants is the most desirable situation. If one thinks of a typical shepherd in the field watching his sheep, one envisions a lone man with a herd of sheep. The sheep are engaged in being sheep and doing what sheep do, and the shepherd has no one to interact with to give him valuable feedback. It is common knowledge, and the Bible affirms, that people are like sheep. Sheep are animals, and they cannot interact with a shepherd, but people in churches are not animals and can interact with their pastor and

vice-versa.

Just as the shepherd of sheep must lead the sheep to go in a specific direction, so must pastors transparently lead their sheep to grow spiritually and serve Christ wholeheartedly in trusting relationships. This leadership typically happens through their teaching, preaching, and individual counsel. Pastors need reminding that it is crucial to be a caring shepherd who does not go it alone. Sheep do not change, but it is in the shepherd's best interest to guide the sheep to do what he wants them to do for their safety and wellbeing. People change with God's help, and it is in the pastor's best interest to find people in his congregation to build relationships. This humble example will help the congregants to be and act the way they should. These relationships only happen in an open and honest environment modeled by the pastor, encouraging a mutually edifying relationship. The pastor/shepherd must display these traits: good moral character, an affirming attitude, an awareness of need, a care for people, a kinship focus, a sincere love, and an approachable attitude. Shepherding done correctly will create an environment where neither the pastor nor the congregants will feel alone and enjoy mutual communication and edification.

In the Pastoral Interview I, the question was asked, "What is the greatest area (or areas) of positive biblical change you would like to see in your congregation today?" Five pastors specifically answered they would like their congregants to be better at disciple-making. The other pastors had different responses to this question. They hoped for their congregants to be inclined to service, personal revival, biblical knowledge, closer fellowship one to another, emotionally respond to Scripture, move together in one accord, fan the flame of love for Christ, doing evangelism, a better social media presence, and a less hostile political conviction. All of the responses have the same thing in common. These pastors' concern was for their congregants' spiritual health and to act out of biblical principles practically in their everyday lives.

Eight of the pastors appreciated a refocus on the Great Commission in the study. The interaction with Pastor # 12 was fascinating and exciting in that regard. In Pastor # 12's opinion, churches today are making weak disciples. He mentioned that many people could come to church during the Covid-19 pandemic but are not coming and that this reality reflects on the church and pastors. He points out that the church has not been making effective disciples and has not taught them as the Great Commission commands them. The concerns of other pastors interviewed in this study also prove this.

This researcher believes this weak discipleship is happening because many pastors are not shepherding the way the Bible teaches. In many cases, this is happening because pastors are alone and separated from their congregation by leadership requirements and models that are not biblical. Pastor # 12 made another point in saying that the church has a choice now to start over as the pandemic winds down. The church can do church as before, making weak disciples, or change by making disciples with the character of Jesus, which will take a more prolonged investment. He related that this starts with the character of the pastor.

Because this study took place during the 2020 pandemic, church attendance was a big issue with every pastor, including deep concerns about the discipleship issues of spiritual growth and having a faith that acts. In this study's recruitment stage, many churches that this researcher attempted to recruit to participate in the study on the outer Northside and the inner city's Northside were only meeting online. Two of the African American participating churches in the inner city were meeting exclusively online, while the others, in the inner and outer limits, were meeting in their churches, requiring attenders to register while using social distancing measures. Some churches have not met together in this city for almost a whole year. The pastors of the churches that are meeting exclusively online expressed significant concern for their elderly

members because of Covid-19 virus fears. All the Caucasian churches in the study were meeting online and in their churches with social distancing measures. Many people with fears of the pandemic are staying home from churches all over the world, regardless of race or nationality, yet this unique situation will pass. The problem of weak disciples needs to be addressed and is a trend that stood out in this study.

Another trend related to discipleship arising from the interviews in this study concerns the desire to train leaders. In the Pastoral Interview II, the question was asked, “Can you tell me any plans you have to implement anything new in your church as a direct result of the resources and contacts obtained from this study?” Ten pastors indicated “yes” and gave a variety of answers, but there is a general theme. This theme is their concern for spiritual health and practical leadership development in their church. They wanted to see their leaders and congregates learn and grow in leadership or ministry and planned to use the resources given to them to accomplish that end. Seven of these ten pastors plan to use the resources given to them in this study for leadership development.

Most of the pastors did not hesitate to respond to the question about implementing something as a result of the study. Pastor # 01 was not having trouble raising leaders at the start of his church’s revitalization but has been having difficulty more recently. He had some plans he was not sure that he would implement, but after reading his resources will go forward with his plans. Pastor # 02 will share his resource with his leaders. Pastor # 03 desires to use his material for personal and congregational renewal that he hopes will result in transparency in his leadership team. He expressed that sometimes leaders hold to their positions, not giving others opportunities to move in and take over. He wants them to practice the idea of multiplying disciples in established ministries of his church. He even prepared action steps that included the

statement, “disciple-making is the worthy lifelong pursuit.” Pastor # 08 was inspired to have more prayer in leadership meetings. Pastor # 09 will train his staff in church revitalization in the staff development process after reviewing his resources. Pastor # 12 will buy for his staff and lay leaders the two books given him. As a leader himself, Pastor # 13 will use his material for personal renewal. Pastors are planning to use these new revitalization resources to disciple staff and lay leadership, which lines up with this dissertation’s thesis.

Those pastors that had read *Who Moved My Pulpit* in the past or through this study were very positive about Rainer’s principle of “picking low hanging fruit” and the idea of sensitivity to older member’s concerns. Pastor # 10 was so impressed with these two principles that he called all of his older members to invite them back to church. Pastor # 11 also loved Rainer’s idea of building a coalition of lay leaders to help people own and accept change.

Some reflections on the fact that there were seven Caucasian and seven African American majority churches in the study follow. This even racial split seems to come close to representing the population of the Northside of Indianapolis. Except for one African American majority church that had most of its members commuting from far away, these churches seemed to have a keen sensitivity to their surrounding community’s needs, thinking of themselves as an integral part of the community as they reach out for Christ. The Caucasian churches seemed to be looking for ways to reach the community from a position less intimately attached to their surrounding community. This opinion is highly subjective and may hold some unrecognized racial bias or uninformed naivety, as this researcher has not had much interaction with other pastors outside of his former church, whether Caucasian or African American.

This study does not focus on the financial aspect of church revitalization, but when one considers the paid resources available for church revitalization, the Caucasian majority churches

have an advantage. The Caucasian churches generally seemed to be doing well financially, while most of the African American churches struggled more with their church and neighborhood financial concerns. Two of the Caucasian pastors, when asked about their resources related to church revitalization, shared that they had or would hire consulting firms for church growth and revitalization. This luxury is not financially affordable to less-endowed African American churches or, for that matter, most Caucasian majority churches.

Three African American pastors noted that teaching on financial management was a big part of their ministry, while none of the Caucasian pastors mentioned this point at all. In the pastoral interviews, the Caucasian pastors made no mention of receiving financial help as a means for revitalization. In contrast, every African American church, except one, mentioned the possibility of financial help coming from outside of their church in the form of grants as a means for church revitalization. The organization mentioned by each African American pastor as a revitalization resource for their church was The Indianapolis Center for Congregations which does help some of them to get various grants. Not addressing this aspect of church revitalization in this study may have been a deficiency, mainly because it could have better served this study's African American churches.

### **Potential Future Impact for Participating Churches**

The thesis statement for this study is “If a connection point and resources are provided for pastors to revitalize their churches on the Northside of Indianapolis, then there is a potential for mass church revitalization in the city.” A variety of results came from this research study addressing the question in the thesis statement. Most of the pastors knew what they would implement due to this study, some received assurance in their revitalization efforts, and some



received encouragement to go on with planned ideas. What follows is a possible scenario that could happen if pastors do implement these ideas:

Pastor # 01 was having difficulty finding new leaders and was concerned with his congregants' spiritual health. He was not implementing anything new but felt *The Disciple Making Church* confirmed his plan for leadership development. Pastor # 01 is a revitalization pastor, and if he follows through with his plans, he will communicate his plans to his leaders, and with the goal of multiplication, he will see more new leaders added that could lead ministries to increase the spiritual health and expand outreach to his community.

Pastor # 02 was interested in starting a vibrant ministry to young people in the inner city. Plans to start this ministry were in place when the pandemic hit and was in a holding pattern during the interview. As a result of this study, he plans to give *Leader Shift* to his leaders to read. If Pastor # 02 follows through, he will train his leaders in a team leadership approach to be encouragers and take risks together. This book's insights will help each leader think and act more like a conductor and less of a soloist. These leadership qualities will be necessary for starting a new ministry and beneficial in leading his church revitalization.

Pastor # 03 expressed a need to combat apathy in his leadership team. He valued the information about a believer's spiritual renewal and purposeful organizational renewal in the scholarly article titled "The Renewal of the Church." He also felt the first eighteen pages of *The Disciple Making Church* were so applicable to his leaders that he bought them the book. If Pastor # 03 follows through with plans to implement the principles from the article and his leaders read the book, there is a potential that it will inspire personal and organizational renewal in his church that will result in passionate leaders that have the heart to reach out for Christ.

Pastor # 04 expressed a desire to encourage his elders to be a part of even more

extraordinary things going forward and was looking for practical ways to reach out to his community. Pastor # 04 read *There is Hope for Your Church* and some of the *Conspiracy of Kindness*. He wants to explore more of *Conspiracy of Kindness* to glean ideas for his church to connect to the neighborhood around his church to share Christ with them. If Pastor # 04 follows through in service to his church's community, there is the potential to continue to reach the community and revitalize his church.

Pastor # 05 desired to continue down the road of his new church plant's spiritual and operational health. He also expressed the desire to reach his surrounding community. He only read over the Suggestions for Resources and Contacts form. He will not be implementing anything new but felt the information he read had a right balance between the importance of a pastor's character and the strategic ideas of management and leadership skills. If Pastor # 05 reads the resources given him, this could help his goal for his congregation's continued spiritual health, resulting in more people in his surrounding community coming to know Jesus.

Pastor # 06 is concerned that his congregants apply Scripture to their everyday lives. He also expressed the hope to reach out to the community surrounding his church and the younger generation. He was only able to look over the resources given him, but he plans to supplement his preaching on Revelation with these resources. If Pastor # 06 investigates the books and resources and includes revitalization principles in his teaching, it could help his efforts to reach out to his community and make his teaching in Revelation more focused on living out the Scripture, possibly bringing revitalization.

Pastor # 07 admitted that it was difficult for the older generation in his church to accept change and expressed his heart for continuing to reach out to the community. He felt that *Reclaiming Glory* had a great community focus and addressed change issues with older people in

the church. He feels that the resources he received affirmed his church's revitalization efforts and will investigate more of them. His church will not implement anything new. Pastor # 07's reassurance can only fuel his church's resolve to make a difference in his community, and if he reads more revitalization material, it will likely help in this effort.

Pastor # 08 is a revitalization pastor who wants to reach the next generation and desires to implement change to reach the community. He liked *Who Moved My Pulpit* because of its focus on prayer and was impressed with its leading change ideas. He liked the section on the vision because it focused on reaching the community. Pastor # 08 will implement three things as a result of this study. He wants to focus more on prayer in his leadership meetings. He wants to expand his distribution of food to the immigrant community around his church, and he wants to be more intentional about making friendships with other men for accountability. If Pastor # 08 follows through with these measures, he will likely get more guidance from the Lord for his team through prayer, reach out to the immigrant community, and have personal accountability. These action steps, whether considered together or individually, could result in personal and church revitalization.

Pastor # 09 expressed the desire to reach the next generation and introduce, more frequently, expository preaching to his congregation. Though Pastor # 09 was unable to investigate any resources, he benefited from the personal interaction discovering that he has been in a church revitalization since he started pastoring his church. He plans to do an executive summary of the resources and apply his knowledge to his staff development. If Pastor # 09 follows through with his plan, he will build revitalization teaching into his staff development, possibly resulting in more success in his church revitalization.

Pastor # 10 was unfamiliar with church revitalization, thinking of his church as a church

plant when it was a church replant. He focused on reaching the multicultural community around his church and had given up on his church's previous members because they could not seem to catch the new vision. He vigorously consumed *Who Moved My Pulpit* and *Reclaiming Glory* and reported many "aha moments" in many different areas. As a result of reading the books, Pastor # 10 called all the previous church members inviting them back, and one couple came back, but all reacted positively at the prospect of returning. He wants to take what he has learned about revitalization to his leadership team to discover a culture they can create to unite the new people with the previous members. He also wants to be more deliberate in prayer. What Pastor # 10 has done by reaching out to the previous members will help his replanting efforts and grow his church. If Pastor # 10 follows through with creating a new church culture that includes the previous members, concentrates more on prayer, and puts into action what he has learned in these books, there is an excellent probability that his church could revitalize and reach his multicultural community for Christ.

Pastor # 11 was already in the process of working with a co-pastor and leaders to revitalize his church. They desire to reorganize operational issues and want to help their congregants accept change. Pastor # 11 loved the idea of picking low-hanging fruit in making changes and building a coalition to own a change and influence others to accept the change he read about in *Who Moved My Pulpit*. He plans to implement those strategies in his church to advance the operational changes needed. If Pastor # 11 follows through with the operational changes, it could help their revitalization efforts and make his church more effective at reaching people for Christ.

Pastor # 12 has experience in church revitalization and is revitalizing his current church, but he has felt starved of revitalization material in recent years. He seemed disillusioned with the

strategy of church growth that churches use today. He wants his church to be “the right church” instead of “the better church.” He wants his congregants to shine the light of Jesus in all areas of their lives. Pastor #12 was very excited about *Redefining Leadership* because he felt that it brought the concepts of humility and the idea of a life that imitates Christ together in a relevant way today. He related to *The Prodigal Church* because he felt it brought balance to churches concentrating too much on sin or too much on grace. He felt that both books focused on making disciples with the character of Christ as opposed to making weak disciples. He said that he would be giving *Redefining Leadership* to his staff and possibly portions of *The Prodigal Church*. He will also be giving both books to his relaunch team. If Pastor # 12 does these things, it will likely align his staff more thoroughly with his ministry and discipleship philosophy. Hopefully, it will bring the relaunch team to a conclusion that would help his congregation revitalize by exhibiting the character of Jesus.

Pastor # 13 wants to be a good leader instead of a manager, has a heart for the next generation, and wants his congregation to “do” the Great Commission. He read some of *Who Moved My Pulpit* especially commenting on what the book had to say about implementing change through building a coalition. When asked if he would implement anything new due to this study, he said he wants a personal renewal. If pastor # 13 follows through with personal renewal efforts, it can affect every aspect of his ministry and life. His idea for personal renewal may evidence the most effective encounter of this study because the interaction with the researcher and materials given to Pastor # 13 caused him to look inward and do self-examination, which is the central focus of the theological and theoretical foundations of this study. He made the point that if a pastor is not revitalized, then how can a church be?

Pastor # 14 wanted to encourage his congregants to serve and had some interest in church

mergers and small group ministry. He was touched the most by reading through the scholarly article titled “Identifying Common Procedures for Revitalization Leaders When Initiating Turnaround Strategies in Declining Churches.” When asked if he would implement anything new in his church due to this study, he said that this article convinced him to go forward with a small group strategy that he had in mind for his church. If Pastor # 14 follows through and implements a small group strategy for revitalization, there is a possibility that his people will get the Bible teaching and fellowship he feels they need right now, and his church may revitalize.

This study had a positive effect on each pastor that participated in the intervention. By measuring the change in the pastor’s answers to the church revitalization questionnaire before the intervention and after the intervention, the T-test determines the intervention’s significance. Because  $p = .002$ , the probability of the results occurring by chance could have only occurred 2 out of 1,000 times. That means this intervention will yield a very similar result 99.8 percent of the time. Though this is a small sample compared to other studies, this is an extremely significant result that concludes that the intervention was very successful.

It is complicated to prove that this study will advance the Great Commission on the Northside of Indianapolis. It would take a lot more time to observe and measure this. The potential is there if the pastors follow through with their stated plans and each church involved is successful at revitalization. It seems that it would be very beneficial to repeat this study on the South, East, and West side of Indianapolis and in other cities and regions in the United States. If that were to happen, many more church pastors could have the tools to revitalize their churches through personal study.

### **Potential Further Applications of this Study**

This study proves that it is possible to do a recruitment process for a dissertation study

using the method outlined in chapter 3 of this dissertation. It is proven in this study that it is possible from 46 attempts to find 14 pastor participants to agree to participate in a Doctor of Ministry study. That is, this recruitment strategy had a positive response of 31 percent. That is a fantastic figure during a global pandemic. This result is especially significant for a person who would like to do a Doctor of Ministry study that is not in a denomination, not pastoring a church, or not presently working in a ministry profession. Recruitment is a big issue in some doctorate studies, and this study expands the possibilities in this area.

This study could substantially impact churches in various geographic areas if doctoral students do studies in various church disciplines outside of their denominations or outside of their autonomous churches. It could be possible to bring evangelical pastors together across denominational divides. In this study, some pastors inquired about meeting and discussing church revitalization with other pastors on the Northside of Indianapolis that participated in this study. This idea is an area that this researcher will very likely explore after the completion of the degree. It has been an invaluable experience to hear the various perspectives related to this discipline of study and to be able to share this researcher's perspective and resources with other pastors from differing persuasions. Studies like these show the potential to have cross-denominational fellowship and cross-denominational ministry, resulting in a geographical area experiencing revitalization.

This study proves that a researcher for a Doctor of Ministry degree can help solve a problem in a specific geographical area in various church disciplines. One can cross denominations on specific common issues without dabbling in theological and methodological differences. There can be a great advantage to seeing the church from a different perspective and learning how another church pastor from another persuasion looks at a subject. This insight

opens up more possibilities for a broader range of studies, resulting in more opportunities for solving various church-related problems.

Even though this researcher is new to the Indianapolis area and was inherently limited in the number of personal contacts possible for adequate networking to recruit pastors, the cold call strategy was very successful. The pastors that participated were eager to be of help. There was also the fear that the pandemic might limit personal interaction with each pastor. This fear was not warranted as most pastors met individually with the researcher for most of the meetings. There were video calls for some meetings, but there were face-to-face meetings with every pastor. Each pastor that participated in the study seemed very concerned for their church, community, was reflective, humble, and enthused to participate. Most of them agreed to do the study because they wanted to help the researcher but soon realized that through the personal interaction and the resources and connections in revitalization, they benefited. This study was mutually edifying, and the researcher learned new things from each encounter with each pastor.



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## Illustrations

Table 1. Church Revitalization Questionnaire Results: Pastor # 01

Church Revitalization Questionnaire	Pastor # 01 (1st)	Pastor # 01 (2nd)
1. How familiar are you with the term “church revitalization”?	Very familiar	Very familiar
2. What is your familiarity with books and articles about church revitalization?	Very familiar	Very familiar
3. To what extent do you think your church needs to revitalize?	A moderate amount	A moderate amount
4. How much interest do you have in discussing church revitalization with others interested in the subject?	Somewhat interested	Somewhat interested
5. What is the level of hope you have for your church to revitalize?	A great deal	A great deal
6. How likely is it for a church to revitalize without revitalization resources and connections?	Unlikely	Unlikely
7. How much of a priority should a pastor’s spiritual health be to church revitalization?	A great deal	A great deal
8. How important do you think expository preaching could be to church revitalization?	Very important	Extremely important
9. How valuable do you think resources and connections about church revitalization could be to a growing and healthy church?	Somewhat valuable	Very valuable
10. What extent of interest do you have in receiving a free resource and suggestions for other resources about church revitalization that is specifically tailored to your church’s needs?	Very interested	Very interested

Table 2. Church Revitalization Questionnaire Results: Pastor # 02

Church Revitalization Questionnaire	Pastor # 02 (1st)	Pastor # 02 (2nd)
1. How familiar are you with the term “church revitalization”?	Somewhat familiar	Very Familiar
2. What is your familiarity with books and articles about church revitalization?	Somewhat familiar	Not so familiar
3. To what extent do you think your church needs to revitalize?	A great deal	A great deal
4. How much interest do you have in discussing church revitalization with others interested in the subject?	Extremely interested	Extremely interested
5. What is the level of hope you have for your church to revitalize?	A great deal	A great deal
6. How likely is it for a church to revitalize without revitalization resources and connections?	Unlikely	Unlikely
7. How much of a priority should a pastor’s spiritual health be to church revitalization?	A great deal	A great deal
8. How important do you think expository preaching could be to church revitalization?	Not so important	Very important
9. How valuable do you think resources and connections about church revitalization could be to a growing and healthy church?	Extremely valuable	Extremely valuable
10. What extent of interest do you have in receiving a free resource and suggestions for other resources about church revitalization that is specifically tailored to your church’s needs?	Extremely interested	Extremely interested

Table 3. Church Revitalization Questionnaire Results: Pastor #03

Church Revitalization Questionnaire	Pastor # 03 (1st)	Pastor # 03 (2nd)
1. How familiar are you with the term “church revitalization”?	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar
2. What is your familiarity with books and articles about church revitalization?	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar
3. To what extent do you think your church needs to revitalize?	A lot	A lot
4. How much interest do you have in discussing church revitalization with others interested in the subject?	Somewhat interested	Somewhat interested
5. What is the level of hope you have for your church to revitalize?	A lot	A lot
6. How likely is it for a church to revitalize without revitalization resources and connections?	Neither likely nor unlikely	Unlikely
7. How much of a priority should a pastor’s spiritual health be to church revitalization?	A great deal	A lot
8. How important do you think expository preaching could be to church revitalization?	Extremely important	Extremely important
9. How valuable do you think resources and connections about church revitalization could be to a growing and healthy church?	Very valuable	Very valuable
10. What extent of interest do you have in receiving a free resource and suggestions for other resources about church revitalization that is specifically tailored to your church’s needs?	Very interested	Very interested

Table 4. Church Revitalization Questionnaire Results: Pastor #04

Church Revitalization Questionnaire	Pastor # 04 (1st)	Pastor # 04 (2nd)
1. How familiar are you with the term “church revitalization”?	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar
2. What is your familiarity with books and articles about church revitalization?	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar
3. To what extent do you think your church needs to revitalize?	A moderate amount	A Lot
4. How much interest do you have in discussing church revitalization with others interested in the subject?	Somewhat interested	Very interested
5. What is the level of hope you have for your church to revitalize?	A great deal	A great deal
6. How likely is it for a church to revitalize without revitalization resources and connections?	Unlikely	Unlikely
7. How much of a priority should a pastor’s spiritual health be to church revitalization?	A great deal	A great deal
8. How important do you think expository preaching could be to church revitalization?	Extremely important	Very important
9. How valuable do you think resources and connections about church revitalization could be to a growing and healthy church?	Very valuable	Very valuable
10. What extent of interest do you have in receiving a free resource and suggestions for other resources about church revitalization that is specifically tailored to your church’s needs?	Very interested	Very interested



Table 5. Church Revitalization Questionnaire Results: Pastor #05

Church Revitalization Questionnaire	Pastor # 05 (1st)	Pastor # 05 (2nd)
1. How familiar are you with the term “church revitalization”?	Not so familiar	Somewhat familiar
2. What is your familiarity with books and articles about church revitalization?	Not so familiar	Somewhat familiar
3. To what extent do you think your church needs to revitalize?	A moderate amount	A moderate amount
4. How much interest do you have in discussing church revitalization with others interested in the subject?	Somewhat interested	Somewhat interested
5. What is the level of hope you have for your church to revitalize?	A great deal	A great deal
6. How likely is it for a church to revitalize without revitalization resources and connections?	Neither likely nor unlikely	Unlikely
7. How much of a priority should a pastor’s spiritual health be to church revitalization?	A great deal	A great deal
8. How important do you think expository preaching could be to church revitalization?	Extremely important	Very important
9. How valuable do you think resources and connections about church revitalization could be to a growing and healthy church?	Very valuable	Somewhat valuable
10. What extent of interest do you have in receiving a free resource and suggestions for other resources about church revitalization that is specifically tailored to your church’s needs?	Very interested	Somewhat interested

Table 6. Church Revitalization Questionnaire Results: Pastor # 06

Church Revitalization Questionnaire	Pastor # 06 (1st)	Pastor # 06 (2nd)
1. How familiar are you with the term “church revitalization”?	Somewhat familiar	Extremely familiar
2. What is your familiarity with books and articles about church revitalization?	Somewhat familiar	Extremely familiar
3. To what extent do you think your church needs to revitalize?	A great deal	A great deal
4. How much interest do you have in discussing church revitalization with others interested in the subject?	Extremely interested	Extremely interested
5. What is the level of hope you have for your church to revitalize?	A great deal	A great deal
6. How likely is it for a church to revitalize without revitalization resources and connections?	Very unlikely	Very unlikely
7. How much of a priority should a pastor’s spiritual health be to church revitalization?	A great deal	A great deal
8. How important do you think expository preaching could be to church revitalization?	Extremely important	Extremely important
9. How valuable do you think resources and connections about church revitalization could be to a growing and healthy church?	Extremely valuable	Extremely valuable
10. What extent of interest do you have in receiving a free resource and suggestions for other resources about church revitalization that is specifically tailored to your church’s needs?	Extremely interested	Extremely interested

Table 7. Church Revitalization Questionnaire Results: Pastor # 07

Church Revitalization Questionnaire	Pastor # 07 (1st)	Pastor # 07 (2nd)
1. How familiar are you with the term “church revitalization”?	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar
2. What is your familiarity with books and articles about church revitalization?	Not so familiar	Very familiar
3. To what extent do you think your church needs to revitalize?	A lot	A moderate amount
4. How much interest do you have in discussing church revitalization with others interested in the subject?	Somewhat interested	Somewhat interested
5. What is the level of hope you have for your church to revitalize?	A great deal	A great deal
6. How likely is it for a church to revitalize without revitalization resources and connections?	Neither likely nor unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely
7. How much of a priority should a pastor’s spiritual health be to church revitalization?	A great deal	A great deal
8. How important do you think expository preaching could be to church revitalization?	Extremely important	Extremely important
9. How valuable do you think resources and connections about church revitalization could be to a growing and healthy church?	Very valuable	Very valuable
10. What extent of interest do you have in receiving a free resource and suggestions for other resources about church revitalization that is specifically tailored to your church’s needs?	Very interested	Very interested

Table 8. Church Revitalization Questionnaire Results: Pastor #08

Church Revitalization Questionnaire	Pastor # 08 (1st)	Pastor # 08 (2nd)
1. How familiar are you with the term “church revitalization”?	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar
2. What is your familiarity with books and articles about church revitalization?	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar
3. To what extent do you think your church needs to revitalize?	A great deal	A great deal
4. How much interest do you have in discussing church revitalization with others interested in the subject?	Very interested	Extremely interested
5. What is the level of hope you have for your church to revitalize?	A great deal	A great deal
6. How likely is it for a church to revitalize without revitalization resources and connections?	Likely	Unlikely
7. How much of a priority should a pastor’s spiritual health be to church revitalization?	A great deal	A great deal
8. How important do you think expository preaching could be to church revitalization?	Very important	Extremely important
9. How valuable do you think resources and connections about church revitalization could be to a growing and healthy church?	Extremely valuable	Very valuable
10. What extent of interest do you have in receiving a free resource and suggestions for other resources about church revitalization that is specifically tailored to your church’s needs?	Extremely interested	Extremely interested

Table 9. Church Revitalization Questionnaire Results: Pastor # 09

Church Revitalization Questionnaire	Pastor # 09 (1st)	Pastor # 09 (2nd)
1. How familiar are you with the term “church revitalization”?	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar
2. What is your familiarity with books and articles about church revitalization?	Somewhat familiar	Somewhat familiar
3. To what extent do you think your church needs to revitalize?	A lot	A moderate amount
4. How much interest do you have in discussing church revitalization with others interested in the subject?	Very interested	Very Interested
5. What is the level of hope you have for your church to revitalize?	A great deal	A lot
6. How likely is it for a church to revitalize without revitalization resources and connections?	Unlikely	Unlikely
7. How much of a priority should a pastor’s spiritual health be to church revitalization?	A great deal	A great deal
8. How important do you think expository preaching could be to church revitalization?	Extremely important	Extremely important
9. How valuable do you think resources and connections about church revitalization could be to a growing and healthy church?	Extremely valuable	Extremely valuable
10. What extent of interest do you have in receiving a free resource and suggestions for other resources about church revitalization that is specifically tailored to your church’s needs?	Very interested	Very interested

Table 10. Church Revitalization Questionnaire Results: Pastor # 10

Church Revitalization Questionnaire	Pastor # 10 (1st)	Pastor # 10 (2nd)
1. How familiar are you with the term “church revitalization”?	Not so familiar	Very familiar
2. What is your familiarity with books and articles about church revitalization?	Not at all familiar	Somewhat familiar
3. To what extent do you think your church needs to revitalize?	Not at all	A great deal
4. How much interest do you have in discussing church revitalization with others interested in the subject?	Somewhat interested	Very interested
5. What is the level of hope you have for your church to revitalize?	A lot	A great deal
6. How likely is it for a church to revitalize without revitalization resources and connections?	Neither likely nor unlikely	Very unlikely
7. How much of a priority should a pastor’s spiritual health be to church revitalization?	A lot	A lot
8. How important do you think expository preaching could be to church revitalization?	Extremely important	Extremely important
9. How valuable do you think resources and connections about church revitalization could be to a growing and healthy church?	Very valuable	Extremely valuable
10. What extent of interest do you have in receiving a free resource and suggestions for other resources about church revitalization that is specifically tailored to your church’s needs?	Very interested	Extremely interested

Table 11. Church Revitalization Questionnaire Results: Pastor # 11

Church Revitalization Questionnaire	Pastor # 11 (1st)	Pastor # 11 (2nd)
1. How familiar are you with the term “church revitalization”?	Extremely familiar	Very familiar
2. What is your familiarity with books and articles about church revitalization?	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar
3. To what extent do you think your church needs to revitalize?	A moderate amount	A lot
4. How much interest do you have in discussing church revitalization with others interested in the subject?	Very interested	Very interested
5. What is the level of hope you have for your church to revitalize?	A great deal	A great deal
6. How likely is it for a church to revitalize without revitalization resources and connections?	Unlikely	Unlikely
7. How much of a priority should a pastor’s spiritual health be to church revitalization?	A moderate amount	A lot
8. How important do you think expository preaching could be to church revitalization?	Extremely important	Extremely important
9. How valuable do you think resources and connections about church revitalization could be to a growing and healthy church?	Very valuable	Very valuable
10. What extent of interest do you have in receiving a free resource and suggestions for other resources about church revitalization that is specifically tailored to your church’s needs?	Extremely interested	Extremely interested

Table 12. Church Revitalization Questionnaire Results: Pastor # 12

Church Revitalization Questionnaire	Pastor # 12 (1st)	Pastor # 12 (2nd)
1. How familiar are you with the term “church revitalization”?	Extremely familiar	Extremely familiar
2. What is your familiarity with books and articles about church revitalization?	Very familiar	Somewhat familiar
3. To what extent do you think your church needs to revitalize?	A moderate amount	A great deal
4. How much interest do you have in discussing church revitalization with others interested in the subject?	Extremely interested	Extremely interested
5. What is the level of hope you have for your church to revitalize?	A great deal	A great deal
6. How likely is it for a church to revitalize without revitalization resources and connections?	Unlikely	Unlikely
7. How much of a priority should a pastor’s spiritual health be to church revitalization?	A great deal	A great deal
8. How important do you think expository preaching could be to church revitalization?	Extremely important	Extremely important
9. How valuable do you think resources and connections about church revitalization could be to a growing and healthy church?	Very valuable	Extremely valuable
10. What extent of interest do you have in receiving a free resource and suggestions for other resources about church revitalization that is specifically tailored to your church’s needs?	Very interested	Extremely interested

Table 13. Church Revitalization Questionnaire Results: Pastor # 13

Church Revitalization Questionnaire	Pastor # 13 (1st)	Pastor # 13 (2nd)
1. How familiar are you with the term “church revitalization”?	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar
2. What is your familiarity with books and articles about church revitalization?	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar
3. To what extent do you think your church needs to revitalize?	A lot	A lot
4. How much interest do you have in discussing church revitalization with others interested in the subject?	Extremely interested	Extremely interested
5. What is the level of hope you have for your church to revitalize?	A lot	A great deal
6. How likely is it for a church to revitalize without revitalization resources and connections?	Unlikely	Unlikely
7. How much of a priority should a pastor’s spiritual health be to church revitalization?	A great deal	A great deal
8. How important do you think expository preaching could be to church revitalization?	Extremely important	Extremely important
9. How valuable do you think resources and connections about church revitalization could be to a growing and healthy church?	Extremely valuable	Extremely valuable
10. What extent of interest do you have in receiving a free resource and suggestions for other resources about church revitalization that is specifically tailored to your church’s needs?	Extremely interested	Extremely interested

Table 14. Church Revitalization Questionnaire Results: Pastor #14

Church Revitalization Questionnaire	Pastor # 14 (1st)	Pastor # 14 (2nd)
1. How familiar are you with the term “church revitalization”?	Somewhat familiar	Very familiar
2. What is your familiarity with books and articles about church revitalization?	Not so familiar	Very familiar
3. To what extent do you think your church needs to revitalize?	A moderate amount	A moderate amount
4. How much interest do you have in discussing church revitalization with others interested in the subject?	Very interested	Extremely interested
5. What is the level of hope you have for your church to revitalize?	A great deal	A great deal
6. How likely is it for a church to revitalize without revitalization resources and connections?	Very unlikely	Very unlikely
7. How much of a priority should a pastor’s spiritual health be to church revitalization?	A great deal	A great deal
8. How important do you think expository preaching could be to church revitalization?	Extremely important	Extremely important
9. How valuable do you think resources and connections about church revitalization could be to a growing and healthy church?	Extremely valuable	Extremely valuable
10. What extent of interest do you have in receiving a free resource and suggestions for other resources about church revitalization that is specifically tailored to your church’s needs?	Extremely interested	Extremely interested

## Appendix A

### In-Person Recruitment Script

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The purpose of this research is to study the practice of church revitalization on the Northside of Indianapolis. I am trying to learn more about how much Northside pastors know about church revitalization so that I can provide information to them on church revitalization resources and connections. I am inviting eligible participants to join my study.

Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete an initial survey and interview in person, attend a meeting to discuss revitalization resources, review the revitalization resources over 2 weeks, and complete the same survey and another interview in person. The surveys will take approximately 1 minute to complete. The first interview will take approximately 1.5 hours to complete, and the second interview will take approximately 1 hour to complete. The interviews will be audio and video recorded. The meeting will last approximately 30 minutes. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

In order to participate, please contact me at [REDACTED].

I have a consent document with me. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you are eligible to participate in the study, please sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the first interview.

If you choose to participate, you will receive a book related to your church revitalization needs and a breakfast or lunch provided by me at the time of the second interview and survey.

Sincerely,

William J. Marshall

Reverend  
[REDACTED]

**Appendix B**

Church Information Form

**Church Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**URL:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Secretary:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Office Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Office Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pastor:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**Denomination:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Approx. Size:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Doctrine:**  Calvinistic  Arminian  Conservative  Liberal  Charismatic  Unknown

**Ministries:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Worship Style:**  Modern  Traditional  Blended

**Children Friendly:**  Yes  No  Unsure **Off-Site Campus**

**Missions Emphasis:**  Excellent  Average  Below Average  Non-Existent

**Appearance:**  Modern  Traditional  Big  Medium  Small Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Maintained:**  Well  Average  Poor **Decade it Seems (Feel):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Friendliness of Website:**  Above Average  Average  Below Average  Terrible

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

### Recruitment Email

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The purpose of this research is to study the practice of church revitalization on the Northside of Indianapolis. I am trying to learn more about how much Northside pastors know about church revitalization so that I can provide information to them on church revitalization resources and connections. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete an initial survey and interview in person, attend a meeting to discuss revitalization resources, and complete the same survey and another interview in person. The surveys will take approximately 1 minute to complete. The first interview will take approximately 1.5 hours to complete, and the second interview will take approximately 1 hour to complete. The interviews will be audio and video recorded. The meeting will last approximately 30 minutes. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

In order to participate, please contact me at [REDACTED].

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you are eligible to participate in the study, please sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

If you choose to participate, you will receive a book related to your church revitalization needs and a breakfast or lunch provided by me at the time of the second interview and survey.

Sincerely,

William J. Marshall  
Reverend

[REDACTED]



Appendix D

DMIN Project Consent

**Title of the Project:** Church Revitalization Resources and Connections for the Northside of Indianapolis

**Investigator:** Reverend William J. Marshall, graduate student, Liberty University

**Invitation to be Part of a Research Study**

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older and a pastor of an evangelical church on the Northside of Indianapolis.

Please take the time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to participate in this research project.

**What is the study about, and why is it being done?**

The purpose of this research is to study the practice of church revitalization on the Northside of Indianapolis. The researcher is trying to learn more about how much Northside pastors know about church revitalization so that he can provide information to them on church revitalization resources and connections.

**What will happen if you take part in this study?**

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

- 1) Complete an in-person survey. The survey will last approximately 1 minute.
- 2) Participate in a video and audio-recorded, in-person interview. The interview will last approximately 1.5 hours.
- 3) Attend a meeting to outline the participant's revitalization needs. The meeting will last approximately 30 minutes.
- 4) Review the resources provided at the meeting. You will be given 2 weeks to review the resources prior to meeting for the following procedures.
- 5) Complete an in-person survey. The survey will last approximately 1 minute.
- 6) Participate in a video and audio-recorded, in-person interview. The interview will last approximately 1 hour.

**How could you or others benefit from this study?**

The direct benefit participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study that the pastors of these churches could increase their effectiveness in the area of church revitalization, thereby having healthier, growing churches.

Benefits to society include increased public knowledge on the topic of church revitalization.

**What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

### **How will personal information be protected?**

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

1. Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
2. Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. All paper copies will be stored in a locked container until copied to a password-protected computer, whereupon paper copies will be shredded. Only the researcher will have access to the data. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
3. The interviews will be video and audio recorded, and the recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

### **How will you be compensated for being part of the study?**

Pastor participants will be compensated for participating in this study. As an incentive to do personal study related to the research, participants will be given one vital resource in the form of one book, to be determined by the researcher, with information in it related to the church's and pastor's revitalization needs. The value of the book will range from \$10 to \$25. The book will be given at or before the second appointment with the pastor. An e-book can be provided if available.

At the last appointment, each participating pastor will be provided breakfast or lunch as an appreciation gift. The value of this breakfast or lunch will range from \$10 to \$15.

### **Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision about whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

### **What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?**

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

**Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?**

The researcher conducting this study is William (Bill) J. Marshall. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Jeffrey L. Dowdy, at [REDACTED].

**Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

**Your Consent**

By signing this document, you agree to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

*I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.*

The researcher has my permission to audio and video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Subject Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature & Date

## Appendix E

### Follow-Up Call Script

Dear [Recipient],

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. [three days ago] an email was sent to you inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up call is being made to remind you to respond if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is two weeks from today.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete an initial survey and interview in person, attend a meeting to discuss revitalization resources, review the revitalization resources over 2 weeks, and complete the same survey and another interview in person. The surveys will take approximately 1 minute to complete. The first interview will take approximately 1.5 hours to complete, and the second interview will take approximately 1 hour to complete. The interviews will be audio and video recorded. The meeting will last approximately 30 minutes. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

In order to participate, please contact me at [REDACTED].

A consent document will be emailed to you. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you are eligible to participate in the study, please sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the first interview.

If you choose to participate, you will receive a book related to your church revitalization needs and a breakfast or lunch provided by me at the time of the second interview and survey.

Sincerely,

William J. Marshall  
Reverend

[REDACTED]

## Appendix F

### Follow-Up Script

Dear [Recipient],

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. One week ago, I invited you to participate in a research study. I thought I would remind you to respond if you would like to participate and have not already done so. The deadline for participation is in one week.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete an initial survey and interview in person, attend a meeting to discuss revitalization resources, review the revitalization resources over 2 weeks, and complete the same survey and another interview in person. The surveys will take approximately 1 minute to complete. The first interview will take approximately 1.5 hours to complete, and the second interview will take approximately 1 hour to complete. The interviews will be audio and video recorded. The meeting will last approximately 30 minutes. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

In order to participate, please contact me at [REDACTED].

A consent document will be sent to you. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you are eligible to participate in the study, please sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the first interview.

If you choose to participate, you will receive a book related to your church revitalization needs and a breakfast or lunch provided by me at the time of the second interview and survey.

Sincerely,

William J. Marshall  
Reverend

[REDACTED]

## Appendix G

Doctorate of Ministry Project

Church Revitalization Resources and Connections for the Northside of Indianapolis  
By Rev. William J. Marshall

Permissions

[Insert Date]

Rev. William J. Marshall



Dear Rev. Marshall,

After careful review of your research proposal entitled Church Revitalization Resources and Connections for the Northside of Indianapolis, I/we have decided to grant permission to have our Associate Pastor [Associate Pastor's Name] participate in your study.

I am requesting a copy of the results upon study completion.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Title]

[Your Church]

## Appendix H

### Doctorate of Ministry Project

#### Church Revitalization Resources and Connections for the Northside of Indianapolis By Rev. William J. Marshall

#### Church Revitalization Questionnaire

1. How familiar are you with the term “church revitalization”?  
 Extremely Familiar  Very Familiar  Somewhat Familiar  Not so Familiar  
 Not at all Familiar
2. What is your familiarity with books and articles about church revitalization?  
 Extremely familiar  Very familiar  Somewhat familiar  Not so familiar  
 Not at all familiar
3. To what extent do you think your church needs to revitalize?  
 A great deal  A lot  A moderate amount  A little  Not at all
4. How much interest do you have in discussing church revitalization with others interested in the subject?  
 Extremely interested  Very interested  Somewhat interested  Not so interested  
 Not at all interested
5. What is the level of hope you have for your church to revitalize?  
 A great deal  A lot  A moderate amount  A little  Not at all
6. How likely is it for a church to revitalize without revitalization resources and connections?  
 Very likely  Likely  Neither likely nor unlikely  Unlikely  Very unlikely
7. How much of a priority should a pastor’s spiritual health be to church revitalization?  
 A great deal  A lot  A moderate amount  A little  None at all
8. How important do you think expository preaching could be to church revitalization?  
 Extremely important  Very important  Somewhat important  Not so important  
 Not at all important

9. How valuable do you think resources and connections about church revitalization could be to a growing and healthy church?

- Extremely valuable  Very valuable  Somewhat valuable  Not so valuable  
 Not at all valuable

10. What extent of interest do you have in receiving a free resource and suggestions for other resources about church revitalization that is specifically tailored to your church's needs?

- Extremely interested  Very interested  Somewhat interested  Not so interested  
 Not at all interested



## Appendix I

### Doctorate of Ministry Project

#### Church Revitalization Resources and Connections for the Northside of Indianapolis By Rev. William J. Marshall

#### Pastoral Interview I Questionnaire

1. What do you know about the subject of church revitalization? What are your resources and/or contacts related to church revitalization?
2. How would you describe the health of your congregation when you started in your current role compared to the health of your congregation now?
3. In what areas have you had the most considerable pushback in leading your church and why?
4. Is there a particular age group that you find especially challenging to lead?
5. What is the greatest area (or areas) of positive biblical change you would like to see in your congregation today?

6. What is your strategy for implementing change? How does your congregation respond to the idea of change?
  
7. What part does/could your preaching play in revitalizing your church?
  
8. As you lead your congregation, can you share one thing that has affected your family in a positive way and one thing that has affected your family in a negative way?
  
9. How would you like to see your church advance the Great Commission on the Northside of Indianapolis?
  
10. Is there any area (or areas) that I can pray for you with regard to your spiritual health?

**Appendix J**

Doctorate of Ministry Project

Church Revitalization Resources and Connections for the Northside of Indianapolis  
By Rev. William J. Marshall

Suggestions for Resources and Connections

Perceived Main Revitalization Need of Church/Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

Perceived Secondary Revitalization Need of Church/Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_

**Resources**

Free Vital Resource (book): \_\_\_\_\_

Why This Free Resource?:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Vital Resource Topics/Page #s:

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Other Resources (Books and Articles):

Bibliography Citation:

Topic:

Quotes:

Bibliography Citation:

Topic:

Quotes:

Bibliography Citation:

Topic:

Quotes:

Websites:

URL:

URL:

URL:

### **Connections**

#### Online Chat Possibilities for Church Revitalization

URL:

URL:

#### Possible Consultants

Name of Organization/Contact Person:

URL:

Name of Organization/Contact Person:

URL:

#### Last Appointment with Pastor Marshall

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix K**

Doctorate of Ministry Project

Church Revitalization Resources and Connections for the Northside of Indianapolis  
By Rev. William J. Marshall

Pastoral Interview II Questionnaire

1. Has participation in this study been beneficial to you personally? Why or why not?
2. Can you tell me any plans you have to implement anything new in your church as a direct result of the resources and/or contacts obtained from this study?
3. In what ways might your participation in this study advance the Great Commission on the Northside of Indianapolis?

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## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

October 28, 2020

William Marshall

Jeffrey Dowdy

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY20-21-167 Church Revitalization Resources and Connections for the Northside of Indianapolis

Dear William Marshall, Jeffrey Dowdy:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) 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 the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

Category 2.(iii). 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:

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).

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information

electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

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