

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Increasing Church Growth Potential through Education and Implementation of the Biblically
Defined Roles of the Pastor and the Body of Christ

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

By

Gregory A. Kincaid

Lynchburg, Virginia

December 3, 2021

Copyright © December 3, 2021, by Gregory A. Kincaid
All Rights Reserved

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Thesis Project Approval Sheet

Thomas G. Spotts, Doctor

Jeffrey S. Mayfield, Doctor

THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

Gregory A. Kincaid

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, December 3, 2021

Mentor: Dr. Thomas Spotts

This action research project focuses on church growth. It posits that if a congregation is taught and implements the biblical roles of the pastor and the church Body, then the church should grow quantitatively and qualitatively. To test this assumption, the roles of the pastor and that of the Body were delineated, taught, and practiced throughout a year-long study. Emphasis was placed on how God equipped every member of the Body to perform ministry within the church and outreach from the church. To reinforce the differences in the roles, study participants were required to actively participate in life groups with other believers for encouragement to serve in a ministry and to mentor a “younger” believer in the faith. Throughout the project, the researcher administered a series of surveys to the participants and facilitated focus groups to capture the changes in the participants as they moved forward. Although this project was completed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic (an excursus on the changes forced on the research plan due to COVID-19 is contained in Chapter 3), growth occurred.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Ministry Context	1
Community Context.....	2
Church Context	3
Problem Presented	5
Purpose Statement	6
Basic Assumptions	6
Definitions	7
Body of Christ/Role of the Body/Priesthood of Believers.....	7
Discipleship.....	8
Pastor/Role of the Pastor.....	8
Purpose Driven.....	9
Small Group Ministry	9
Spiritual Gifts.....	9
Limitations	10
Delimitations	10
Thesis Statement	11
Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework	13
Literature Review	13
The Church.....	13
Definition	14
Function	15
The Role of the Pastor.....	17
Pastoral Character	17
Pastoral Tasks	18
The Role of the Body	23
The Priesthood of Believers.....	24
Tasks of the Body	25
Discipleship.....	26
Spiritual Formation	27
Spiritual Gifts.....	28
Discovery	30
Theological Foundations	31
Theoretical Foundations	35
Spiritual Life Development Process	37
Life Groups	39
Synthesis	40
Chapter 3: Methodology	41
Intervention Design	41
Neuse Baptist Church	43
Oak Ridge Baptist Church	45
Implementation of Intervention Design	46

An Excursus—“Due to COVID”	47
The Historical Response of the Church to Pandemics	48
The Global Response of the Church to COVID-19	50
The Local Response of this Writer’s Church to COVID-19.....	52
Changes Forced in this Research Project “Due to COVID”	54
Oak Ridge Baptist Church	55
Neuse Baptist Church	58
Survey 1	58
Survey 2	63
Focus Group 1	68
Survey 3	68
Focus Group 2	73
Chapter 4: Results	75
Qualitative Growth	75
Quantitative Growth	78
Chapter 5: Conclusion	80
Bibliography	81
Appendix A, C.L.A.S.S. 101 Membership Covenant.....	84
Appendix B, C.L.A.S.S. 201 Maturity Covenant	86
Appendix C, C.L.A.S.S. 301 Ministry Covenant.....	87
Appendix D, C.L.A.S.S. 401 Missions Covenant.....	89
Appendix E, Project Bulletin Announcement.....	90
Appendix F, Project Flyer Announcement	91
Appendix G, Talking Paper on Action Research Project	93
Appendix H, Consent/Participation Form.....	95
Appendix I, Participant Survey 1	101
Appendix J, Participant Interview Questions.....	103
Appendix K, Training Outline C.L.A.S.S. 301, <i>Discovering My Ministry</i>	105
Appendix L, Participant Survey 2.....	106
Appendix M, Focus Group Questions	108
Appendix N, Participant Survey 3	109
IRB Approval.....	111

Tables

3.1	<i>Timeline for Intervention Implementation at NBC</i>	45
3.2	<i>Timeline for Surveying ORBC</i>	46

Illustrations

Figures

1.	Kincaid, “Discipler’s Training Model”	36
2.	Kincaid, “Oak Ridge Participants by Gender”	56
3.	Kincaid, “Oak Ridge Participants by Age”	56
4.	Kincaid, “Oak Ridge Participants by Spiritual Growth Element”	57
5.	Kincaid, “Oak Ridge Participants by Spiritual Growth Statement”	57
6.	Kincaid, “Neuse Baptist Participants by Gender”	59
7.	Kincaid, “Neuse Baptist Participants by Age”	59
8.	Kincaid, “Neuse Baptist Participants by Spiritual Growth Element (Survey 1)”	60
9.	Kincaid, “Neuse Baptist Participants by Spiritual Growth Statement (Survey 1)”	60
10.	Kincaid, “Survey 1 Compared to Benchmark Data for Spiritual Growth Elements”	62
11.	Kincaid, “Survey 1 Compared to Benchmark Data for Spiritual Growth Statements”	62
12.	Kincaid, “Neuse Baptist Participants by Spiritual Growth Element (Survey 2)”	64
13.	Kincaid, “Neuse Baptist Participants by Spiritual Growth Statement (Survey 2)”	64
14.	Kincaid, “Survey 1 Compared to Survey 2 for Spiritual Growth Elements” ..	65
15.	Kincaid, “Survey 1 Compared to Survey 2 for Spiritual Growth Statements” ..	66
16.	Kincaid, “Survey 2 Compared to Benchmark Data for Spiritual Growth Elements”	67
17.	Kincaid, “Survey 2 Compared to Benchmark Data for Spiritual Growth Statements”	67
18.	Kincaid, “Neuse Baptist Participants by Spiritual Growth Element (Survey 3)”	69
19.	Kincaid, “Neuse Baptist Participants by Spiritual Growth Statement (Survey 3)”	70
20.	Kincaid, “Survey 1 Compared to Survey 3 for Spiritual Growth Elements” ..	71
21.	Kincaid, “Survey 1 Compared to Survey 3 for Spiritual Growth Statements”	71
22.	Kincaid, “Survey 3 Compared to Benchmark Data for Spiritual Growth Elements”	73
23.	Kincaid, “Survey 3 Compared to Benchmark Data for Spiritual Growth Statements”	73
24.	Kincaid, “Percentage of Change from Survey 1 to Survey 3 for Spiritual Growth Elements”	77
25.	Kincaid, “Percentage of Change from Survey 1 to Survey 3 for Spiritual Growth Statements”	77
26.	Kincaid, “Percentage of Change for Membership and Attendance Data”	79

Abbreviations

C.L.A.S.S.	<i>Christian Life and Service Seminars</i>
DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
NBC	<i>Neuse Baptist Church of Kinston</i>
ORBC	<i>Oak Ridge Baptist Church</i>
S.H.A.P.E.	<i>Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experiences</i>
S.L.D.P.	<i>Spiritual Life Development Process</i>

Chapter 1

Introduction

Seemingly, throughout the years, the Church has developed a “serve-me mindset” rather than the “servant mindset” prescribed by Scripture. Jesus said, “Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:26b-28, *NASB*).¹ The command of Christ in this passage is difficult to live out in the Community of Faith. However, in His providence, God has equipped the Church to do precisely that by assigning specific roles and responsibilities to the Body’s members. Yet, generally speaking, the Pareto Principle is in full effect in the Church, with only twenty percent of the people doing eighty percent of the work.²

Ministry Context

The blessed position of the members of the Body of Christ lies in the fact that those who were once separated from God by their sinfulness have now been reconciled back to God by the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ (Rom 5:10-11) and God gave the Church the privilege of ministering that same reconciliation to the world (2 Cor 5:18-19). To that end, God has placed His Church in various communities worldwide to be His instrument of change in this sinful, broken world. To increase effectiveness, the Church must rediscover its unity and function as a flexible, dynamic, Holy Spirit energized community designed to impact society

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the *New American Standard Version*.

² Seth Edwards, and Paul Stock, “Application of the Pareto Principle in Today’s Church,” *ResearchGate* (February 2018), available from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323127023-Application-of-the-Pareto-Principle-in-Today’s-Church> (accessed April 22, 2020).

positively.³ God desires that His Church impact those around it, necessitating the Church to learn the community context to function within that environment.

Community Context

This pastor's community context is rural. He serves in Kinston, NC, a part of Lenoir County, covering an area just over four hundred square miles with approximately 56,000 people. Kinston has a population of almost 20,000, and his church is within city limits. The primary industry is farming, emphasizing crops (cotton, corn, soybeans, and tobacco) and animals (pigs, turkeys, and chickens).⁴ The appropriate infrastructure support systems are present to accommodate day-to-day needs and social life within a reasonable driving distance.

To learn more about the residents of Lenoir County, the pastor accomplished an in-depth review of the demographic and psychographic data gathered by census takers and compiled by Measure of America of the Social Science Research Council⁵ to develop a sketch of what the average resident and family were like to determine the church target audience. For ease in communicating the findings to the congregants, the pastor developed profiles and named them Larry with his counterpart Linda. The following are relevant statistics of the profiles: 1) There is a fifty percent chance that Larry is married, and he and his wife have one to two children. 2) Along with Larry, one must consider Linda, as there is a fourteen percent possibility that she is the head of the household living as a single mother with her children. 3) The age breakdown in

³ Timothy A. Van Aarde, "The Missional Church Structure and the Priesthood of all Believers (Ephesians 4:7-16) in the Light of the Inward and Outward Function of the Church," in *Verbum Et Ecclesia* 38, no. 1 (2017), 4, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquestcom.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1909590482?accountid=12085> (accessed April 9, 2020).

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, *Lenoir County North Carolina*, (n.d.), available from <http://www.co.lenoir.nc.us/statistics.html> (accessed April 22, 2020).

⁵ Measure of America, *Social Science Research Council* (n.d.), available from <http://www.measureofamerica.org> (accessed January 23, 2013).

the population is twenty-four percent are age eighteen or under, and sixteen percent are over sixty-five, which means the bulk (sixty percent) are between eighteen and sixty-five years old. 4) There is a fifty-seven percent probability that Larry and Linda are Caucasian, a forty percent chance that they are African American, and only a three percent possibility of being another ethnicity. 5) Larry and Linda are both likely High School graduates, as seventy-eight percent of the residents fall into that category. Still, there is only a fourteen percent likelihood that they possess a bachelor's degree or higher. 6) Larry and Linda are blue-collar workers or are employed in some aspect of the farming industry with an estimated \$27,000 annually.

While these profiles represent an accurate picture of the people surrounding this pastor's church, one must be careful not to think of them in terms of statistics alone. Each individual comes with a unique personality and situation, which presents ministry opportunities requiring the Body of Christ to reach out.

Church Context

Neuse Baptist Church of Kinston (NBC) was founded in 1958 and sits on the same acreage from its inception. Church historical documents (*e.g.*, Constitution and Bylaws, Business Meeting Minutes, Church Committee descriptions and minutes, budgets, *etc.*) and interviews with some of the original members reveal that the Founders began with the intention to fulfill the commands of Scripture regarding the church and to adhere to traditional Southern Baptist doctrine as outlined in the *Baptist Faith and Message*. From its inception, the church has been a cooperating member of the local Association, the North Carolina Baptist State Convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Before this pastor's arrival, nine pastors served this church, with the average tenure being 3.9 years (range 1 to 8 years). During that time, the church slipped from a mindset of missions to

one of maintenance where the members' desires became the primary concern over and above ministry within and outreach from the church. The historical documentation clearly shows this attitude, which was apparent in the culture when this pastor accepted the call to serve this church.

The number of people on the membership role grew to 658; however, the number of active members remained approximately 75-150. While there were always willing workers in the church, the Pareto Principle was in full effect, with most members adopting a consumer mentality expecting the pastor to serve at their beck and call. When the pastor no longer met their service expectations, the congregation replaced him with someone who would do as they asked. Some of the volunteers who served did so to control the church's direction and appease their friends as they safeguarded their "clicks."

Upon this pastor's arrival, he met with the "Board of Deacons." He put forward two stipulations as conditions for accepting the call to serve: 1) He would release pastoral control of the church to the various groups within the Body who wished to perform ministry functions, and 2) The church must relinquish their control of the pastor and allow him to perform the ministry to which God had called him. The diaconate accepted the stipulations, and the pastor received a unanimous call to shepherd Neuse Baptist Church. Almost twenty years have passed since that call. Frequently, what has ensued has been a rocky road to travel, often butting heads with members experiencing fear as they felt their control and influence over the church waning.

The transition back to a missions culture—to a purpose-driven church—has not been smooth and is not complete, but it is a work in progress. One primary problem remains to address and correct to fulfill God's purpose for this church.

Problem Presented

The problem is that the congregation at Neuse Baptist Church does not understand the biblical roles of the pastor or the Church Body. The primary reason for this problem is that historically, the pastor's biblical role and that of the Body have not been taught to the congregation. Traditionally, the church would bring new members based on their confession of Jesus Christ as Savior, baptize them by immersion, and then tell them, essentially, to sit down and wait for the Second Coming.

This pastor holds that the priesthood of believers, spiritual giftedness, ministry inside, and outreach outside the church are topics that have been neglected. Sadly, church tradition has led to the formation of immature Christians who, quite frankly, are either unwilling to fulfill or uninformed about their God-given roles in the Body of Christ.

This writer's level of certainty to the validity of this problem is high. It has been bolstered through anecdotal evidence as he has served this congregation over the last twenty years. During this time, he has noted that members coming from an unchurched situation (*i.e.*, not a family legacy of church attendance) are more willing and interested to serve through the church than those considered church people. The unchurched have not experienced the tradition of the pastor doing everything, and they are willing to step out in faith and work.

Correction of this misinterpretation of roles within the church would rightly align Neuse Baptist with the biblically defined roles and, when implemented, the church should grow. This problem is worthy of correction, for it is only when members of the Body of Christ are fully functioning in their God-given roles that the church stands a chance of reaching its full potential. Additionally, the personal benefit of each member of the Body doing what they were made to do will bring blessings beyond anything they have ever dreamed or imagined.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMIN action research thesis is to teach church members the scriptural role of the pastor and the church Body. The practice in this congregation is currently that some of the more senior members expect that if there is work to be done in the church, the pastor will do it. This mindset is not only held by the seniors but is taught to the junior members, as well. Some of the congregants go so far as to point out what needs to be done, then sit back and wait for the pastor to accomplish it only to complain when he does not. Congregational assignments overload the pastor's schedule and negate the effectual working of the spiritual gifts with which the Holy Spirit has enabled the Body.

Basic Assumptions

As the projected outcome of this action research thesis is church growth, one overarching assumption is that growth is God's desire both for the Body of Christ, collectively and for the individual members of the Body in personal and practical ways. The *Great Commission* (Matt 28:19-20) instructs the Church to make disciples (*i.e.*, facilitate more members coming into the Body), teaching them God's Word, and doing life together until they reach the point they can do the same. This assumption is put forward as some members of the Body of Christ prefer that the church remain small in its configurations so that they may know everyone present and, more importantly, that everyone can know them. However, this mindset is contrary to God's "marching orders" for His Church. As long as there is one more in need of the Gospel message, the Church must be willing to reach out to them and bring them into the fold.

Another assumption is that believers, suitably trained and motivated, will want to do God's will and fulfill His purpose for their lives. One of God's purposes is for His Ambassadors (2 Cor 5:20, Eph 6:20) to represent Him confidently, cheerfully, and correctly by sharing His

message in this world. The result of faithfully conveying the message is that others will come to Christ, for that is God's desire (1 Tim 2:3-4), and His Word will accomplish the purpose for which it was given (Isa 55:1).

A final assumption is the sample selected will represent the whole and that participants will be candid with their input since participants must provide their names for follow-up purposes.

Definitions

The following definitions provide clarity and establish a common ground from which this work will proceed:

Body of Christ/Role of the Body/Priesthood of Believers

The Body of Christ comprises the Church based on their eschatological existence as a new humanity and their unity in the Spirit.⁶ Scripture presents this clearly, making the distinction that the Church is like a body because they are a Body (1 Cor 12:12-13), with each part designed to perform a specific function. One can aptly describe the Body's role (*i.e.*, the combined effort of the individual parts) as the Priesthood of Believers. The Apostle Peter refers to believers as a royal priesthood (1 Pet 2:9) responsible to minister, both inside and outside the church. This priesthood was commissioned for service on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16ff), and the proof was the descent of the Holy Spirit with all the believers fulfilling their function as priests.⁷

⁶ Michelle V. Lee, *Paul, the Stoics, and the Body of Christ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 101-102, ebook, doi: 10.1017/CBO9780511584541 (accessed April 15, 2020).

⁷ David Lim, *Spiritual Gifts: A Fresh Look* (Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1991), 28, e-book, ProQuest Ebook Central (accessed April 9, 2020).

Discipleship

Discipleship is the process of communicating deeply held convictions and life experiences into other's lives. As the ultimate example of discipleship, Jesus took a group of twelve men, forsook the large crowds, and expended much time to build into the lives of those men.⁸ In Christ's call to discipleship, He challenged the disciples to be with Him, learn His ways, and proclaim the Good News of His Kingdom to others.⁹

Pastor/Role of the Pastor

The pastor is a God-called, spiritually gifted leader of the church. The pastor's primary responsibility is to lead the congregation, including 1) Teaching, 2) Vision casting, and 3) Protecting the sheep from false teaching.¹⁰ Additionally, the pastoral role and responsibility also include 1) Ministry of the Word, 2) Communication of God's Word, 3) Oversight or leadership, and 4) Serve as an example to the flock.¹¹

Purpose Driven

To function correctly, the Church must please God, be what God says it must be, and be a purposeful assembly.¹² To that end, Scripture details a five-fold purpose statement of the Church located in *the Great Commission* (Matt 28:19-20) and *the Great Commandment* (Matt 22:36-40);

⁸ Paul Pettit, ed, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ* (Grand Rapids, Kregel Publications, 2008), 9.

⁹ Jeffrey Arnold, *The Big Book on Small Groups*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2004), 18.

¹⁰ Aubrey Malphurs, *Being Leaders: The Nature of Authentic Christian Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 176.

¹¹ John S. Hammett, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches: A Contemporary Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2005), 163-66.

¹² *Ibid.*, 67-68.

it is teaching, fellowship, worship, service, and evangelism.¹³ These elements encapsulate the Church's purpose and must be the driving factor behind all the church seeks to accomplish.

Small Group Ministry

Small Group ministry is designed to foster community among believers. Small groups are defined as a group of people who come together regularly for a common purpose; it is led by an identified leader who assists members in their progress toward full devotion to Christ by intentionally providing an environment for connection, community, and spiritual formation.¹⁴ Small groups are: 1) Open, 2) Outward-focused, 3) Spirit-led, 4) Inclusive, 5) Fluid/Multiplying, 6) Action-oriented, 7) Integrated, and 8) Intentional.¹⁵

Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual gifts are unique (supernatural) abilities every believer receives at the time of salvation with the primary intent of equipping for service¹⁶ and building up the Body of Christ.¹⁷ Every believer in the Body of Christ is empowered by the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as He wills (1 Cor 12:11).¹⁸

¹³ Hammett, 221.

¹⁴ Bill Donahue, and Russ Robinson, *The Seven Deadly Sins of Small Group Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 236.

¹⁵ Jeffrey Arnold, *The Big Book on Small Groups*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2004), 9.

¹⁶ Lim, 19.

¹⁷ Brian A. DeVries, "Spiritual Gifts for Biblical Church Growth," in *Die Skriflig* 50, no. 1 (2016): 4, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1815404993?accountid=12085> (accessed April 9, 2020).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

Limitations

As in all research endeavors, some limitations will hinder the outcome of this project. Considering that the active membership of Neuse Baptist Church is small (average 143 over the past three years), it is not practical to differentiate by age, gender, or the amount of time since accepting Christ as Savior, which would be ideal if the population were greater. This researcher believes that the data's stratification will not yield meaningful differences as the active membership does not support a large sample size. Additionally, at present, only 15% of the active membership has attended C.L.A.S.S. 301, *Discovering My Ministry*, a training designed to facilitate members identifying and beginning working in areas based on their S.H.A.P.E. For these reasons, the limitation on sample size and selection is greatly affected as the participants must be chosen from the congregation at large based on willingness to participate.

In the initial data gathering, self-reporting will be used, which may produce skewed information based on an individual's desire to appear better than they are. To safeguard this limitation, the researcher will conduct follow-up interviews to obtain the most accurate information possible. Additionally, participants are requested to provide their names to eliminate the cover of anonymity.

Finally, some selected research participants may drop out from the study and choose not to continue. In that case, their input will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and may need to be scrubbed from the results based on the level of completion.

Delimitations

While there is a plethora of factors that promote or inhibit church growth, the aspects of this action research project are limited to the understanding of the role of the pastor, the role of the body, and the practice of the same.

The membership of Neuse Baptist Church, based on the church role, is presently 653 members. However, this is not a valid number as the average is 143 active members over the past three years. This research will be limited to only active members since the inactive inclusion will skew the data. To that end, the research subjects from Neuse Baptist Church will comprise those active members who have shown evidence of salvation (*e.g.*, display the fruit of salvation), are currently serving or have served in ministry, and are engaged in a small group or Sunday school. For comparative purposes, an additional sample will be chosen from Oak Ridge Baptist Church¹⁹ in Salisbury, MD. The subjects from Oak Ridge will be limited to only those who have completed C.L.A.S.S. 301, *Discovering My Ministry*, or a comparative course of study, are currently serving in ministry, and are active in a small group. Two hundred believers will be selected for this additional sample (100 male, 100 female). The subjects will be further divided into subgroups by age (less than 40, greater than 40). One final stratification of the participants will be based on time since conversion to Christianity (less than one year, 1-10 years, 10-20 years, and greater than 20 years).

Thesis Statement

This work will show if the congregation is taught and implements the biblical roles of the pastor and the church body, then the church should grow. To accomplish this, using discipleship channels and the formation/continuation of a small group ministry, the roles of the pastor and that of the Body will be delineated, taught, and practiced. Emphasis will be placed on how God

¹⁹ The Lead Pastor, Dr. Brian Moss, of Oak Ridge Baptist Church currently serves as this pastor's coach in the Purpose Driven Network. He has graciously given permission to allow this researcher access to his congregation to complete this study. Both congregations, Neuse Baptist and Oak Ridge are part of the Purpose Driven Network of churches through which a partnership was established to facilitate the implementation of the Purpose Driven paradigm at Neuse. The Oak Ridge sample will be used for comparative purposes as that church is a Purpose Driven church and its members, generally speaking, understand and practice the role of the pastor and the role of the body.

has equipped every member of the Body to perform ministry within the church and outreach from the church.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework

One expects all living entities to grow if they are healthy and balanced, so, too, the Church should grow. This growth should occur if the Body of Christ is taught and implements the biblical role of the pastor and the Body. Much work has preceded this writing and presents a virtual plethora, which informs the thesis at hand. This chapter will provide a review and sampling of the literature that expands on this writer's thesis. An explication and paraphrasing of themes will form a synthesis of thought about educating the Body of the roles mentioned above and the practice of the same. Additionally, the theological context and theoretical foundation will also be expanded.

Literature Review

Given that the congregation does not understand the biblical roles of the pastor or the church Body, a review of available literature pertaining to this problem was accomplished. What follows is an analysis of that review, beginning with a brief examination of the Church's definition and function, which provides the foundation upon which the problem is addressed. Next, the analysis moves into the pastor's role, followed by the role of the Body. The final topic is discipleship, which will be the primary method to solve the problem.

The Church

The Church is God's creation, where the Body of Christ serves as a particular instrument of the Holy Spirit in the world today.²⁰ God works through the Church as a whole and through the individual parts of the Body in particular. The Church is intended to be God's change agent in the world today and must, out of necessity, function with all of its parts in unity and with

²⁰ Hammett, 11.

Christ as its head. This writer offers the following as a synthesis of information towards a definition pertaining to the problem at hand.

Definition

The Church is the Body of Christ based on their eschatological existence as a new humanity and their unity in the Spirit.²¹ Scripture presents this clearly making the distinction that the Church is like a body because they are a body (1 Cor 12:12-13). The Church's membership comprises those who have a genuine commitment to Christ and the Body, having been regenerated by the Holy Spirit through the process of justification.²² The commitment to Christ rarely causes one to question why this is required, yet the commitment to the other Body members may give one reason for pause. The implication here is that the Body must function in unity as one bodily unit, which becomes the mechanism for the outworking of spiritual gifts provided by the Holy Spirit.²³

While the Church is a Body with all the parts being interdependent, there is an order within the Church. Scripture reads, “He gave . . . some as *pastors and teachers*, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the Body of Christ” (Eph 4:11-12, *emphasis added*). There are three different terms used in the New Testament to refer to this same church leader: 1) *Poimēn*—pastor or shepherd, 2) *Presbyteros*—elder, and 3) *Episkopos*—overseer or bishop. The terms are used interchangeably in Scripture. Take as an example the Apostle Peter’s encouragement to the leaders of the church, “To the elders [*presbyteros*] I say, be shepherds [*poimēn*] of God’s flock serving as overseers [*episkopos*]” (1 Pet 5:1-2, *NIV*). All three refer to the managing aspects of church leadership and feeding and leading the Body of Christ. In

²¹ Lee, 101-102.

²² Hammett, 82.

²³ Lee, 151.

times past (*cir.* 400 A.D.), many church offices were built up in a pyramidal layout: bishop, priest, deacon (deaconess), lector, cantor, gatekeeper, and grave digger.²⁴ It is important to note that, below the bishop's office, most if not all of the positions involve worship of God and ministry to the Body and community. While some of the positions listed here may not be known as such today, their function is still required rather than laying all responsibility at the feet of the pastor. The Church must rediscover its unity and function as a flexible, dynamic, Holy Spirit energized community operating as God originally designed it.²⁵

Function

To function properly, the Church must please God, be what God says it must be, and be a purposeful assembly.²⁶ To that end, Scripture details a five-fold purpose statement of the Church located in *the Great Commission* (Matt 28:19-20) and *the Great Commandment* (Matt 22:36-40); it is teaching, fellowship, worship, service, and evangelism.²⁷ Many Bible scholars agree on this purpose statement, although they may word it differently and add or remove a particular aspect. This writer accepts the five-fold statement as posited by Hammett and takes it a step further, incorporating Hughes's elements required to grow a church. The elements to grow a church are: 1) Gifted Leadership, 2) Discipleship, and 3) Truthing in love.²⁸ Practically, this comes down to some basic practices found in Scripture; churches gather to worship (Acts 13:2-3; 1 Cor 14:23ff), which includes prayer (Acts 12:5; 13:3; 14:23), reading of Scripture (Col 4:16; 1 Tim 4:13),

²⁴ Walter Homolka, and Heinz-Günther, eds, *Rabbi-Pastor-Priest: Their Roles and Profiles through the Ages* (Berlin/Boston: DeGrutyer, Inc., 2013), 52-53, e-book, ProQuest Ebook Central (accessed April 16, 2020).

²⁵ Van Aarde, 4.

²⁶ Hammett, 67-68.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 221.

²⁸ R. K. Hughes, *Ephesians (ESV Edition): The Mystery of the Body of Christ* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1990), Chapter 15, under "Growing the Church," e-book, ProQuest Ebook Central (accessed April 15, 2020).

teaching from the leaders (Acts 20:28-31; Eph 4:11; 1 Tim 3:2), and observing the sacraments (1 Cor 11:18ff).²⁹ Additionally, the Body of Christ: 1) Enjoys fellowship in the local assembly and with other churches (Rom 16:16), 2) Serves widows and the needy (1 Tim 5:16; 1 Cor 16:1), and 3) Is involved in spreading the gospel (Acts 8:2--4; 13:2--3).³⁰

While many fail to include or practice church discipline, Poirier insists that Scripture portrays church discipline as a mark of the Church and a means of grace, which constitutes the Church's authority.³¹ Church discipline is administered by those holding a leadership office in the Body. Although one should not speak about "offices" in the modern sense of the word when referring to the Church, there are different functions and tasks requiring someone called and positioned in leadership, such as a pastor.³² The church needs organization and guidance, so certain believers are assigned to be theologically educated and become responsible for public preaching, teaching, and the sacraments' administration.³³ In the Protestant understanding, the pastoral role and profession is integrated within the priesthood of all believers. While there is no spiritual difference between the pastor and the other church members, the pastor is the leader of the congregation.³⁴

²⁹ Hammett, 28-29.

³⁰ Ibid., 29.

³¹ Alfred Poirier, *The Peace Making Pastor: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict* (Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 2006), 242.

³² Homolka, 37.

³³ Ibid., 185.

³⁴ Ibid.

The Role of the Pastor

As the pastor is an integral member of the Body, this writing will now take up the role of the pastor in an attempt to determine what the character of the position demands and to explore some of the various tasks that are to be carried out by this individual. There is a plethora of scholarly works on the office, role, calling, *etc.*, of a pastor; however, this writing will focus on character aspects and tasks related to the problem previously identified in this thesis.

Pastoral Character

A pastor's character must include: 1) Set apart carefully—fully qualified, 2) Must not deny his call to the ministry, 3) Practice what he preaches, 4) Encourage his flock through preaching and visitation, 5) Demonstrate mercy and care for physical needs of those in the church, 6) Not entangled in worldly affairs, and 7) Preach soundly.³⁵ This listing of character indicators has endured the test of time. With only minor changes as to wording or delineation of certain duties (*e.g.*, visitation and caring for physical needs), this writer agrees with Basil. Malphurs opines that the pastor's attitude must include: 1) Humility, 2) Service, 3) Focusing on others, and 4) Love.³⁶ Add to this listing a modicum of compassion and intercultural empathy, which enables the pastor to attend to spiritual care, and one will find an impossible listing of attributes if left to human will and abilities alone.³⁷ Fortunately, for the one called to this position, God equips them and, if wise, they operate in His power and following the Word. The pastor must be ever aware of the presence of God and maintain his integrity before God and man,

³⁵ Edward L. Smither, *Augustine as Mentor: A Model for Preparing Spiritual Leaders* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2008), 58.

³⁶ Malphurs, 31-42.

³⁷ Carrie Doehring, *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1981), 39, e-book, ProQuest Ebook Central (accessed April 2, 2020).

all the while serving with confidence in God's sovereign grace.³⁸ God provides gifts of significance, excellence, energy, and intentionality to those who serve in this capacity.³⁹ While a pastor's role is important for the sake of the identity and mission of the Church, the pastor must acknowledge the responsibilities belonging to this call and place limits on this role.⁴⁰

Pastoral Tasks

After discussing certain general duties, this analysis will turn to the specific tasks of leading, shepherding, and mentoring.

General Discussion of Pastoral Tasks

There is some difficulty defining the primary duty of a pastor. Malphurs holds a firm conviction that the pastor's primary role is that of a leader of the flock who, at times, provides pastoral care for the flock.⁴¹ Homolka gives the Churches' primary pastoral function after the Reformation as caring for and looking after the flock, maintaining goodwill, and the source of right faith, God's Gospel.⁴² While Mitchell insists the pastor is to be an educator promoting and attaining growth and development, enabling individuals to comprehend, contemplate, and contribute to their community and culture.⁴³ Malphurs extrapolates on the difficulty in assigning pastoral duty in this way:

³⁸ Don N. Howell, Jr., *Servants of the Servant: A Biblical Theology of Leadership* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2003), 25-26.

³⁹ Reggie McNeal, *Practicing Greatness: Seven Disciplines of Extraordinary Spiritual Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 97.

⁴⁰ Arden Mahlberg, and Craig L. Nessaf, *The Integrity of the Body of Christ: Boundary Keeping as Shared Responsibility* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2016), 124-125, e-book, Proquest Ebook Central (accessed April 15, 2020).

⁴¹ Malphurs, 179.

⁴² Homolka, 72.

⁴³ Michael R. Mitchell, *Leading, Teaching, and Making Disciples* (Bloomington: Cross Books, 2010), 233.

It is the assumption that the primary and foremost role of the pastor is to provide pastoral care for the congregation—to take care of the sheep. This includes such hands-on care as visitation in the hospital and at home, counseling, encouragement during a crisis, and so on. I challenge this assumption both biblically (exegetically) and practically. I believe that, while pastoral care is a function of the pastorate, it is neither its primary nor foremost role.⁴⁴

As this writer is a pastor, he will let Malphurs' statement stand and accept it as his interpretation of a pastor's secondary, if not tertiary, responsibility in the Church. The primary responsibility of the pastor is to lead the congregation, which includes: 1) Teaching the Scriptures, 2) Propagating the mission, 3) Casting a vision, 4) Strategizing to accomplish the Church's mission, and 5) Protecting the sheep from false teaching.⁴⁵ Hammett agrees stating the pastoral role and responsibility thus: 1) Ministry of the Word, 2) Communication of God's Word, 3) Oversight or leadership, and 4) Serve as an example to the flock.⁴⁶

Nichols places great emphasis on the pastoral responsibility to be a vision-caster for their particular congregation. He holds that the pastor is responsible for hearing God's vision for the church and articulating it so that members of the Body accept it as their own and pursue it.⁴⁷ While DeVries chooses to focus on a pastor's responsibility to help develop all church members' spiritual giftedness.⁴⁸ He contends leaders should intentionally work to develop church members'

⁴⁴ Malphurs, 176.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Hammett, 163-166.

⁴⁷ Tim Nichols, "The Pastor's Role in Vision-Based Leadership," in *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 2, no. 1 (2007): 26-27, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquestcom.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/751869916?accountid=12085> (accessed April 16, 2020).

⁴⁸ DeVries, 8.

spiritual giftedness under their spiritual care, giving special heed to note that only the Spirit can produce the desired results.⁴⁹

The Task of Pastoral Leadership

Christian leaders are servants with the credibility and capabilities to influence people in a particular context to pursue their God-given direction.⁵⁰ The single most important piece of information a leader possesses is self-awareness, which touches all the other disciplines because it is foundational to every other element of greatness.⁵¹ The authority with which one operates in a pastoral role is given by God, and, above all, one is accountable to God for the manner in which it is used.⁵² Biblical leadership is taking the initiative to influence people to grow in holiness and passionately promote God's kingdom in the world; it is proactive, purposeful, and comprehensive.⁵³

Some distinctives of Christian leadership include: 1) Being a Christian, 2) Being a committed Christ-follower, 3) Having divine revelation as his source of truth, 4) Emphasizing godly character, 5) Understanding the importance of motives, 6) Serving through the power of the Holy Spirit, and 7) Practicing godly servant leadership.⁵⁴ A servant leader is primarily motivated by two things: 1) The fulfillment of God's mission for his ministry or organization and 2) The fulfillment of God's purpose in the lives of the people who are part of the ministry or

⁴⁹ DeVries, 9.

⁵⁰ Malphurs, 10.

⁵¹ McNeal, 10-11.

⁵² Mahlberg, 125.

⁵³ Howell, 3.

⁵⁴ Malphurs, 14-22.

organization.⁵⁵ Great leaders bless people, they inspire and encourage, they help people become more than what they have been, maybe even more than they thought they could be.⁵⁶

There are three primary qualities critical for leadership success: 1) Purpose—provided by the mission and vision, 2) Principles—certain behavioral skills fueled by a sense of call and commission, and 3) Passion.⁵⁷ Visionary leadership has its roots in God’s call and His vision of all the Church could and should be.⁵⁸ God is calling leaders to lead His people to venture something significant for His kingdom today, requiring mentoring skills.⁵⁹

The Task of Pastoral Mentoring

As a follower of Christ, the development of one’s character is his primary goal; to mirror the character of God himself as a just, merciful, and humble person who leads with others in mind.⁶⁰ This must not only be the desire for the pastor, but he must have the intention to pass this mindset along to others through the process of mentoring, and in essence, mentoring means that a master, expert, or someone with significant experience is imparting knowledge and skill to a novice in an atmosphere of discipline, commitment, and accountability.⁶¹ This does not mean the mentor must have attained the fullness of Christ but must be one step ahead of the mentee, be able to provide sound teaching and modeling, and then resource and release the disciple into

⁵⁵ Pettit, 180.

⁵⁶ McNeal, 4.

⁵⁷ Mitchell, 105.

⁵⁸ Nichols, 24.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 25.

⁶⁰ Pettit, 161.

⁶¹ Smither, 4.

ministry.⁶² The aim of mentoring is to encourage the habits of Christian formation or spiritual maturity, which some think is mainly about using one's willpower to change external behaviors, whereas Jesus says it is about changing the flow of one's heart.⁶³ Spiritual maturity is not a matter of following rules; it is about deepening one's relationship with Jesus and relying on divine resources to make change possible.⁶⁴

Scripture conveys the picture that man is a special creation of God, made in His own image, which means a believer's life could make a significant difference in His kingdom.⁶⁵ This message must be passed along within the context of mentoring, where a personal relationship has been forged with another through the process of spending time together. The mentee must be encouraged to discover his uniqueness and his place in the work of God to be all that God has created him to be.⁶⁶ While some will understand this concept and flourish in the context of mentoring, others will require additional encouragement to take another form.

The Task of Pastoral Shepherding

Historically, pastoral care has referred to supportive and crisis care offered by lay and ordained members. The adjective "pastoral" refers to the shepherd image found in biblical texts and Christian traditions, which has taken on the meaning of care of the Body of Christ by embodying the love of God.⁶⁷ Smither suggests that the Church would do well to slow down and

⁶² Smither, 19-22.

⁶³ Klaus Issler, *The Formation of Christian Character: Living into the Life of Jesus* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 12.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Erik Rees, *S.H.A.P.E. Finding & Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 18.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 21.

⁶⁷ Doehring, xxii.

place more emphasis on quality relationships in which there is spiritual depth, as in shepherding encounters.⁶⁸ Shepherding involves, among other things, leading others to understand biblical forgiveness, which requires recognizing the sinfulness of sin; is covenantal in nature; is foremost about God, and is a promise between those in the shepherding relationship.⁶⁹ Shepherding takes various forms but mainly occurs when the pastor cares for another by spending time with them and serving them.⁷⁰

Among the many examples of pastoral shepherds, Joshua stands out. Howell said Joshua's overriding concern was the nation's spiritual health, and his final acts were national conventions for spiritual remembrance and renewal.⁷¹ Joshua chose to follow the Lord (Josh 24:15b) and his choice emboldened the people to make the same commitment (Josh 24:18b). This is a picture of shepherding at its best.

The Role of the Body

The role of the Body can be summed with what Peter calls the Priesthood of Believers. God uniquely formed the members of the Body of Christ as His masterpieces (Eph 2:10), and, as such, each minister in the Priesthood of Believers has a ministry to God and to the Body. Each part has been created with purpose, gifted by the Holy Spirit, provided ministry opportunities by Jesus Christ, and God the Father will produce His intended results (1 Cor 12:4-6). One can discern the role of the Body by considering the Priesthood of Believers.

⁶⁸ Smither, 258.

⁶⁹ Poirier, 145-155.

⁷⁰ Smither, 235-236.

⁷¹ Howell, 47.

The Priesthood of Believers

Peter, writing to the church, said, “You are a chosen race, *a royal priesthood*, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9, *emphasis added*). The members of the Body of Christ form the Priesthood of Believers and have the responsibility to minister. Lim informs that God’s original intention was that all Israel were to be priests (Exo 19:6).⁷² However, because of Israel’s disobedience, God has now passed that responsibility on to the Body of Christ. Peter said the passing of the duty was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16ff), and the proof was the descent of the Holy Spirit with all the believers fulfilling their function as priests.⁷³

By their baptism, the Priesthood of Believers is commissioned to proclaim God’s marvelous acts to the world and use their God-given gifts to minister to the Body of Christ.⁷⁴ Every believer has both a responsibility and a privilege to come to God directly and to exercise his spiritual vocation of being a priest to God through one type of ministry or another.⁷⁵ The believer’s priestly ministry is twofold: 1) Foremost, it is a ministry to God, and 2) A ministry to God’s people.⁷⁶ The Priesthood of Believers has always been central for the Church, and it is fundamental for the Church to function.⁷⁷ The work of the Priesthood of Believers takes many forms as the tasks of the Body.

⁷² Lim, 27.

⁷³ Ibid., 28.

⁷⁴ Van Aarde, 7.

⁷⁵ Lim, 27.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 28-29.

⁷⁷ Van Aarde, 5.

The Tasks of the Body

Regardless of the role one has in his congregation, that role is important to the congregation's vitality and ministry. To fulfill each role according to its purpose, one must practice certain faithfulness hallmarks: 1) Strengthening his role while not exceeding it, and 2) Not weakening anyone else's role or their ability to fulfill it.⁷⁸ Discovering one's specific purpose in life opens up the opportunity to use what God has given to serve others in this generation and fulfill one's ultimate purpose of living a significant life.⁷⁹

Many in the Body of Christ never realize their call to service, and few step out in faith to complete the tasks to which God has called them. The people of God are called to Christian service at the time of their baptism when the Holy Spirit equips them to minister in specific ways within the Body. It is not only those ordained as pastors who are accountable to Christian practice standards; rather, all Christians have inherent responsibility to live their lives in accordance with the teaching and way of Jesus Christ.⁸⁰

One method of introducing members to service in the Body of Christ is through small groups. Small groups help believers appreciate the Body of Christ in its very giftedness, and spiritual growth is best nurtured and promoted through them.⁸¹ Most members of the Body will need to be encouraged to serve, and they are more likely to do so in a less-threatening venue such as a small group. The increased service possibility in the smaller groupings is a definite advantage as opposed to the larger worship gatherings. Another advantage of a small group

⁷⁸ Mahlberg, 181-182.

⁷⁹ Rees, 11.

⁸⁰ Mahlberg, 143.

⁸¹ Pettit, 12.

ministry is that it provides hands-on pastoral care for its members,⁸² and they are an effective way of building significant personal relationships.⁸³

Discipleship

Given the problem presented in this work and the lack of information available on the role of the Body, a logical direction for the correction is through discipleship channels. If one can teach the Body of Christ how to fulfill their role in the Priesthood of Believers, then allow them to practice ministry as they serve through small groups, one could logically expect God to grow the Church.

Before moving into an exposition of two discipleship topics, namely, spiritual formation and spiritual gifts, a delineation of the role of a student (disciple) and the role of a teacher (discipler) is appropriate. Mitchell holds that the student is accountable for five distinct essential activities of the learner in order for learning to occur: 1) Attend with interest, 2) Receive the message, 3) Study the material, 4) Learn a lesson, and 5) Effect a change.⁸⁴ In like manner, an instructor is responsible for five distinct essential activities for teaching to occur: 1) Motivating, 2) Communicating, 3) Inspiring, 4) Elevating, and 5) Activating.⁸⁵ With each member of the Body of Christ doing his part in the learning process, coupled with appropriate motivation and the unction provided by the Holy Spirit, the role of the Body should be fulfilled.

⁸² Mahlberg, 178.

⁸³ Pettit, 12.

⁸⁴ Mitchell, 212.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 213.

Spiritual Formation

Practices of spiritual formation or spiritual maturity have as its goal conformity to Christ, which is aided by the Spirit's leadership function.⁸⁶ The results are entirely dependent on the Holy Spirit's work in the context of forming, transforming, or conforming a person's life toward Christlikeness.⁸⁷ Turner teaches that the Spirit transforms and empowers the Body of Christ for religious-ethical life through a deeper knowledge of and an intimate relationship with God, Jesus Christ, and the community of faith.⁸⁸ The work of the Spirit, along with God's unconditional love and the occasional reality check from Scripture, provide proper motivation for the disciple to move along to spiritual maturity.⁸⁹

Some spiritual formation practices include quiet time with God; prayer; Bible reading, study, memorization, meditation, and application; fasting; and feedback from trusted others. Community is an essential element of spiritual formation. The degree of one's success or failure on the Christian discipleship pathway depends on the depth of community that he cultivates with others.⁹⁰

Just as critical, if not more so, as seeking to obtain spiritual formation, is the failure on the part of church members to maintain their spiritual journey or to initiate it after receiving the precious gift of salvation. If the universal priesthood accords to all Christians equal status before God by virtue of baptism, all Christians also stand equally accountable in the presence of God in

⁸⁶ Max Turner, "Spiritual Gifts and Spiritual Formation in 1 Corinthians and Ephesians," in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 22, no. 2 (2013): 205, doi:10.1163/17455251-02202007 (accessed April 9, 2020).

⁸⁷ Pettit, 51.

⁸⁸ Turner, 191-192.

⁸⁹ Issler, 87.

⁹⁰ Pettit, 101.

Christ for learning and the responsible conduct of their God-given ministry as part of the Priesthood of Believers.⁹¹ If Christians would seek to understand the significance of their existence as a bodily unity and follow the way of love, they would naturally desire to know how to use their gifts as they performed their ministry.⁹²

Spiritual Gifts

According to Lim, there are four views on spiritual gifts today: 1) The Bible is complete, and there is no need for spiritual gifts, 2) The gifts are optional, some gifts being more important than others, 3) A spiritualized sacerdotalism—Some possess gifts and can impart them at will, and 4) Every believer receives a spiritual gift(s) at salvation.⁹³ This writer holds to the fourth position that every believer receives a spiritual gift(s) at salvation with the primary intent of equipping for service⁹⁴ and building up the Body of Christ.⁹⁵ Every believer in the Body of Christ is empowered by the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as He wills (1 Cor 12:11).⁹⁶

When one considers the primary passages dealing with spiritual gifts (Rom 12, 1 Cor 12 to 13, Eph 4, and 1 Peter 4), each seems to have a different emphasis, but at least thirteen guidelines apply to the gifts⁹⁷: Romans 12—1) One should exercise his ministry in proportion to his faith, 2) One should concentrate on his known ministries and develop them, 3) One must

⁹¹ Mahlberg, 144.

⁹² Lee, 193.

⁹³ Ibid., 33.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 19.

⁹⁵ DeVries, 4.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 2.

⁹⁷ Lim, 182-183.

maintain the right attitudes (give generously, lead diligently, show mercy cheerfully); 1 Corinthians 12—4) There are different functions in the Body of Christ, and each member must understand his connection to and relationship with the whole Body, 5) Gifts must be manifested for the edification of all, not just for self, 6) One must have no sense of superiority or inferiority since every member is equally important, 7) The gifts are given to the Church, no one earns them. God's will and sovereignty determine distribution, 8) At the same time, these are God-given manifestations, not human talents; 1 Corinthians 13—9) Though one may manifest a gift perfectly, done without love, the presentation is hollow; Ephesians 4—10) Public enabling ministries have the special function of setting members free and develops maturity in them; 1 Peter 4—11) God's grace flows through people to people so believers need to be alert to the best time, place, and approach for ministering God's grace in its various forms, 12) One must not be timid about his ministry or confident in his own strength, and 13) The glory must go to God—the gifts/ministries are all graces with which God has blessed His Church.

Along with teaching about spiritual gifts and how they work, one should also be discipled on the concept of S.H.A.P.E. Rees posits that members of the Body are all custom-designed creations, and one's potential for significance and excellence is revealed by the S.H.A.P.E. God has given each one.⁹⁸ S.H.A.P.E. points to five specific characteristics: 1) Spiritual Gifts—A set of special abilities that God has given to minister to the Body, 2) Heart—The particular passions God has placed within the believer, 3) Abilities—A set of talents that God gave the believer at birth, which is used to make an impact for God, 4) Personality—One's unique make-up to enhance God's purpose in life, and 5) Experiences—Life events, both positive and painful,

⁹⁸ Rees, 24.

which God intends to use in significant ways.⁹⁹ God has expended excellent effort sowing clues—talent, passion, experiences, successes, personality traits, opportunities—in the believer’s life to help foster the discovery of his mission and purpose.¹⁰⁰

Discovery

While many have chosen to write on the concept of the Church, the role of the pastor, and discipleship, it is more difficult to find scholarly works on the role of the Body. A search through the material reveals several references; however, when one delves into the listings, most of the works are devotional in nature or are training materials intended to show the laity how to be the Body.

This researcher finds that there is somewhat of a void in scriptural, scholarly works dealing with the role of the Body of Christ. There is a gap in the literature, which can occur for one of two reasons: 1) Either no one has realized the need to write on the subject, or 2) The need to write has been realized, but others have deemed the matter unworthy of the effort. This researcher rejects both explanations. Seemingly, Bible teachers know of the need to put forward the “how-to” concepts, yet few are led to write on the foundational aspects of the role of the Body. One would serve the academy well to research and publish on the theological foundations of the role of the Body. While this writer’s modest efforts will not be published under separate cover, he will now present the theological foundations for the problem mentioned above and the solution to include a section on the role of the Body.

⁹⁹ Rees, 24.

¹⁰⁰ McNeal, 84.

Theological Foundations

It is God's desire that His people grow. He first appointed the Nation of Israel as His witnesses (Isa 44:8), equipping them with His Word through which He accomplished great things (Isa 55:10-11). God further appointed and equipped additional witnesses (Acts 1:8), this time not solely with His Word, but also by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). It is part of the Body of Christ's mission to spread the Gospel message to foster growth in the Church. Jesus, Himself, said, "I will build my church; and all the powers of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18, *TLB*). With God's appointment of ambassadors for His cause (2 Cor 5:20), with the equipping of the saints through the Word and by the Holy Spirit, and with Jesus' expressed desire to build His Church, one must understand that church growth is part of the plan for the Body of Christ and is to be part of its mission.

When one sets out to determine the Church's biblical mission, he must remember, as Warren reminded, "In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, 'I will build my church.' He obviously has a specific purpose in mind. It isn't our job to create the purposes of the Church but to discover them."¹⁰¹ One need look no further than what has been dubbed *The Great Commission* recorded as the last words of Christ in the Gospel of Matthew. The *Great Commission* reads, "Go therefore and *make disciples* of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, *teaching them to observe all that I commanded you*; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt 28:19-20, *emphasis added*). This writer bases his claim that the Church is intended to grow on the commission's emphasized phrase—make disciples, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. Warren opines, "The word we

¹⁰¹ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message & Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 97.

commonly use to refer to this purpose is discipleship. The church exists [among other things] to edify; or educate, God's people."¹⁰² Through constant exposure to the Word and ways of God, as the Body of Christ fulfills its role, growth should occur. This growth is numerical by adding additional members to the Body and individual growth in the members as they begin doing God's will.

The reality of the situation is that everyone is born as babies in this world. Similarly, believers are born as babes in Christ, and everyone needs to grow up physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. The question becomes, "What is one growing up to be?" Are churches fulfilling the element of discipleship and pointing people to Jesus, or are they making people who look just like themselves? Moss instructs, "It is a non-negotiable mandate for every church to make disciples. That is the core of the church's existence. Every church is called to be a disciple-making factory. No biblically based church could possibly deny this reality. God wants churches to turn irreligious people into fully devoted followers."¹⁰³ Along the same line of thinking, the writer of Hebrews warns against immaturity in the Church. Bruce summarizes this warning in this way, "In view of the time that has elapsed since your conversion to Christianity, you ought to be taking solid food, like grown-up men and women; in fact, however, you are still unable to digest anything stronger than milk, the food of infants."¹⁰⁴ From this warning passage, one can deduce that the expectation of exposure to God's Word and His ways will cause growth. However, this is not a foregone conclusion as in the case of the Hebrew believers, seemingly,

¹⁰² Warren, 106.

¹⁰³ Brian Moss, "Leadership Development in the Local Church: An Intentional Strategy for Developing Leaders at Every Level" (2014). *Doctoral Dissertations and Projects*. 950: 77. <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/950> (accessed October 12, 2017).

¹⁰⁴ F. F. Bruce, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Hebrews, Revised* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 135.

more was needed to move them from the “milk” to the “meat” of God’s Word. Yet, the author hopes that they will repent of their spiritual immaturity, grasp hold of the more profound matters of the faith, and move on as they continue to grow.¹⁰⁵ On the continual state of growth, Paul also had much to say. In his Epistle to the Ephesians, he writes concerning growth, “Until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be *mature and full grown in the Lord*, measuring up to the full stature of Christ. Then we will no longer be like children Instead, we will hold to the truth in love, becoming more and more in every way like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church” (Eph 4:13-15, *NLT, emphasis added*). Powell insists Paul’s statement describes the conclusion of the battle, the end of the race, the fulfillment of dreams, and the climax of everything attempted by God in the formation, growth, and purification of the Church.¹⁰⁶

One can hope for and work towards the final maturation of the Church, at which time the Body of Christ will be fully functioning as God’s ambassadors on earth; however, the Priesthood of Believers must be willing to do their parts to add to the collective growth. Paul differentiated the work in this way when writing to the church at Corinth: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters are anything, but only God who gives the growth” (1 Cor 3:6-7, *HCSB*). There are different roles within the Body of Christ as each member is gifted explicitly by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:4) and provided ministry contexts by Christ (1 Cor 12:5) through which they work. God, the Father, however, produces the results (1 Cor 12:6) through the yielded Body performing His will and purpose.

¹⁰⁵ George Guthrie, *The NIV Application Commentary: Hebrews*, Terry Muck, gen. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 204.

¹⁰⁶ Ivor Powell, *Exciting Epistle to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1989), 196.

Given the above theological grounding, it is fair to reiterate the opening statement in this section: “It is God’s desire that His people grow.” To take this statement a step further, this has been the Church’s stance from its inception. Guiding passages that give the Church practices (e.g., Acts 2:42-47) include the aspect of teaching, which, as indicated above, is a primary catalyst to growth, both individually and corporately. Longenecker surmises, “Undoubtedly the early congregation at Jerusalem, amid differences of perspective and along with a lively eschatological expectation, had a general ‘sense of center’ provided by the historical and doctrinal teaching of the apostles. And this, Luke tells us, was preeminently the *raison d’être* (‘reason for being’) and the focus of the early Christian community.”¹⁰⁷ The focus on God’s Word and on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ enabled not only believers to grow individually, but the Church grew numerically as well as indicated by Luke’s comment on the early Church: “And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47b). Bock posits, “The note of growth at the end of [Acts 2:42-47] is related to the community work and fellowship God was bringing about within the new community. Their life as a community was a visible part of their testimony. In sharing Christ, they also gave of themselves.”¹⁰⁸ In short, in fulfilling their roles in the Priesthood of Believers, the Body of Christ created an atmosphere of community and acceptance, which brought about tremendous growth.

Compared to the early Church’s work and the environment that it fostered, when one looks to the Church today, quite a different picture is seen. The cultural context of the current Church, according to Cole, can be summed thus: “We have made church nothing more than a

¹⁰⁷ Richard N. Longenecker, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary with the New International Version: Acts, Volume 9.*, Frank E. Gaebelin, gen. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 289.

¹⁰⁸ Darrell L. Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Acts*, Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein, eds. (Grand Rapids: Backer Academic, 2007), 155.

religious show that takes place on Sunday, and after it's done we all go home, until church starts again next week, same time, same place."¹⁰⁹ Accepting Cole's assessment of the current church culture and realizing the body of evidence that informs the theological grounding of growth in the church, one must then consider the theoretical foundations upon which these precepts can be put in place and practiced.

Theoretical Foundations

Jesus indicates the type of disciples the Church should produce in *The Great Commission* (Matt 28:19-20) and *The Great Commandment* (Matt 22:36-40). It follows, then, that Jesus expects the Church to produce disciples who love God, love others, and are going out to the entire world, making disciples, baptizing, and teaching them to obey everything Jesus taught. With this being the type of disciple one desires to bring to maturity in the Church, the expectation should be communicated to the members of the Body through an intentional, incremental, systematic discipling process. While it is true that the five-fold function of the Church (worship, ministry, evangelism, fellowship, and discipleship)¹¹⁰ must be balanced within a local congregation to provide the Body with healthy stability and the potentiality for growth,¹¹¹ this writing will focus solely on the aspect of discipleship. This effort is not an attempt to elevate discipleship above the other elements, but it is merely the focus of this writing.

As this writer's thesis centers on education and implementation of the role of the pastor and the Body of Christ, it becomes necessary to consider educational theory. While much has been written concerning various theories and models for teaching, this researcher will rely

¹⁰⁹ Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), XXV.

¹¹⁰ Warren, 103-106.

¹¹¹ Moss, 154.

heavily, if not solely, on the Discippler’s Model as described by Mitchell. This model is founded upon two principles: 1) Biblical content, and 2) Student needs.¹¹² Three pillars rise from the foundation representing: 1) Thinking, 2) Feeling, and 3) Doing.¹¹³ The pillars form the primary vehicle through which an emergent synthesis is developed, which brings the disciples to the model's capstone, enabling them to think about, respond to, and do that being conveyed.¹¹⁴

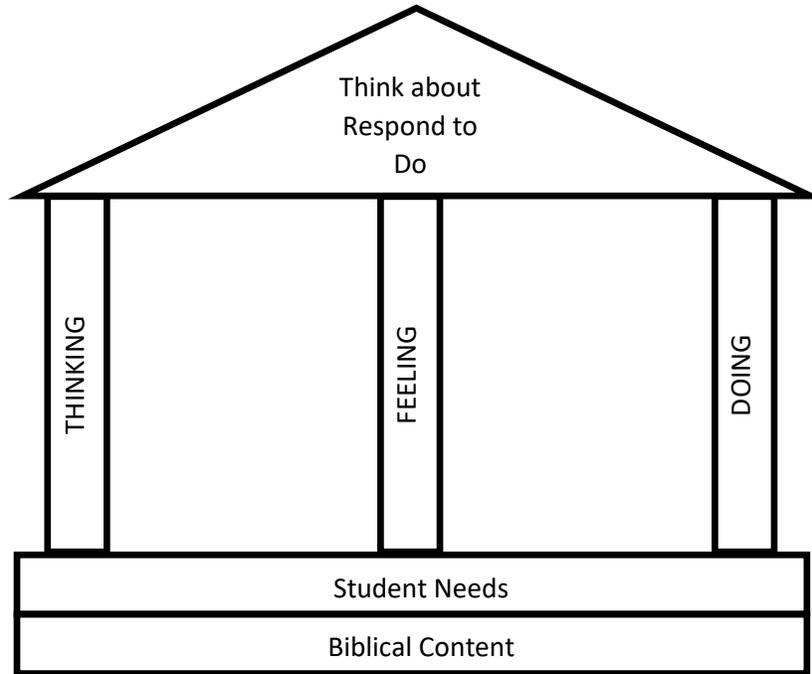


Figure 1—Discippler’s Training Model

In the case at hand, disciples will be taught the specific roles of the pastor and of the Body of Christ using the Spiritual Life Development Process and small groups as the means of communicating the roles and to provide an opportunity to practice what has been taught in a non-threatening environment among their peers.

¹¹² Mitchell, 131.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

Spiritual Life Development Process

The Spiritual Life Development Process (S.L.D.P.) is an intentional, incremental, systematic discipling process designed to create the type of disciples desired by Christ, which for this writing are those who understand and adhere to the roles of the pastor and the Body of Christ. The goal of the S.L.D.P. is to help people develop a lifestyle of service to God, produce doers of the Word, not hearers only, and transform, not merely inform.¹¹⁵ The S.L.D.P. is a series of Christian Life and Service Seminars (C.L.A.S.S.) and covenants designed to bring disciples to maturity in the church while establishing accountability and expectations among the members of the Body. Regarding this system of instruction, Moss writes, “The classes are used to present the basic foundations that every Christian needs to integrate into their life in order to grow. They emphasize application over information. No one becomes a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ by merely attending the classes. They become a fully devoted follower by actually practicing the disciplines presented in the classes.”¹¹⁶ The S.L.D.P., patterned after Saddleback’s Life Development Process,¹¹⁷ is intended for all members and prospective NBC members. Participation in each C.L.A.S.S. is expected for new or prospective members and highly encouraged for current members. The S.L.D.P. is advertised in the church as applicable to anyone desiring a closer walk with God or who wants to know what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Church leadership strives to provide as much guidance as possible to grow the Body in a relationship with Christ and understand God’s calling on their lives. To that end, the S.L.D.P. consists of the following C.L.A.S.S.es: 1) C.L.A.S.S. 101—*Discovering NBC*

¹¹⁵ Warren, 143.

¹¹⁶ Moss, 81.

¹¹⁷ Warren, 144.

Membership—is a basic introduction to the church family designed to explain the “who and what” of the church. The C.L.A.S.S. covers the church’s beliefs on salvation, doctrinal statements, overarching strategy, and structure. In this C.L.A.S.S., the role of the pastor is presented as an equipper, mentor, and shepherd. This role is further emphasized in the other C.L.A.S.S.es, as well. 2) C.L.A.S.S. 201—*Discovering Spiritual Maturity*—provides participants with the spiritual disciplines of Scripture reading, prayer, tithing, and fellowship. The goal is that if the attendees regularly practice these elements, they will develop lifelong habits that lead to spiritual maturity. 3) C.L.A.S.S. 301—*Discovering My Ministry*—is the most difficult of the seminars. As members work through the assignments presented in this C.L.A.S.S., they will learn how God has equipped them for ministry. The C.L.A.S.S. consists of three parts: classroom instruction, completing a S.H.A.P.E. profile, and consultation with a ministry guide to determine the best fit for serving. This is the C.L.A.S.S. that fully describes and differentiates between the roles of the pastor and that of the Body of Christ. Finally, 4) C.L.A.S.S. 401—*Discovering My Life Mission*—rounds out the S.L.D.P. by assisting members in discerning their role in God’s plan to reach out to the world. All of the seminars culminate with a C.L.A.S.S. Covenant pertaining to the subject matter presented (membership, maturity, ministry, and missions—Appendices A through D). This writer believes that the added step of covenanting together as disciples and teachers encourages attendees to practice what was presented.

Small Groups

As one can observe through Jesus’ ministry, disciples are best made in community, and the process will not occur without faithful Christians being intentional about meeting together.¹¹⁸ With this, then, a small group ministry is designed to foster community among believers. Small

¹¹⁸ Arnold, 23.

groups are defined as a group of people who come together regularly for a common purpose; it is led by an identified leader who assists members in their progress toward total devotion to Christ by intentionally providing an environment for connection, community, and spiritual formation.¹¹⁹ If the classroom is the area where knowledge is disseminated to members of the Body, then the small group is the laboratory where one practices it.

NBC designed small groups for support, service, and growth of the members. The support aspect caters to congregational care, fellowship, and worship, targeting specific stages of life of the attendees (*e.g.*, new parents, college students, empty nesters).¹²⁰ Highlighting service in the small group enables the members to work together using their individual S.H.A.P.E. as they join forces with other group members to perform ministry. Through it all, small groups intentionally provide for the members' growth as each one is nurtured and disciplined through in-depth Bible study.¹²¹ An additional benefit of a small group ministry is seeker sensitivity. As members grow and more fully fulfill their role in the Body of Christ, they become aware of the people's utter lostness and invite them into their groups. This setting is non-threatening for nonbelievers and allows them to ask questions, express doubts, and investigate Christ's claims.¹²²

Synthesis

The goal of this thesis is to experience growth in the Church on the individual and corporate levels. Specifically, if the Priesthood of Believers is taught and practices the role of the pastor and the role of the Body, growth should occur. To that end, keeping the Discippler's Model for training in mind, this researcher will set out to fully implement the S.L.D.P., insisting that all

¹¹⁹ Donahue, 236.

¹²⁰ Warren, 146.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

present and prospective members of NBC participate in the C.L.A.S.S. system. Additionally, all members will be encouraged to join a small group through which the principles learned may be sharpened. If attempted faithfully, these two elements should prepare members of the Body to fulfill their roles, thereby freeing the pastor to perform his role, ultimately leading to growth.

Chapter 3

Methodology

It is one thing to determine a persistent problem in the church, and it is another thing to attempt to “fix” it. In the action research project at hand, the thesis is if the congregation is taught and implements the biblical roles of the pastor and the church Body, then the church should grow. To accomplish this, using discipleship channels and the formation/continuation of a small group ministry, the roles of the pastor and that of the Body will be delineated, taught, and practiced. Emphasis will be placed on how God has equipped every member of the Body to perform ministry within the church and outreach from the church. That said, this section on methodology will delve deeper into who, what, when, where, why, and how the Priesthood of Believers will be taught the delineated roles of the pastor and of the Body and how the perspective roles can be practiced and honed to achieve church growth.

Intervention Design

The basic design of the intervention will follow a modified action research plan. This plan will be presented in two parts. This researcher addresses quantitative and qualitative growth at Neuse Baptist Church (NBC) and will supplement data gathered from that congregation with data from Oak Ridge Baptist Church (ORBC). ORBC is several steps ahead of NBC in training church members on the delineated roles concerned and performing ministry based on one’s unique S.H.A.P.E. Data obtained from ORBC will be used for comparative purposes and used as a standard for long-term implementation of this intervention.

Recruitment of participants will be through a series of video commercials, bulletin announcements (Appendix E), and flyers (Appendix F) to create curiosity in the project inviting members to an informational meeting. A talking paper (Appendix G) and PowerPoint®

presentation will inform those interested in the study, resulting in some participants self-identifying. Others will be invited directly by members of the Leadership Team (Pastor, Deacons, Purpose Directors, and Ministry Leaders). All participants will sign a consent (Appendix H) to be included in the study and for the publication of the data derived from the same. At no point will the participant's personal information be revealed.

The pastor of ORBC has already permitted a comparison group to be selected and used from his church, so no further permission is required from that congregation. For NBC, this researcher does not need permission as he has the full cooperation of the congregants and the Leadership Team. The congregation will be informed of the research project but will not need to give permission. This researcher has secured all the required resources, and advanced preparation is complete for implementing this intervention.

The overall project will be described as a way to further the completion of the *Great Commission* and as a means to individual and corporate growth in the church. Information will be disseminated to the selected participants through e-mail, texts, phone calls, and small groups. Project participants will be involved through training, small groups, surveys, interviews, and focus groups. If some congregants do not want to participate or drop out, their decision will be graciously accepted. Participants who drop out of the study will be encouraged to continue and, if not, data gathered from the individual will be scrubbed from the study.

METRIC data has been collected for some years at NBC. That data is straightforward and is an adequate measure for quantitative growth. Qualitative growth will be harder to correlate and will be evaluated anecdotally, to a degree, out of necessity. While some gradation of specific data points is possible using participant measures (Likert Scales, *etc.*), there remains the possibility and need to capture the "feel" of growth as it occurs.

A successful outcome for this research project will be a qualitative and quantitative increase among the church's membership. METRIC data will reveal the church's quantitative increase as it is currently being collected with trending over the last five years. The qualitative measure will require careful attention as these elements are not cut-and-dry but need to be evaluated more subjectively and will vary between the study participants. Generally speaking, a member of the Body that moves from inactivity in ministry to active participation would be considered a qualitative step forward. Those members who understand their S.H.A.P.E. and seek to fulfill God's purpose for their lives display qualitative growth. Likewise, a participant that takes their responsibility to make disciples (mentorship) would be counted as a qualitative step forward for growth in the Body of Christ. These, and possibly other measures, are indicators of a successful outcome.

Neuse Baptist Church

The thesis is that if the congregation is taught and implements the biblical roles of the pastor and the church Body, then the church should grow. To accomplish this, using discipleship channels and the formation/continuation of a small group ministry, the roles of the pastor and that of the Body will be delineated, taught, and practiced. Emphasis will be placed on how God has equipped every member of the Body to perform ministry within the church and outreach from the church. Specifically, this will be done by having participants attend C.L.A.S.S. 301, *Discovering My Ministry*, and routinely attending a small group designed for the practice of that taught in training. Therefore, this intervention aims to facilitate quantitative and qualitative church growth with four following objectives: 1) Attend C.L.A.S.S. 301, 2) Actively serve in a ministry, 3) Participate in a small group, and 4) Begin a mentor relationship with another believer.

The membership of NBC is relatively low and is recorded at 143 active members averaged over the past three years. This research will be limited to only active members since the inactive inclusion will skew the data. To that end, the research subjects from NBC: 1) Will be comprised of those active members who have shown evidence of salvation (*e.g.*, display the fruit of salvation); 2) Will be (or will have been) taught, through C.L.A.S.S. 301, the biblical role of the pastor and the Body of Christ, and the identification and importance of their S.H.A.P.E.; 3) Will be active participants in a small group; 4) Will be active participants in ministry that best suits their S.H.A.P.E.; and 5) Will provide detailed information concerning their growth journey through surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Table 3.1 illustrates, at a glance, the steps to be taken at NBC. The first step of the project has already begun: prayer, which will continue throughout the process. Solicitation of participants (Consent/Participation Form—Appendix H) will start in January and should be completed within two weeks. A survey of participants comes next (Survey 1—Appendix I) with an expectation for completion by the end of the month. During February, one-on-one interviews (Interview Script—Appendix J) will be completed either in person, over the phone, or using Zoom®, Skype®, or Facetime®. Training all participants through C.L.A.S.S. 301, *Discovering My Ministry* (outline at Appendix K), and forming small groups (if needed) is the goal for March. During April, May, and June participants will be encouraged to practice what they have learned. A second participant survey (Appendix L) will be administered in July along with focus groups (questions at Appendix M) to determine the validity of the training and emphasis placed on small groups. During July, data concerning participation levels, attitudes toward ministry, and understanding of the role of the pastor and Body of Christ using Likert scales for gradation and evaluation will be gathered. Over the next three months (August to October), participants will be

encouraged to continue practicing what they have learned with the added responsibility to mentor someone younger in the faith who does not serve in ministry. The third round of surveys (Appendix N) will be administered in November, and a different focus group will be held. Finally, the month of December will be used for study finalization and reporting.

Step	Month(s)	Activity(ies)
1	Ongoing	Prayer
2	January (first half)	Selection of participants (Consent/Participation form at Appendix H)
3	January (second half)	Survey 1 (Appendix I)
4	February	One-on-one interviews (Appendix J)
5	March	Training in C.L.A.S.S. 301 (outline at Appendix K) and the formation of small groups
6	April to June	Participant’s ministry
7	July	Survey 2 (Appendix L) and focus groups (Appendix M)
8	August to October	Continued participant’s ministry with added encouragement to begin mentoring a “younger” Christian
9	November	Survey 3 (Appendix N) and focus groups
10	December	Study finalization and reporting

Table 3.1—Timeline for Intervention Implementation at NBC

As outlined above, one year is anticipated for the implementation and evaluation of this intervention strategy.

Oak Ridge Baptist Church

For comparative purposes, a different group of participants will be chosen from ORBC. The research subjects from ORBC: 1) Will be comprised of those active members who have shown evidence of salvation (*e.g.*, display the fruit of salvation); 2) Will be (or will have been) taught, through C.L.A.S.S. 301 (or a comparative course of study), the biblical role of the pastor and the Body of Christ, and the identification and importance of their S.H.A.P.E.; 3) Will be active participants in a small group; 4) Will be active participants in ministry that best suits their

S.H.A.P.E.; and 5) Will provide detailed information concerning their growth journey through a survey and an interview. Two hundred believers will be selected for this additional sample (100 male, 100 female). The subjects will be further divided into subgroups by age (less than 40, greater than 40). One final stratification of the participants will be based on time since conversion to Christianity (less than one year, 1-10 years, 10-20 years, and greater than 20 years). The implementation schedule differs at ORBC as this group is being studied as a control, of sorts, for comparative purposes only. The solicitation of participants will begin in January and should be completed within two weeks. A survey of participants comes next with an expectation for completion by the end of the month. During February, one-on-one interviews will be completed either in person, over the phone, or using Zoom®, Skype®, or Facetime®. This will be the extent of the contact with ORBC participants other than to give a final report of NBC findings to interested individuals. Table 3.2 illustrates the steps to be taken at ORBC.

Step	Month(s)	Activity(ies)
1	Ongoing	Prayer
2	January (first half)	Selection of participants (Consent/Participation form at Appendix H)
3	January (second half)	Survey 1 (Appendix I)
4	February	One-on-one interviews (script at Appendix J)
5	December	Study finalization and reporting

Table 3.2—Timeline for Surveying ORBC

Implementation of the Intervention Design

In all things, Franklin’s axiom “to fail to plan is to plan to fail” still holds today, but one must never forget Burns’ truism “The best laid schemes o’ mice an’ men gang aft a-gley” (to translate, the best laid plans of mice and men can still go wrong). Much thought and planning went into this research project. However, when it was time for implementation, COVID-19 and

the subsequent pandemic forced concessions to the plan. The following explains the environment created by COVID-19 and the required changes, which this researcher reluctantly accepted.

An Excursus—“Due to COVID”¹²³

“Due to COVID” is an expression that became virtually known world-wide and is one that this researcher has come to detest as it relates to the overreaching arm of government in the name of public safety. Countless requirements were put into place in an effort to “flatten the curve” of the Corona virus, which resulted in shut down of all but essential elements of our society. Unfortunately, most Executive Orders issued by the states did not classify churches as essential. Eidsmoe sums the effect of these orders thus, “To help suppress the spread of COVID-19, in state after state, community after community, officials have ordered churches either to close, to hold only drive-in services, to limit their attendance to a certain number of persons (commonly 10), or not to sing, pass out literature, or share the sacraments.”¹²⁴ It is unfortunate, that God’s change agent for the world (the Church) was not considered essential in our country’s time of need. Much good could have been provided to hurting communities through the Church if only the government had recognized its worth. Instead, church leaders were forced to adapt to the situation and provide impromptu services. Bryson, Andres, and Davies posit, “Clergy have been challenged to improvise alternative worship forms to sustain their congregations while

¹²³ It is not this writer’s intention to opine on the origin, scientific facts, medical implications, economic consequences, or political responses to COVID-19. Rather this excursus deals with the church’s actions in the face of the pandemic and the resulting changes to this research plan.

¹²⁴ John Eidsmoe, “Quarantining the Church? During the COVID-19 Lockdowns, Churches Have Had to Fight Against Unjust Efforts to Close Their Doors by Secular Authorities Using the ‘Pandemic’ to Single Them Out,” *The New American*, 36, no. 22 (2020): 24, <https://thenewamerican.com/print/quarantining-the-church> (accessed April 29, 2021).

providing pastoral support for the apprehensive, ill, and bereaved.”¹²⁵ While some of the improvisation used cutting edge technology to provide worship gatherings for those who were home bound, others were found to be woefully inadequate and left a void in pastoral care for congregations worldwide. Attempting to maintain a sense of community with congregants who are ordered to stay at home is frustrating and almost impossible when “responsible citizens” are encouraged not to visit with the very ones who require a certain level of pastoral care. Add to this the inability to visit hospitals, nursing homes, and hospice centers for fear of spreading COVID-19 and one has a situation that essentially cripples the Church. Pillay opines, “Churches and religious communities have not been spared; they have been severely affected and, in all likelihood, permanently transformed by the pandemic. . . Churches have to adapt; they have to ask themselves questions about the implications for being church in this ‘new normal’ context.”¹²⁶ With an eye to answering Pillay’s question of what is the Church’s role in this “new normal,” this writer offers the following as background information in order to formulate a cogent explanation as to how the Church responded to this scourge.¹²⁷

The Historical Response of the Church to Pandemics

One of the greatest teachers for all mankind is history, and one would do well to seek the lessons provided therein for as Santayana quipped, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it!” This section is not intended to be an exhaustive search for the Church’s

¹²⁵ John R. Bryson, Lauren Andres, and Andrew Davies, “COVID-19, Virtual Church Services and a New Temporary Geography of Home,” in *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 111, no. 3 (2020): 370, DOI: 10.1111/test.12436 (accessed April 29, 2021).

¹²⁶ Jerry Pillay, “COVID-19 Shows the Need to Make Church More Flexible,” in *Transformation* 37, no. 4 (2020): 266, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265378820963156> (accessed April 29, 2021).

¹²⁷ Jean-Daniel Plüss, “COVID-19, the Church, and the Challenge to Ecumenism,” in *Transformation* 37, no. 4 (2020): 286, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265378820961545> (accessed April 29, 2021).

response during past pandemics, but rather it is intended as a reminder of how the Church was treated during times of crisis. For a detailed study one may read the articles cited herein that are scholarly, peer-reviewed works containing an abundance of information. For illustrative purposes, this writer has chosen two examples spanning a great time gap, which yield virtually the same treatment of the Church in relegating it to the background as throngs of people needed help while navigating the effects of a disease out of control.

The Plague of Cyprian, Roman Empire, 249-262 AD

When reviewing the history of this event, relying on the accounts given by the Church fathers, Plüss questioned the Church's response to the plague. He asked, "Are they living up to the ethical benchmark given to them by their Christian faith? Are they caring toward their neighbors and family relations? Are they merciful toward their employees? Do the believers live up to their responsibilities?"¹²⁸ Sadly, the answer was, as it could be given today, "No." The Church was not relied upon to provide relief efforts. They were pushed to the background where they suffered along with the masses instead of being allowed to act on their Christian ethics and edicts.

The Spanish Flu, Switzerland, 1918-1920

As above, when considering how the Church was treated by governmental authorities and what believers were allowed to do during the outbreak, Plüss instructs:

In order to curb the spread of the virus, the Swiss government issued in 1918 emergency orders relating to meeting in public places. Festivities, church services, concerts, theater performances, and visits to the sick were forbidden and heavy fines were imposed on people who were caught breaking the decree. When the peak of the epidemic seemed to have passed, the Reformed and Catholic State

¹²⁸ Plüss, 287.

Churches were allowed to resume services, restaurants and inns could reopen, but gatherings of free churches were still forbidden.¹²⁹

Plüss' closing comment that the free churches were still forbidden to meet while the state churches and other aspects of society were allowed to carry on is quite telling and similarities exist in today's culture as was displayed in Switzerland during the early 1900's.

The Global Response of the Church to COVID-19

The global response of the Church to COVID-19 ranged from complete and total shut-down of any gatherings or ministry to absolute refusal to change standard operating procedures. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the range of responses were based on fear, a desire to comply with governmental edicts in the interest of public safety, or an outright denial of reality and a stance in favor of "separation of church and state." Regardless of one's reasoning, the median response to the Corona virus seemingly was modification of the Church's outreach from their facilities and migration to an online environment. Pillay states, "The closure of churches has turned [invitations to visit fixed facilities to] the plea to 'please join us on Youtube [*sic.*] or other electronic platforms'. [*sic.*] While it is important to recognize the significance of the Church 'gathering to worship' the pandemic has forced us to rethink *how* we gather."¹³⁰

In an electronic conference call held during the pandemic with pastors in the Purpose Driven Network, the question was asked, "Do we, as church leaders, need to redefine what it means to 'attend' church?" Most of the churches represented in that venue had migrated to online services exclusively. Their livestream services included a moderator for interaction with those who joined the gathering. The consensus was "No." Church attendance should, as it always

¹²⁹ Plüss, 288.

¹³⁰ Pillay, 268.

has, require attendees to actually come to church. This answer was not a hasty conclusion but was a realization that in order for one to complete the five-fold purpose of the Church (worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and evangelism), the attendee was required to be physically present at some point. So, the agreed position of the pastors in that conference was, while livestreaming is a tool to be used for those who cannot attend a gathering, it must not be the sole venue for worshippers on a permanent basis.

Eidsmoe posits, “[A] result [of livestreaming services] may have been unintended and unanticipated. Church attendance is a discipline cultivated by long-term habit. Once the habit is broken, it is difficult to reestablish. Some have become comfortable with livestreaming and are not eager to go back to church. . . . By breaking people of the church-going habit, the state may have dealt the church a devastating blow.”¹³¹ It is important to note that religious buildings act as physical, social, and cultural symbols within urban and rural landscapes.¹³² When churches closed their doors, these symbols were relegated to an afterthought and through the livestreaming process worshipers were present together in experience, and potentially, in time, but not in place.¹³³ In essence, some worshippers have accepted electronic offerings from the various churches in place of physically gathering at one time and place as the Church. However, this is not all to be taken as bad, for as Pillay states, “The church buildings maybe [*sic.*] closed but the churches (people of God) are still alive and active. . . . What we see with the COVID-19 pandemic is the church returning back to its roots—back to where it came from . . . in essence churches have not closed but come home: a church in each home.”¹³⁴

¹³¹ Eidsmoe, 29-30.

¹³² Bryson, 361.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Pillay, 268.

The Local Response of this Writer’s Church to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has radically changed individual lives and this world, but it has not changed what God requires of His followers.¹³⁵ The people of God are instructed to “do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). During this pandemic, the Church was challenged to stretch it’s understanding of what it took for granted for a long time.¹³⁶ This writer and his church members had grown to expect the ability to meet unhindered by external forces and was, seemingly, complacent, and ignorant to the fact that, one day, the right to assemble could be curtailed. However, the right to assemble was called into question as North Carolina Executive Order No. 116, *Declaration of a State of Emergency to Coordinate Response and Protective Actions to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19*, was issued on March 10, 2020. In that order, citizens were encouraged to limit their contact with other individuals and, unfortunately, the Church was not exempted from the order. The result was severely decreased attendance by church members at regularly scheduled meetings and the cancellation of all outreach events where the public at large was expected to attend. Subsequently, on March 27, 2020, North Carolina Executive Order No. 121, *Stay at Home Order and Strategic Directions for North Carolina in Response to Increasing COVID-19 Cases*, was issued, which specifically exempted travel to religious gatherings but congregants were already in “stay-at-home-mode” and chose to stay away from public gatherings. After witnessing this “knee jerk” reaction to the Executive Orders, church leadership set out to develop a *COVID Response Plan for Neuse Baptist Church* to encourage members to return and to protect those who did.

¹³⁵ Plüss, 289.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 292.

This pastor was uniquely qualified to lead his congregation through the COVID-19 pandemic as, prior to answering the call to lead a church, he served as a member of the United States Air Force for 22 years in the field of Public Health. During that time, it was his responsibility to keep people healthy both on the base and in the field by promoting and practicing preventive medicine, communicable disease control, and infection control principles and creating environments in which people could do what they were taught. His experience provided him with the precise skill set to establish, implement, and maintain protection protocols, which were universally applied to his congregants. In concert with the Security, Safety, First Aid, and Hospitality Ministry team leadership, guidance was developed and implemented. To date, no cases of COVID-19 have been linked to an outbreak or cluster within the church body. Through education of members, strict screening of attendees, social distancing, the use of proper personal protective equipment, and scrupulous personal hygiene, attendees at Neuse Baptist Church were provided with a safe, healthy environment in which they could worship. However, at least initially, the general consensus was that the church doors should be closed to all but essential staff and volunteers to facilitate livestreaming services only until the *COVID Response Plan* was fully implemented. This was done and on Resurrection Sunday, regularly scheduled services resumed. Even now, as strict adherence to the plan has loosened, some congregants remain apprehensive to in-person gatherings and choose to maintain a connection to the church VIA livestreams.

Livestreaming on Facebook® and posting recorded services to the church's YouTube® channel has become the normal routine. However, it comes at a cost, as virtual church services alters the relationship between the individual and the wider fellowship of the congregation.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Bryson, 365.

Froud explains, “Where there has been a suspension of gathered worship, there is an interruption of shared experience within the church congregation. . . [and] those returning to worship are at new and differing points in their journey of faith as their local, gathered church resumes after one or more periods of lockdown.”¹³⁸ This has been the experience at Neuse Baptist Church. Some members have returned full-force and unfettered by the events during the pandemic, others have returned but seem to have taken a few steps backward in their faith journey and require encouragement and elementary teaching once again, and still others choose to remain at home. Plüss wisely asks, “The question is, when the current pandemic recedes will there be a return to old habits or will there be a ‘new normal’ and what will that entail for the worldwide church?”¹³⁹ The answer, at least in this writer’s ministry context, is “yes” in both regards.

Changes Forced in this Research Project “Due to COVID”

With the above offered as supporting background “due to COVID,” this writer was forced to make modifications to the research plan specifically dealing with the number of volunteers from Oak Ridge Baptist Church. The implementation of the plan was unchanged; however, the projected number of participants used to form a benchmark by which growth would be measured was lower than projected. The projection was that subjects from Oak Ridge would be limited to only those who have completed C.L.A.S.S. 301, *Discovering My Ministry*, or a comparative course of study, were currently serving in ministry, and were active in a small group. The desired number for this sample was 200 (100 male, 100 female). The data derived from this group was to be divided into subgroups by age (less than 40, greater than 40) and further stratified based on time since conversion to Christianity (less than one year, 1-10 years,

¹³⁸ Helen Froud, “Returning from Exile? Reconciliation within the Church after COVID-19,” in *Practical Theology 14*, no. 2 (2021): 123, doi: 10.1080/1756073X.2020.1861402 (accessed April 29, 2021).

¹³⁹ Plüss, 293.

10-20 years, and greater than 20 years). Only 75 participants were available due to the complete shut-down of in-person gatherings at Oak Ridge. When volunteers were solicited, the church had not yet opened fully so, reluctantly, this researcher was forced to take the volunteers that were available. Additionally, full stratification of the data is not practical as the smaller sample size would not yield meaningful data. That said, the benchmark data is as follows.

Oak Ridge Baptist Church

The process of identifying candidates for this study was relatively easy thanks to the inestimable help of Kathy Livesay, ORBC Volunteer Coordinator. She provided information on the volunteers working at the time of this research and facilitated their completion of the required permissions and surveys. Through her scrupulous attention to detail and encyclopedic knowledge of volunteer positions and procedures, all of the 75 members identified from ORBC met the qualification criteria (active in ministry, small group attendance, and received training in C.L.A.S.S. 301 or similar course of study). The sample includes: 24 males and 51 females (Figure 2) of which 16 are less than 40 years of age and 59 are over 40 years of age (Figure 3). When rating spiritual growth elements (Figure 4) using the following scale—Disagree (-2), Somewhat Disagree (-1), Neither Agree nor Disagree (0), Somewhat Agree (+1), and Agree (+2) with 2 being the highest possible score—the following median scores are observed: “I understand my role in the Body of Christ,” 1.87; “I understand the role of the pastor in the Body of Christ,” 1.88; “I understand my S.H.A.P.E.,” 1.67; “I serve in the Body based on my S.H.A.P.E.,” 1.63; and “My small group helps and encourages me to serve,” 1.31.¹⁴⁰ When rating spiritual growth statements (Figure 5) using the following scale—1 to 5 with 5 being the highest rating possible—the following median ratings were obtained: “I feel God has gifted me to serve

¹⁴⁰ An important distinction must be made here. ORBC uses small group venues to fulfill the element of fellowship of the five-fold purpose of the church. NBC emphasizes the entire five-fold purpose in small groups.

in the Body,” 4.75; “I feel equipped to perform my ministry in the Body,” 4.49; “I feel my ministry is important in the Body,” 4.72; “I feel I have grown since salvation,” 4.92; “I feel I am intentionally investing in another’s life (mentoring),” 4.07; and “I feel my small group helps and encourages me to serve,” 4.07.

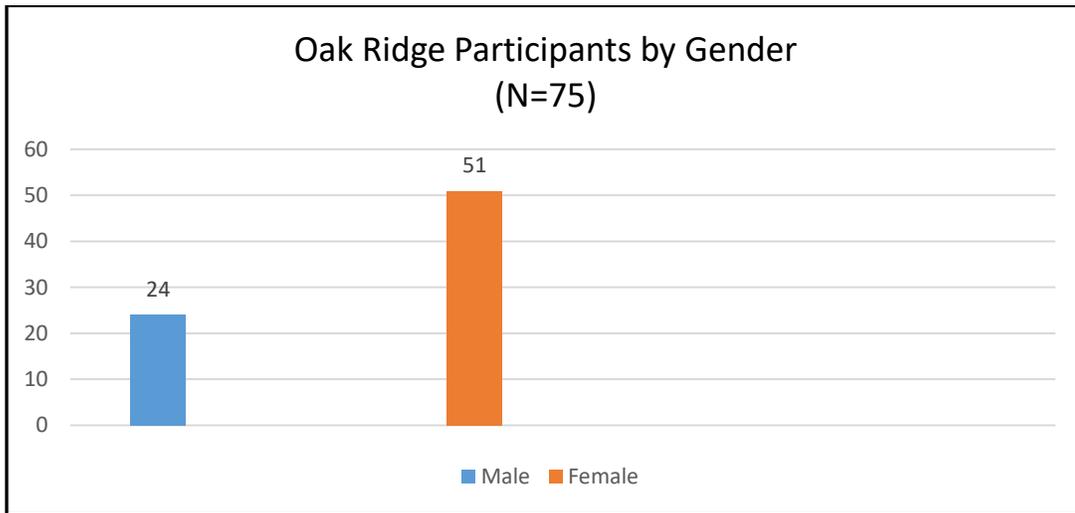


Figure 2—Oak Ridge Participants by Gender

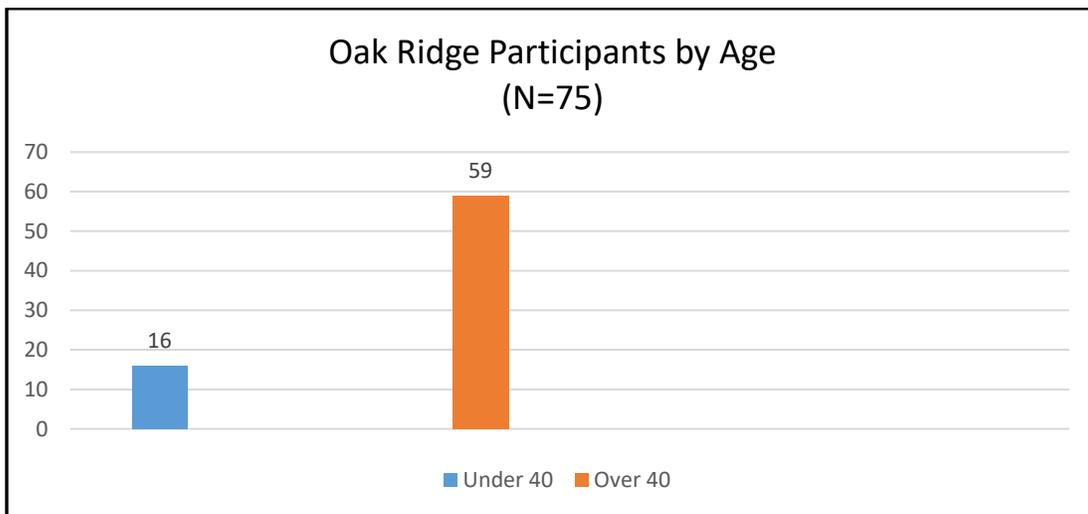


Figure 3—Oak Ridge Participants by Age

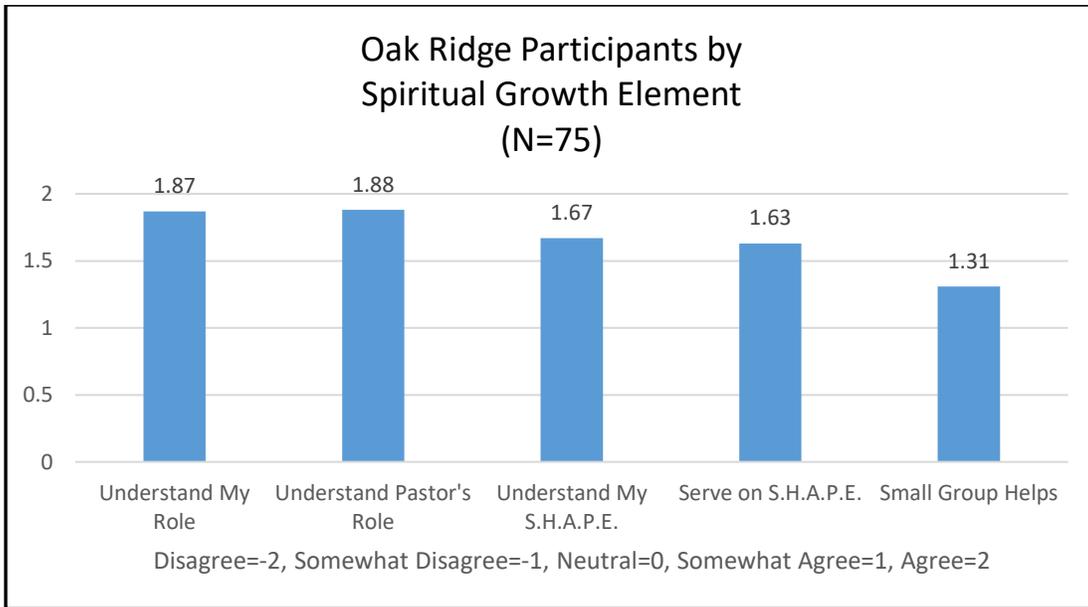


Figure 4—Oak Ridge Participants by Spiritual Growth Element

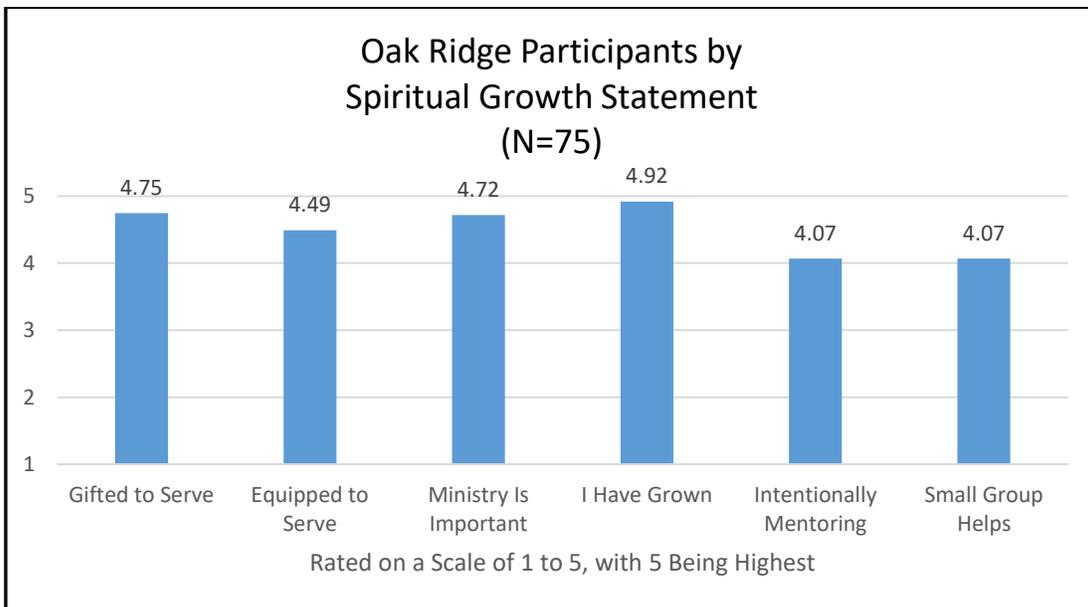


Figure 5—Oak Ridge Participants by Spiritual Growth Statement

The above data will serve as a benchmark for comparison of Neuse Baptist congregants to a more “mature” congregation. As explained above, due to the small sample size, the data was not stratified based on time since conversion to Christianity.

Neuse Baptist Church

Generally speaking, the congregants at Neuse Baptist Church were eager to participate in this research project. However, some of the initial volunteers declined to participate when the researcher informed them of the requirements to take C.L.A.S.S. 301 and to join a small group. The consensus reason (although not worded as such) was the congregant did not have time to commit to training and/or to attend a weekly small group meeting. Although disappointed, this researcher accepted their decision and proceeded with those who were qualified and/or agreed to meet the study qualification requirements.

Survey 1

The Neuse Baptist sample includes: 18 males and 17 females (Figure 6) of which 9 are less than 40 years of age and 26 are over 40 years of age (Figure 7). When rating spiritual growth elements (Figure 8) using the following scale—Disagree (-2), Somewhat Disagree (-1), Neither Agree nor Disagree (0), Somewhat Agree (+1), and Agree (+2) with 2 being the highest possible score—the following median scores are observed: “I understand my role in the Body of Christ,” 1.60; “I understand the role of the pastor in the Body of Christ,” 1.66; “I understand my S.H.A.P.E.,” 1.51; “I serve in the Body based on my S.H.A.P.E.,” 1.09; and “My small group helps and encourages me to serve,” 0.89. When rating spiritual growth statements (Figure 9) using the following scale—1 to 5 with 5 being the highest rating possible—the following median ratings were obtained: “I feel God has gifted me to serve in the Body,” 4.43; “I feel equipped to perform my ministry in the Body,” 4.09; “I feel my ministry is important in the Body,” 4.54; “I feel I have grown since salvation,” 4.37; “I feel I am intentionally investing in another’s life (mentoring),” 3.43; and “I feel my small group helps and encourages me to serve,” 3.60.

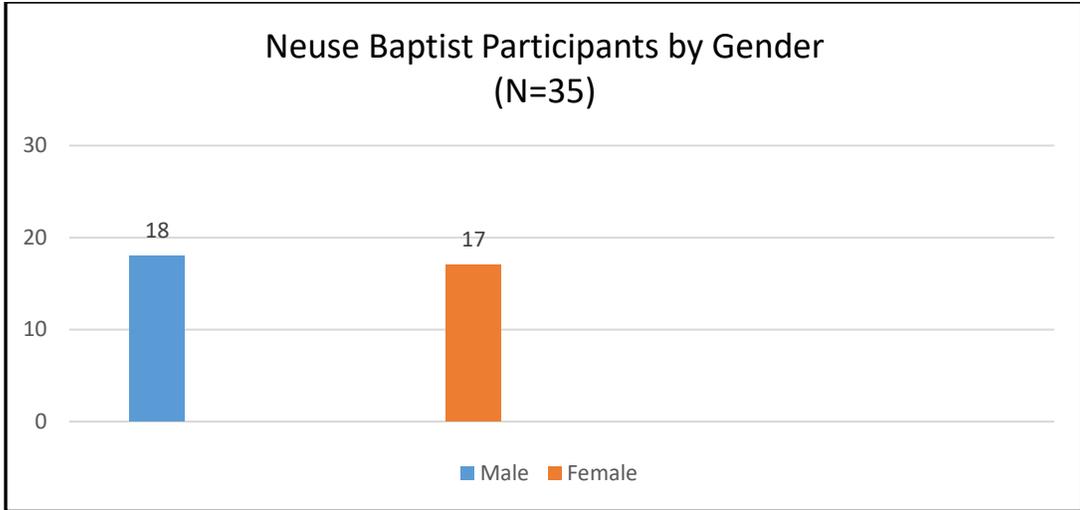


Figure 6—Neuse Baptist Participants by Gender

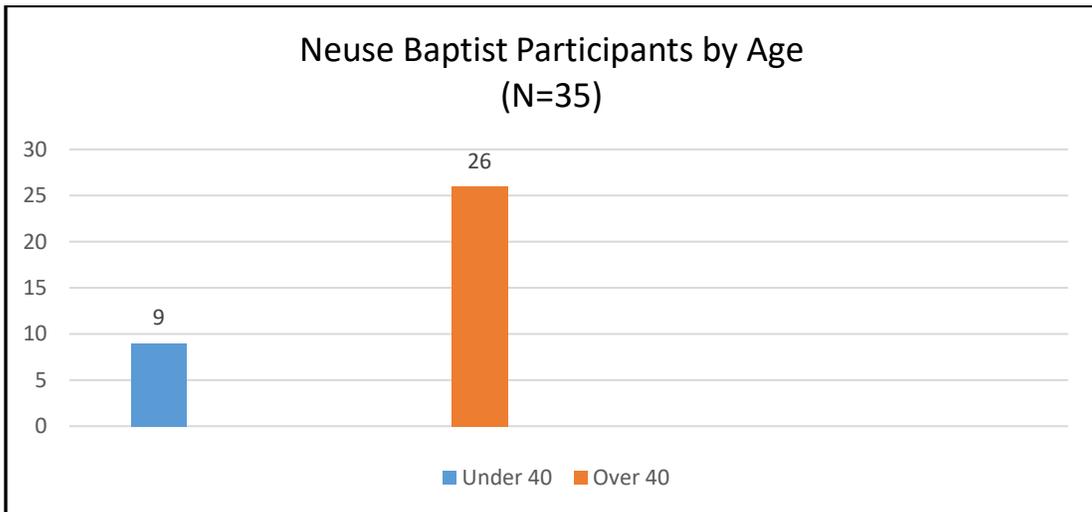


Figure 7—Neuse Baptist Participants by Age

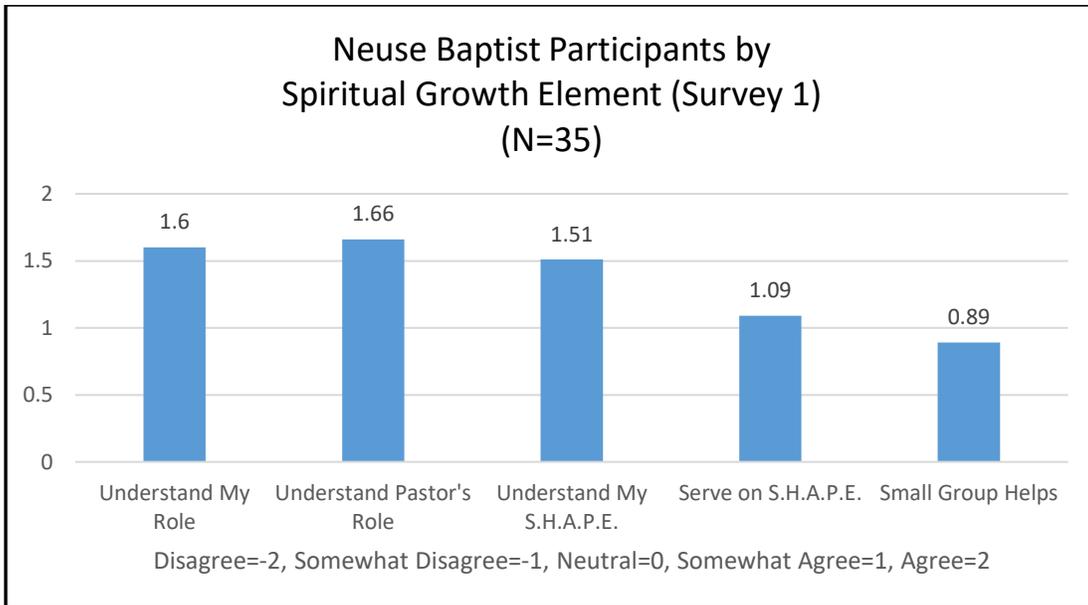


Figure 8—Neuse Baptist Participants by Spiritual Growth Element (Survey 1)

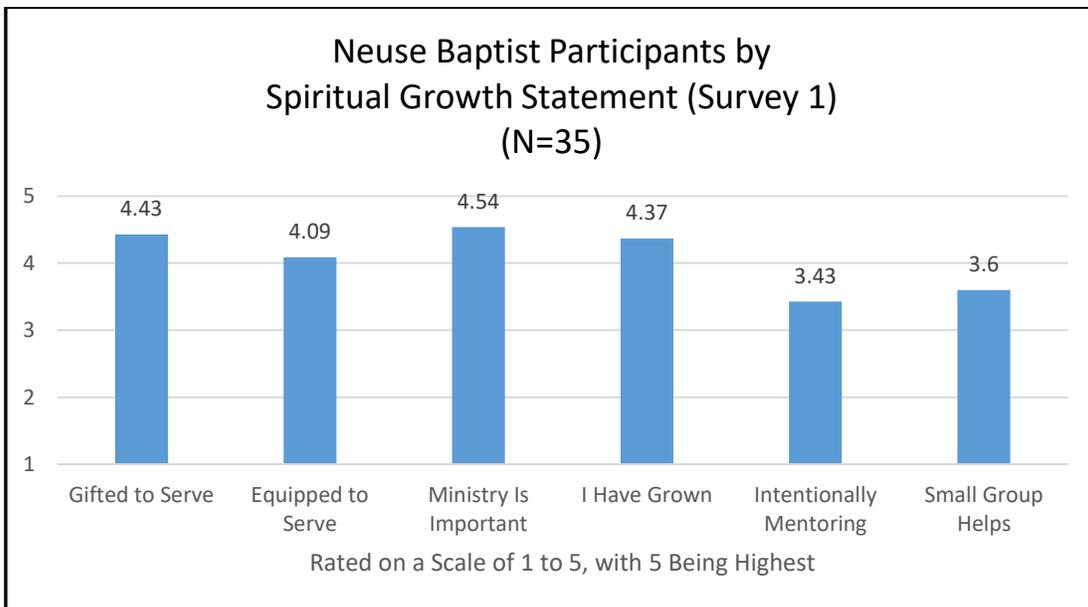


Figure 9—Neuse Baptist Participants by Spiritual Growth Statement (Survey 1)

While the starting point of the analysis for Neuse Baptist Church is not as low as this researcher suspected, there is definite room for growth. Even though the participants were encouraged to answer honestly in their self-evaluation, there may have been some “survey bias,” as, generally speaking, participants do not want to look too good or bad.

When compared to the benchmark data, the room for growth becomes increasingly evident. What follows is the data for the spiritual growth elements from Survey 1 and the benchmark (Figure 10) using the following scale—Disagree (-2), Somewhat Disagree (-1), Neither Agree nor Disagree (0), Somewhat Agree (+1), and Agree (+2) with 2 being the highest possible score. For ease of comparison, the median scores are formatted as **black, bold text for Survey 1** and *red, italicized text for the benchmark*: “I understand my role in the Body of Christ,” **1.60**—*1.87*; “I understand the role of the pastor in the Body of Christ,” **1.66**—*1.88*; “I understand my S.H.A.P.E.,” **1.51**—*1.67*; “I serve in the Body based on my S.H.A.P.E.,” **1.09**—*1.63*; and “My small group helps and encourages me to serve,” **0.89**—*1.31*. The following is the data for the spiritual growth statements and the benchmark (Figure 11) using the following scale—1 to 5 with 5 being the highest rating possible. Once again, for ease of comparison, the median scores are formatted as **black, bold text for Survey 1** and *red, italicized text for the benchmark*: “I feel God has gifted me to serve in the Body,” **4.43**—*4.75*; “I feel equipped to perform my ministry in the Body,” **4.09**—*4.49*; “I feel my ministry is important in the Body,” **4.54**—*4.72*; “I feel I have grown since salvation,” **4.37**—*4.92*; “I feel I am intentionally investing in another’s life (mentoring),” **3.43**—*4.07*; and “I feel my small group helps and encourages me to serve,” **3.60**—*4.07*.

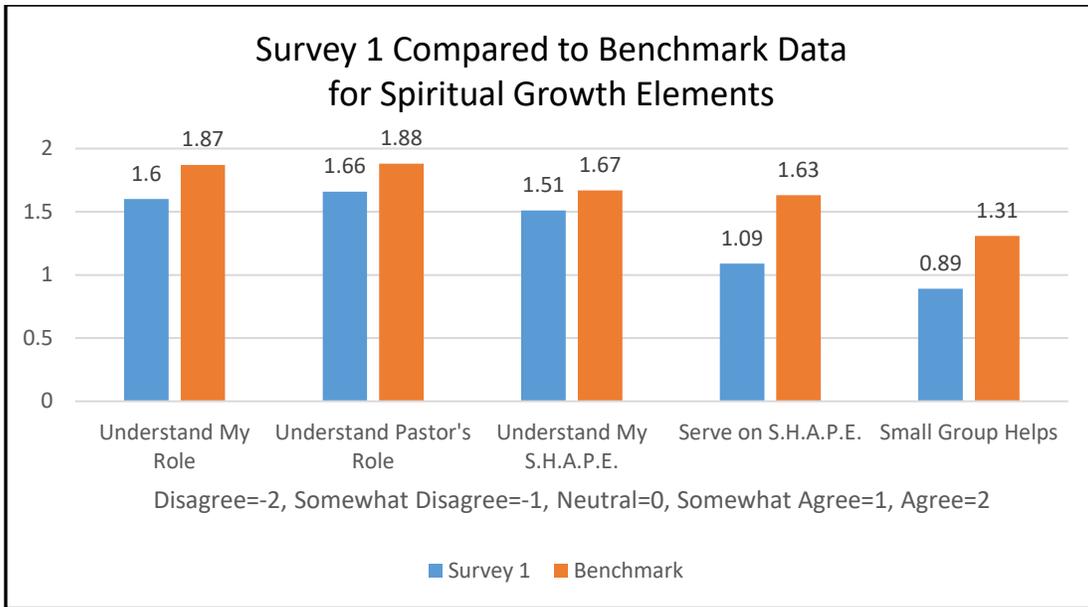


Figure 10—Survey 1 Compared to Benchmark Data for Spiritual Growth Elements

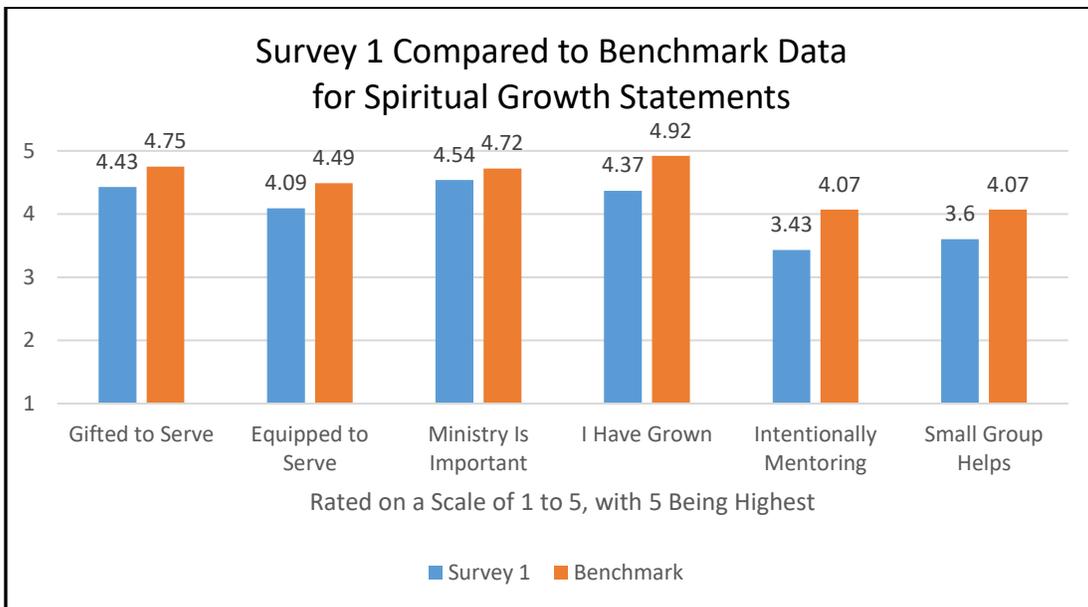


Figure 11—Survey 1 Compared to Benchmark Data for Spiritual Growth Statements

At this point in the study, the researcher offered C.L.A.S.S. 301 for the participants who required the training, encouraged the continuation/formation of small groups, and watched as the study participants continued/began serving according to their S.H.A.P.E. until the next round of surveys.

Survey 2

Seven months into this research project, in July 2021, Survey 2 was administered to the volunteers and a focus groups was held to determine the effects of serving intentionally and “doing life” together through small groups. Survey 2 yielded the following data. When rating spiritual growth elements (Figure 12) using the following scale—Disagree (-2), Somewhat Disagree (-1), Neither Agree nor Disagree (0), Somewhat Agree (+1), and Agree (+2) with 2 being the highest possible score—the following median scores are observed: “I understand my role in the Body of Christ,” 1.74; “I understand the role of the pastor in the Body of Christ,” 1.91; “I understand my S.H.A.P.E.,” 1.69; “I serve in the Body based on my S.H.A.P.E.,” 1.77; and “My small group helps and encourages me to serve,” 1.60. When rating spiritual growth statements (Figure 13) using the following scale—1 to 5 with 5 being the highest rating possible—the following median ratings were obtained: “I feel God has gifted me to serve in the Body,” 4.80; “I feel equipped to perform my ministry in the Body,” 4.60; “I feel my ministry is important in the Body,” 4.86; “I feel I have grown since salvation,” 4.69; “I feel I am intentionally investing in another’s life (mentoring),” 4.11; and “I feel my small group helps and encourages me to serve,” 4.63.

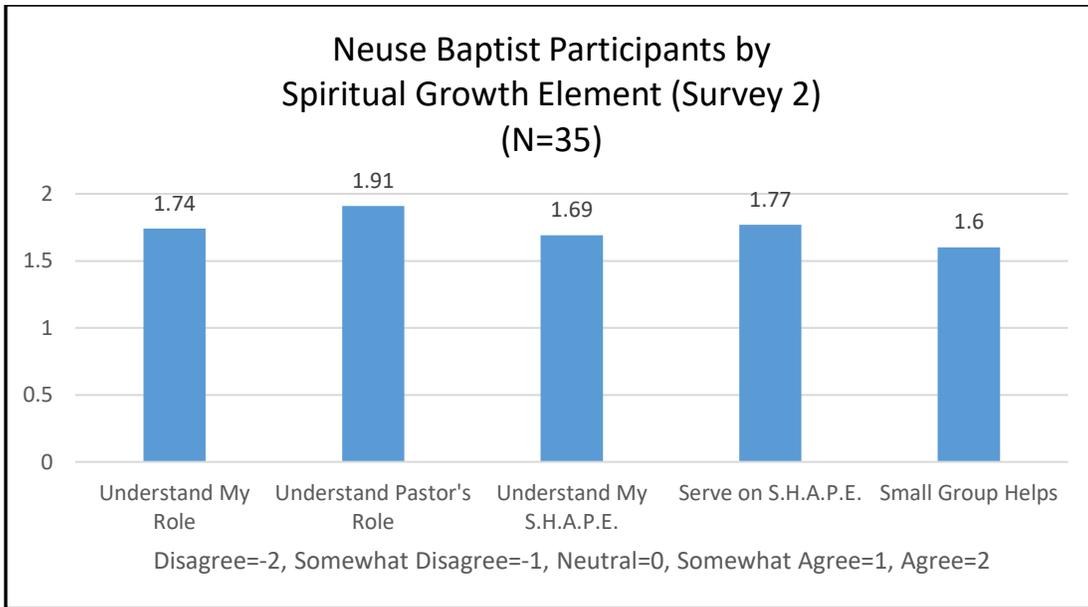


Figure 12—Neuse Baptist Participants by Spiritual Growth Element (Survey 2)

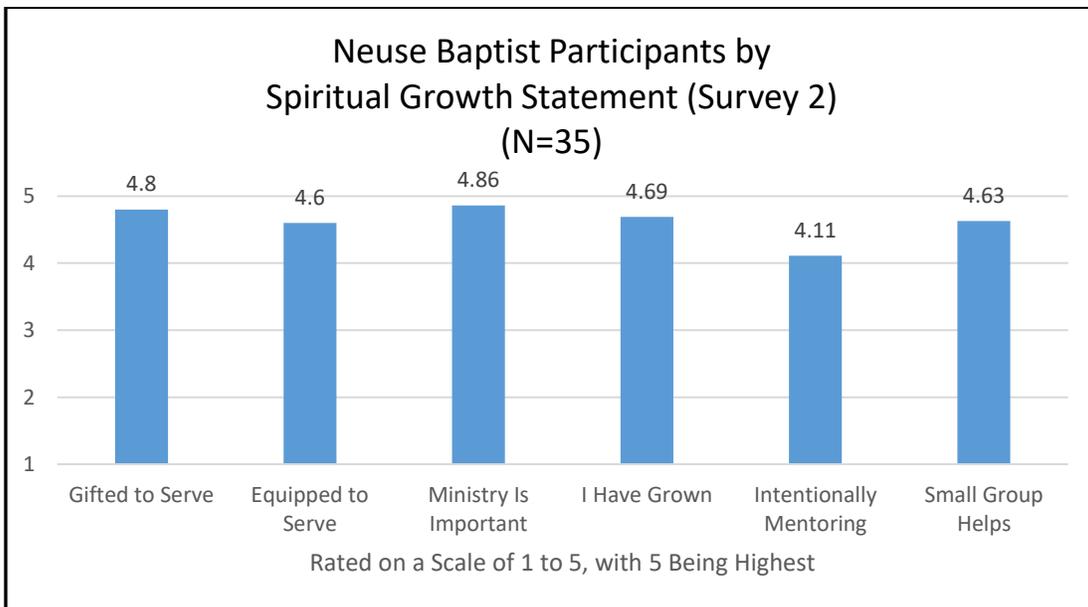


Figure 13—Neuse Baptist Participants by Spiritual Growth Statement (Survey 2)

Data gleaned from Survey 1 compared to Survey 2 shows substantial growth since the start of the research project. That comparison is as follows for the spiritual growth elements from Survey 1 and Survey 2 (Figure 14) using the following scale—Disagree (-2), Somewhat Disagree (-1), Neither Agree nor Disagree (0), Somewhat Agree (+1), and Agree (+2) with 2 being the

highest possible score. For ease of comparison, the median scores are formatted as **black, bold text for Survey 1** and *red, italicized text for Survey 2*: “I understand my role in the Body of Christ,” **1.60**—*1.74*; “I understand the role of the pastor in the Body of Christ,” **1.66**—*1.91*; “I understand my S.H.A.P.E.,” **1.51**—*1.69*; “I serve in the Body based on my S.H.A.P.E.,” **1.09**—*1.77*; and “My small group helps and encourages me to serve,” **0.89**—*1.60*. The following is the data for the spiritual growth statements (Figure 15) using the following scale—1 to 5 with 5 being the highest rating possible. Once again, for ease of comparison, the median scores are formatted as **black, bold text for Survey 1** and *red, italicized text for Survey 2*: “I feel God has gifted me to serve in the Body,” **4.43**—*4.80*; “I feel equipped to perform my ministry in the Body,” **4.09**—*4.60*; “I feel my ministry is important in the Body,” **4.54**—*4.86*; “I feel I have grown since salvation,” **4.37**—*4.69*; “I feel I am intentionally investing in another’s life (mentoring),” **3.43**—*4.11*; and “I feel my small group helps and encourages me to serve,” **3.60**—*4.63*.

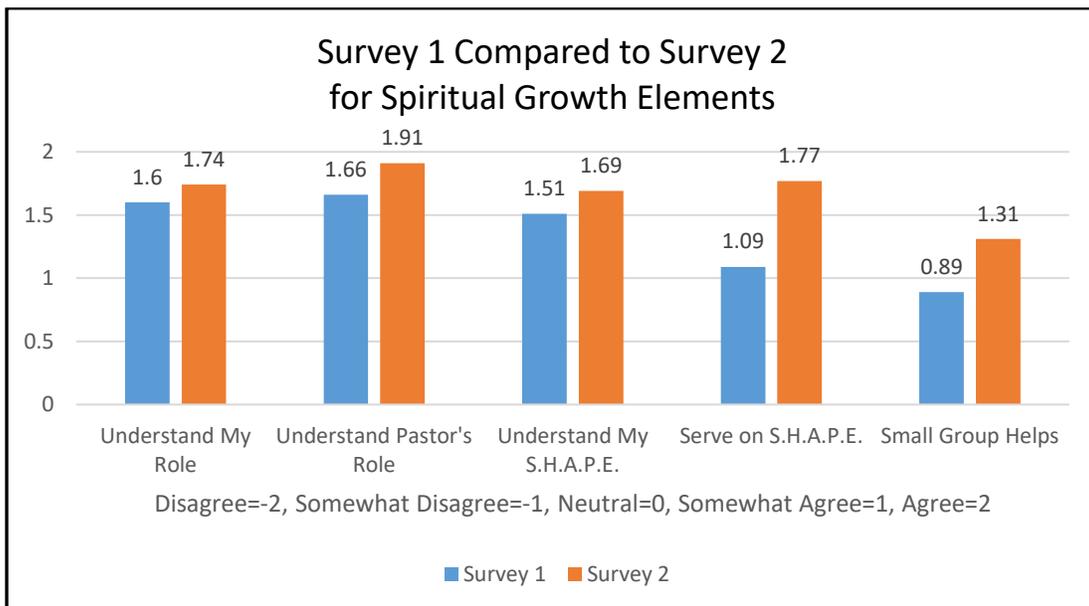


Figure 14—Survey 1 Compared to Survey 2 Data for Spiritual Growth Elements

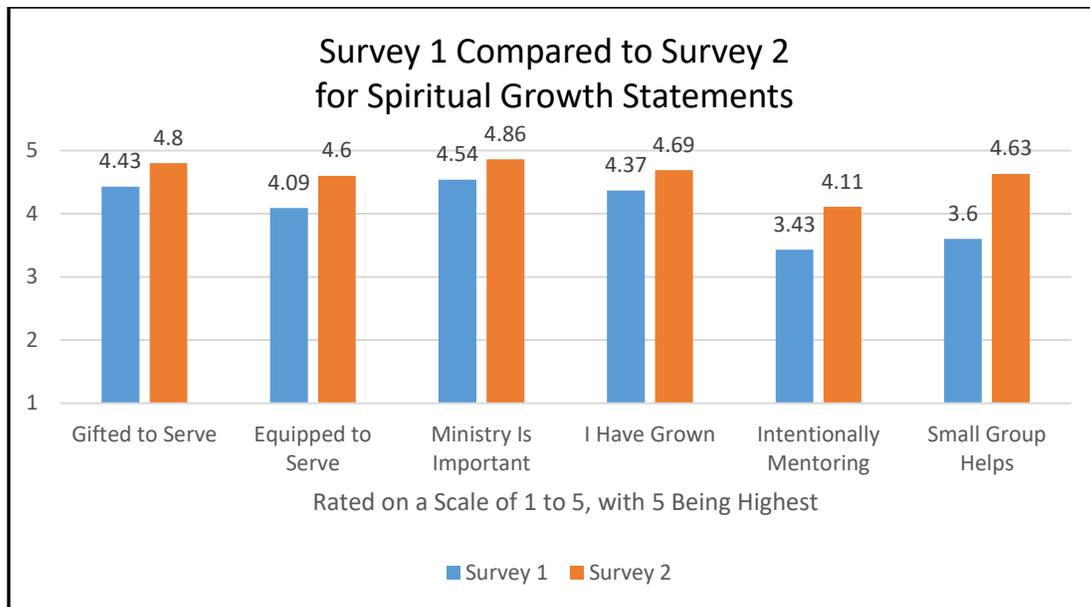


Figure 15—Survey 1 Compared to Survey 2 Data for Spiritual Growth Statements

When compared to the benchmark data, Neuse Baptist participants have grown (with few exception) to equal or surpass the benchmark. What follows is the data for the spiritual growth elements from Survey 2 and the benchmark (Figure 16) using the following scale—Disagree (-2), Somewhat Disagree (-1), Neither Agree nor Disagree (0), Somewhat Agree (+1), and Agree (+2) with 2 being the highest possible score. For ease of comparison, the median scores are formatted as **black, bold text for Survey 2** and *red, italicized text for the benchmark*: “I understand my role in the Body of Christ,” **1.74**—*1.87*; “I understand the role of the pastor in the Body of Christ,” **1.91**—*1.88*; “I understand my S.H.A.P.E.,” **1.69**—*1.67*; “I serve in the Body based on my S.H.A.P.E.,” **1.77**—*1.63*; and “My small group helps and encourages me to serve,” **1.60**—*1.31*. The following is the data for the spiritual growth statements and the benchmark (Figure 17) using the following scale—1 to 5 with 5 being the highest rating possible. Once again, for ease of comparison, the median scores are formatted as **black, bold text for Survey 2** and *red, italicized text for the benchmark*: “I feel God has gifted me to serve in the Body,” **4.80**—*4.75*; “I feel equipped to perform my ministry in the Body,” **4.60**—*4.49*; “I feel my

ministry is important in the Body,” **4.86**—*4.72*; “I feel I have grown since salvation,” **4.69**—*4.92*; “I feel I am intentionally investing in another’s life (mentoring),” **4.11**—*4.07*; and “I feel my small group helps and encourages me to serve,” **4.63**—*4.07*.

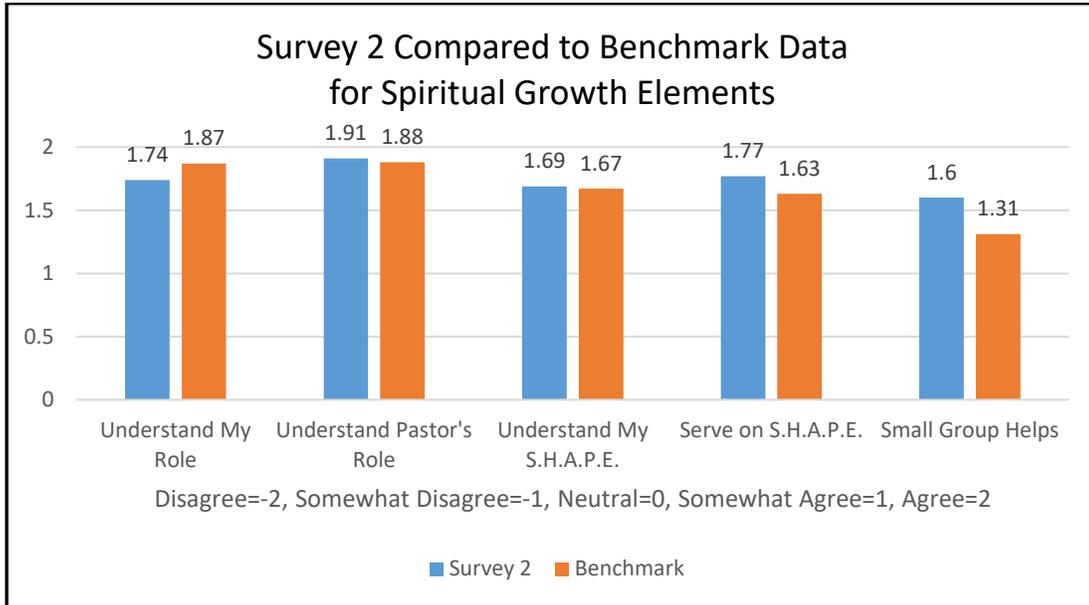


Figure 16—Survey 2 Compared to Benchmark Data for Spiritual Growth Elements

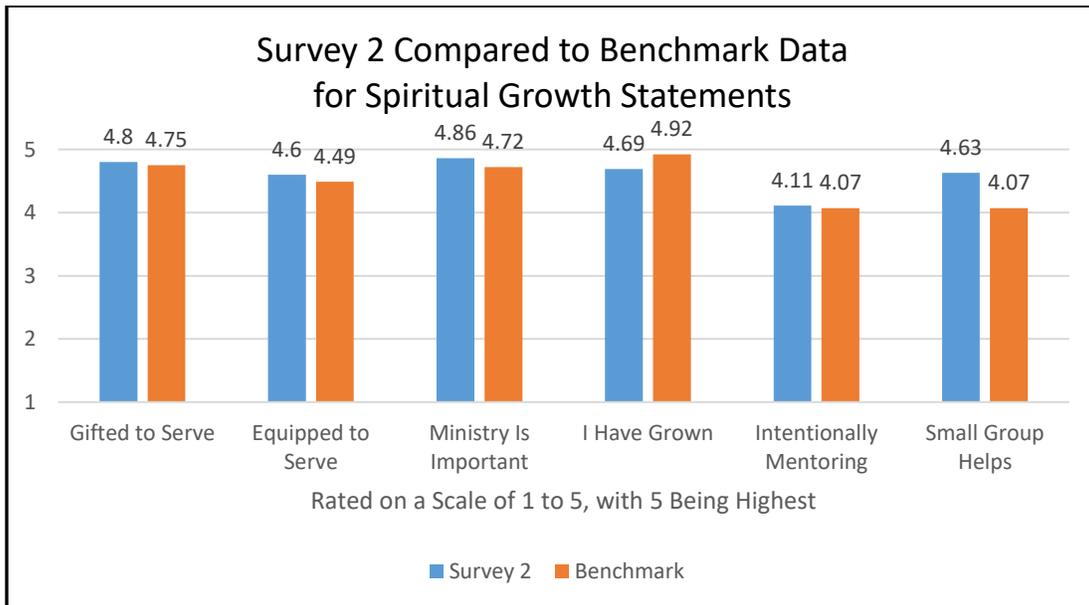


Figure 17—Survey 2 Compared to Benchmark Data for Spiritual Growth Statements

Focus Group 1

The focus group held during this mid-study timeframe was designed to determine the effects of serving intentionally and “doing life” together through small groups. The responses were encouraging and revealed that the study participants had embraced the concept of S.H.A.P.E. and were able to fully explain how this can be used to mentor other believers to discover their ministry “sweet spot.” Additionally, the respondents all agreed that it was their responsibility to mentor other believers, share the Gospel, serve in a ministry, and participate in a small group of believers. One concern gleaned from the focus group was the long-standing, errant thought that the pastor is to do whatever the church directs him to do. When asked about the role of the pastor, most agreed that the position required one to “lead and feed.” However, that thought being clearly articulated, a few of the participants went further with the pastor’s position stating that he was to do whatever the church members required him to do. A second area of concern was an understanding of the Priesthood of Believers. All respondents leaned toward the personal benefits of being a part of the Priesthood of Believers but did not go on to include their responsibility to serve. A minor revision may be required in C.L.A.S.S. 301, *Discovering My Ministry*, to further delineate the role of the pastor and the role of the Priesthood of Believers.

Survey 3

In the Eleventh month of the action research project, in November 2021, Survey 3 was administered to the volunteers. Survey 3 yielded the following data. When rating spiritual growth elements (Figure 18) using the following scale—Disagree (-2), Somewhat Disagree (-1), Neither Agree nor Disagree (0), Somewhat Agree (+1), and Agree (+2) with 2 being the highest possible score—the following median scores are observed: “I understand my role in the Body of Christ,”

1.74; “I understand the role of the pastor in the Body of Christ,” 1.91; “I understand my S.H.A.P.E.,” 1.69; “I serve in the Body based on my S.H.A.P.E.,” 1.77; and “My small group helps and encourages me to serve,” 1.60. When rating spiritual growth statements (Figure 19) using the following scale—1 to 5 with 5 being the highest rating possible—the following median ratings were obtained: “I feel God has gifted me to serve in the Body,” 4.80; “I feel equipped to perform my ministry in the Body,” 4.60; “I feel my ministry is important in the Body,” 4.86; “I feel I have grown since salvation,” 4.69; “I feel I am intentionally investing in another’s life (mentoring),” 4.11; and “I feel my small group helps and encourages me to serve,” 4.63.

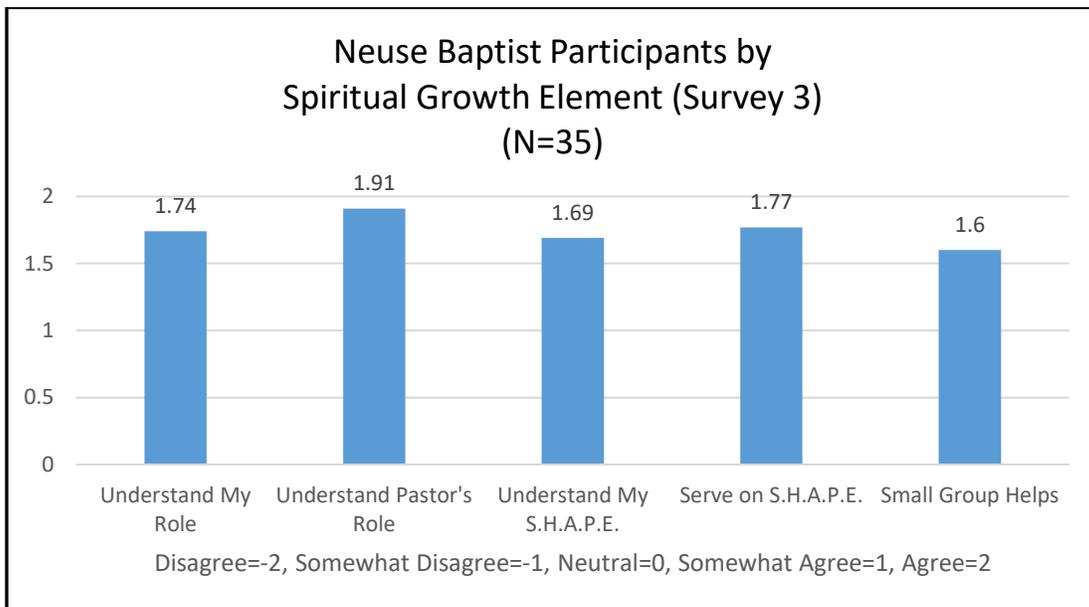


Figure 18—Neuse Baptist Participants by Spiritual Growth Element (Survey 3)

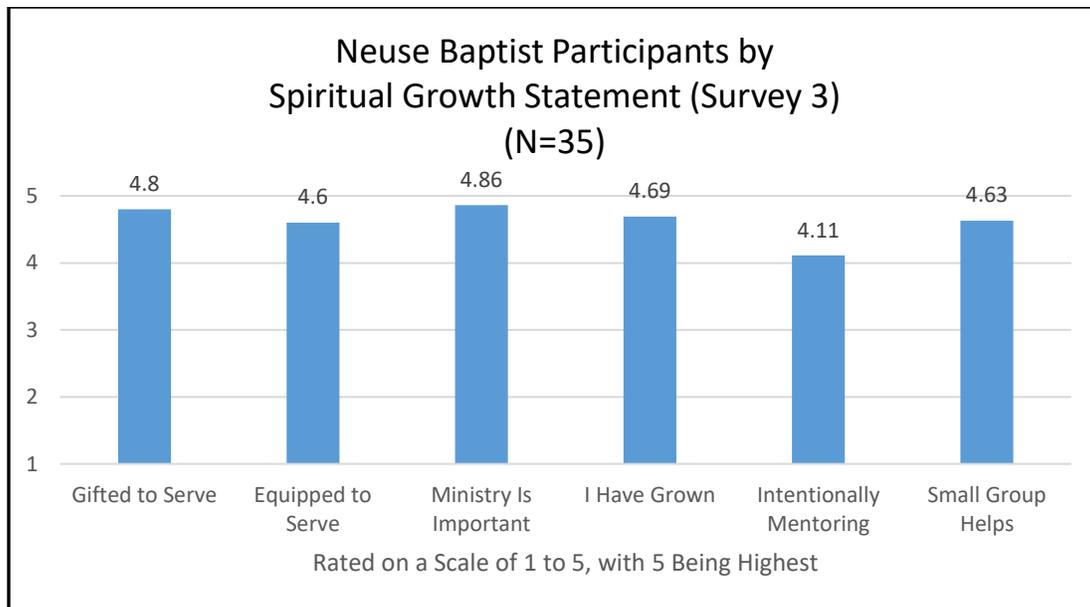


Figure 19—Neuse Baptist Participants by Spiritual Growth Statement (Survey 3)

Data gleaned from Survey 1 compared to Survey 3 shows the overall growth since the start of the research project. That comparison is as follows for the spiritual growth elements from Survey 1 and Survey 3 (Figure 20) using the following scale—Disagree (-2), Somewhat Disagree (-1), Neither Agree nor Disagree (0), Somewhat Agree (+1), and Agree (+2) with 2 being the highest possible score. For ease of comparison, the median scores are formatted as **black, bold text for Survey 1** and *red, italicized text for Survey 3*: “I understand my role in the Body of Christ,” **1.60**—*1.74*; “I understand the role of the pastor in the Body of Christ,” **1.66**—*1.91*; “I understand my S.H.A.P.E.,” **1.51**—*1.69*; “I serve in the Body based on my S.H.A.P.E.,” **1.09**—*1.77*; and “My small group helps and encourages me to serve,” **0.89**—*1.60*. The following is the data for the spiritual growth statements (Figure 21) using the following scale—1 to 5 with 5 being the highest rating possible. Once again, for ease of comparison, the median scores are formatted as **black, bold text for Survey 1** and *red, italicized text for Survey 3*: “I feel God has gifted me to serve in the Body,” **4.43**—*4.80*; “I feel equipped to perform my ministry in the Body,” **4.09**—*4.60*; “I feel my ministry is important in the Body,” **4.54**—*4.86*; “I feel I have

grown since salvation,” 4.37—4.69; “I feel I am intentionally investing in another’s life (mentoring),” 3.43—4.11; and “I feel my small group helps and encourages me to serve,” 3.60—4.63.

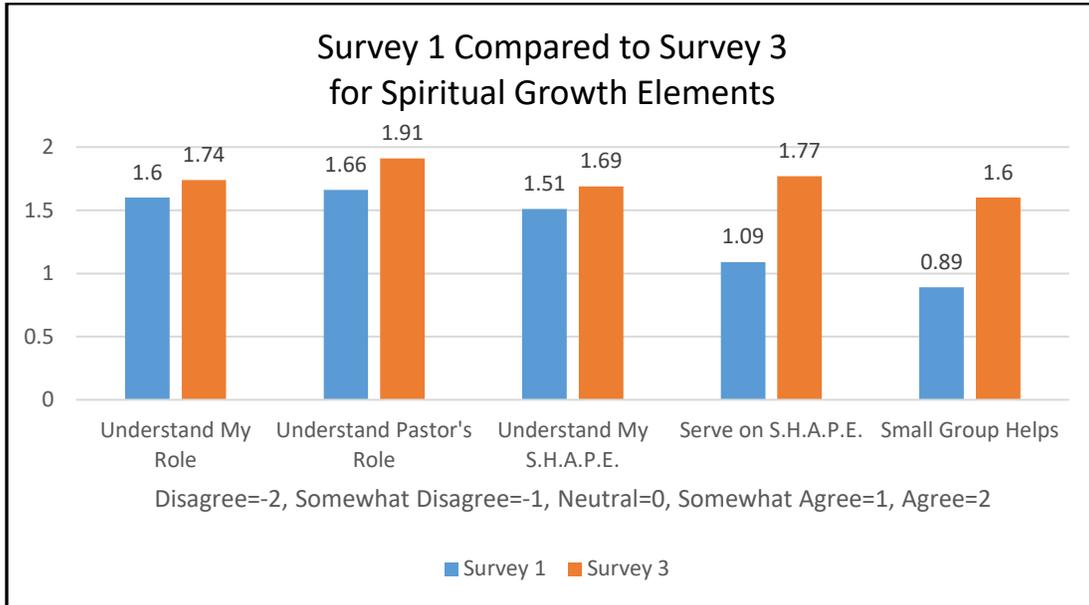


Figure 20—Survey 1 Compared to Survey 3 Data for Spiritual Growth Elements

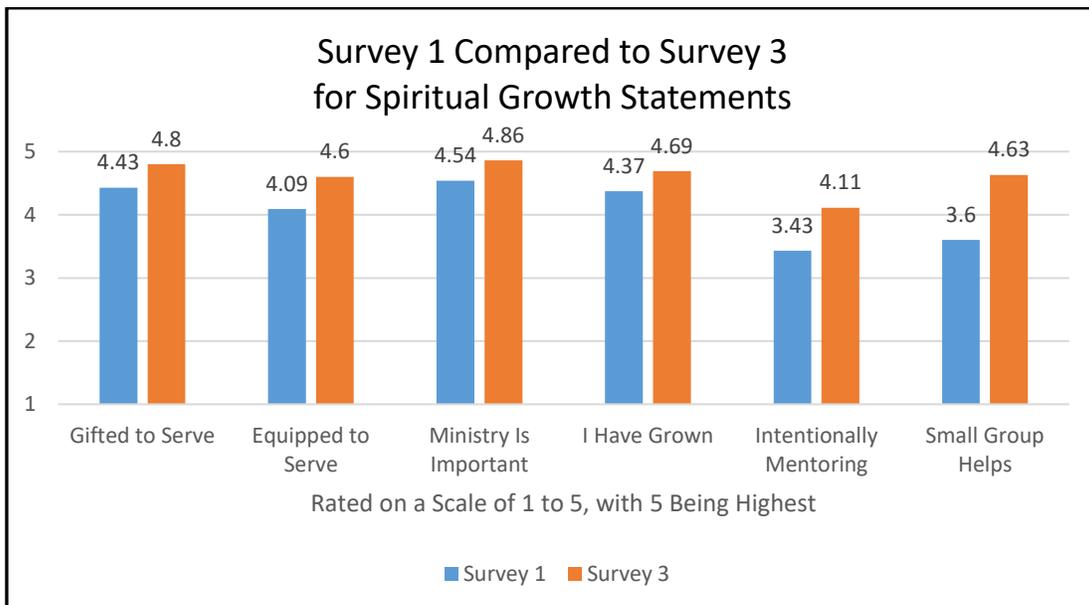


Figure 21—Survey 1 Compared to Survey 3 Data for Spiritual Growth Statements

When compared to the benchmark data, Neuse Baptist participants have grown (with few exceptions) to equal or surpass the benchmark. What follows is the data for the spiritual growth elements from Survey 3 and the benchmark (Figure 22) using the following scale—Disagree (-2), Somewhat Disagree (-1), Neither Agree nor Disagree (0), Somewhat Agree (+1), and Agree (+2) with 2 being the highest possible score. For ease of comparison, the median scores are formatted as **black, bold text for Survey 3** and *red, italicized text for the benchmark*: “I understand my role in the Body of Christ,” **1.74**—*1.87*; “I understand the role of the pastor in the Body of Christ,” **1.91**—*1.88*; “I understand my S.H.A.P.E.,” **1.69**—*1.67*; “I serve in the Body based on my S.H.A.P.E.,” **1.77**—*1.63*; and “My small group helps and encourages me to serve,” **1.60**—*1.31*. The following is the data for the spiritual growth statements and the benchmark (Figure 23) using the following scale—1 to 5 with 5 being the highest rating possible. Once again, for ease of comparison, the median scores are formatted as **black, bold text for Survey 3** and *red, italicized text for the benchmark*: “I feel God has gifted me to serve in the Body,” **4.80**—*4.75*; “I feel equipped to perform my ministry in the Body,” **4.60**—*4.49*; “I feel my ministry is important in the Body,” **4.86**—*4.72*; “I feel I have grown since salvation,” **4.69**—*4.92*; “I feel I am intentionally investing in another’s life (mentoring),” **4.11**—*4.07*; and “I feel my small group helps and encourages me to serve,” **4.63**—*4.07*.

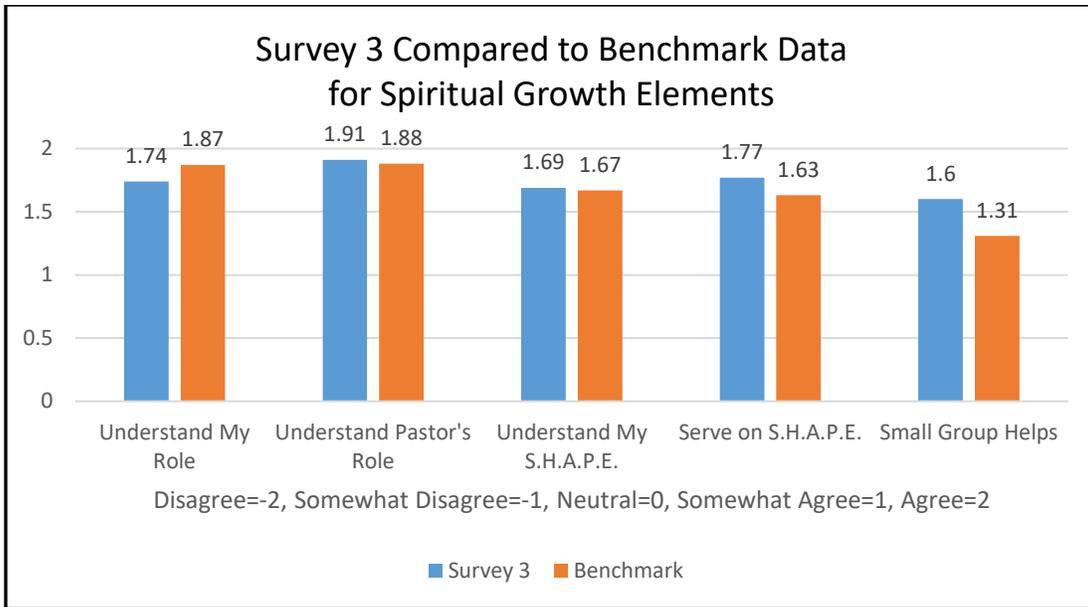


Figure 22—Survey 3 Compared to Benchmark Data for Spiritual Growth Elements

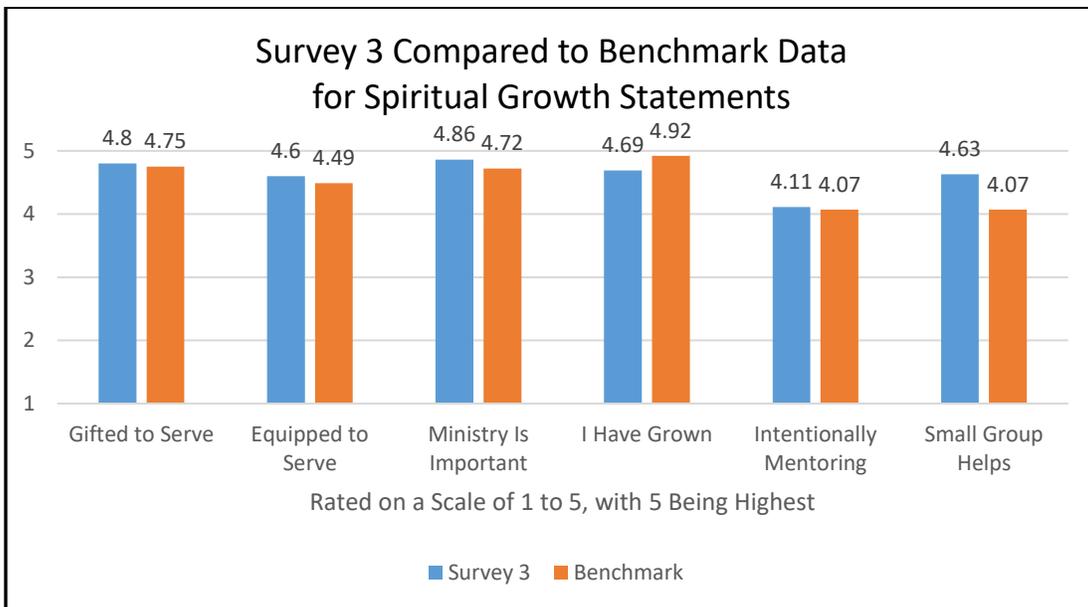


Figure 23—Survey 3 Compared to Benchmark Data for Spiritual Growth Statements

Focus Group 2

The final focus group held in November 2021 was designed to determine how the participants grew in their understanding of the differing roles in the Body of Christ and the overall effects of serving intentionally and “doing life” together through small groups. As in the

previous focus group, the responses were encouraging and revealed that the study participants had embraced the concepts of S.H.A.P.E., mentoring, evangelism, ministry in the church, and the benefits of small group attendance. The previously identified concern over the role of the pastor being at the “beck and call” of the congregation, had worked itself out and the participants were able to clearly define the role of the pastor as opposed to the role of the Priesthood of Believers.

Chapter 4

Results

Considering the environment in which this project was carried out, this researcher holds that the proposed model for church growth through education and implementation of the biblically defined roles of the pastor and the Body of Christ is a success. However, this writer does not have full confidence that the results of this action research project fully display the benefits of adopting and implementing this growth strategy, as studying church growth during a pandemic has never before been accomplished. While there are some very promising qualitative increases among study participants, quantitative increases were not at the level this researcher expected. The quantitative growth of the church was most assuredly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The qualitative and quantitative growth of Neuse Baptist Church during this action research project is as follows.

Qualitative Growth

As previously stated in the *Intervention Design Section* of this writing, qualitative growth can be somewhat difficult to correlate and must be evaluated anecdotally, to a degree, out of necessity. While some gradation of specific data points was possible using participant measures (Likert Scales, *etc.*), there remained the need to capture the “feel” of growth as it occurred. Some qualitative steps forward included: 1) Members of the Body that moved from inactivity in ministry to active participation, 2) Members who understood their S.H.A.P.E. and actively looked to fulfill God’s purpose for their lives, and 3) Members who understood their responsibility to make disciples and to mentor those “younger” in the faith. All of these steps were achieved by all of the participants in the study.

When interpreting the data gleaned from the surveys, across the board growth was realized from Survey 1, through Survey 2, to Survey 3. Without exception, all participants experienced growth. As detailed above in the *Implementation of Intervention Design* section, data gleaned from Survey 1 compared to Survey 3 shows the overall growth since the start of the research project. Here, as final interpretation of the results, the percentage of change from Survey 1 to Survey 3 is in order. The percentage of change is as follows for the spiritual growth elements from Survey 1 to Survey 3 (Figure 24): “I understand my role in the Body of Christ,” 9% increase; “I understand the role of the pastor in the Body of Christ,” 15% increase; “I understand my S.H.A.P.E.,” 12% increase; “I serve in the Body based on my S.H.A.P.E.,” 62% increase; and “My small group helps and encourages me to serve,” 80% increase. The percentage of change is as follows for the spiritual growth statements from Survey 1 to Survey 3 (Figure 25): “I feel God has gifted me to serve in the Body,” 8% increase; “I feel equipped to perform my ministry in the Body,” 12% increase; “I feel my ministry is important in the Body,” 7% increase; “I feel I have grown since salvation,” 7% increase; “I feel I am intentionally investing in another’s life (mentoring),” 20% increase; and “I feel my small group helps and encourages me to serve,” 29% increase. It is important to note that the scale used for the spiritual growth elements was -2 to 2 and the scale used for the spiritual growth statements was 1 to 5, so the percentage of change for the elements is expected to be greater than the percentage of change for the statements.

With the changes indicated above as to the “feel” among study participants, a percentage of change increase for the spiritual growth elements ranging from 9-80%, and a percentage of change increase for the spiritual growth statements ranging from 8-29%; this researcher considers the growth model studied to be a success. Qualitative church growth was realized

through education and implementation of the biblically defined roles of the Pastor and the Body of Christ.

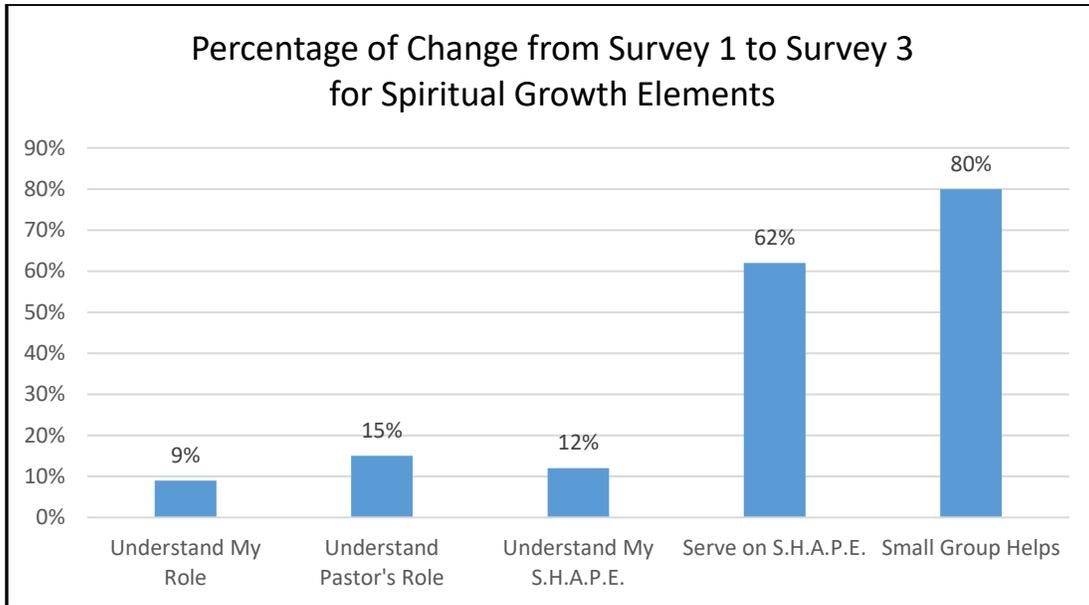


Figure 24—Percentage of Change from Survey 1 to Survey 3 for Spiritual Growth Elements

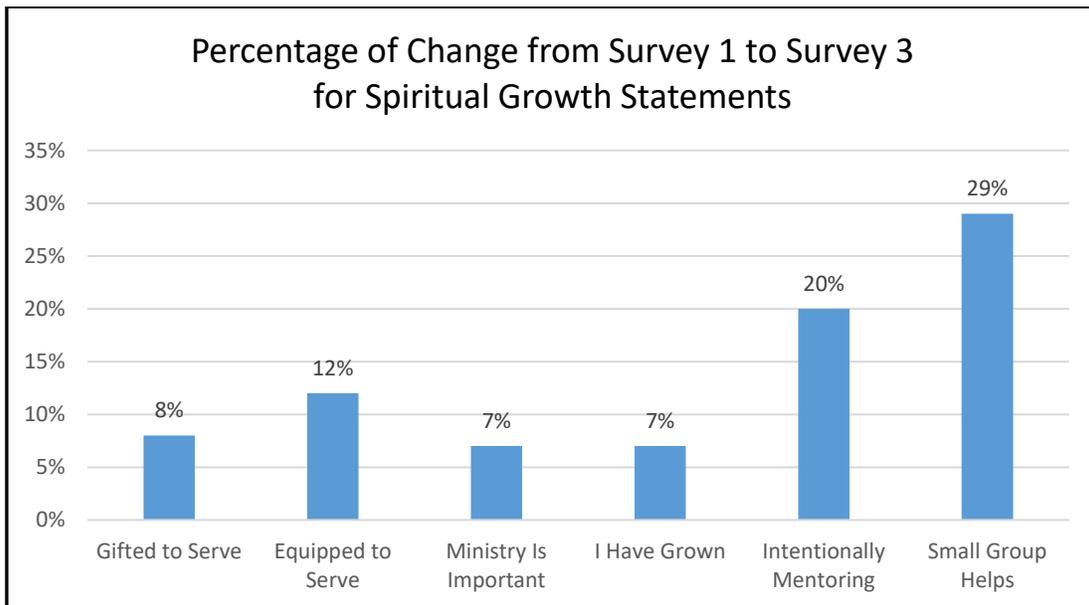


Figure 25—Percentage of Change from Survey 1 to Survey 3 for Spiritual Growth Statements

Quantitative Growth

METRIC data has been collected for some years at NBC. This data is straightforward and serves as an adequate measure for quantitative growth. During the course of this study, the percentage of change for the active population of NBC increased by 0.5%. This number is low, and it is not an accurate measure of the population change. The percentage of change for new members is an increase of 67%. The explanation for this numerical anomaly between the overall membership and new members is as the new members were added, old members departed due to fears associated with COVID-19 and they opted for the livestream sessions in lieu of in-person attendance. There is no comparative METRIC for livestreaming as it was started as a result of the pandemic, however, the average viewing audience is 2,000 to 3,000 weekly. The percentage of change for first-time, in-person guests increased by 7% and the change for in-person, repeat guests increased by 15%. The baptism METRIC is virtually unchanged from last year and is explainable as most of the new members were transfers from other congregations since NBC was one of the few churches that did not close its doors. The membership and attendance data are summarized below (figure 26).

Considering the preceding data for the percentage of change to the membership and attendance statistics, once again, this researcher considers the growth model studied to be a success. Quantitative church growth was realized¹⁴¹ through education and implementation of the biblically defined roles of the Pastor and the Body of Christ.

¹⁴¹ This researcher emphasizes that the numerical growth would have been dramatically higher had it not been for the exodus due to the fear of COVID-19 by some of the older members.

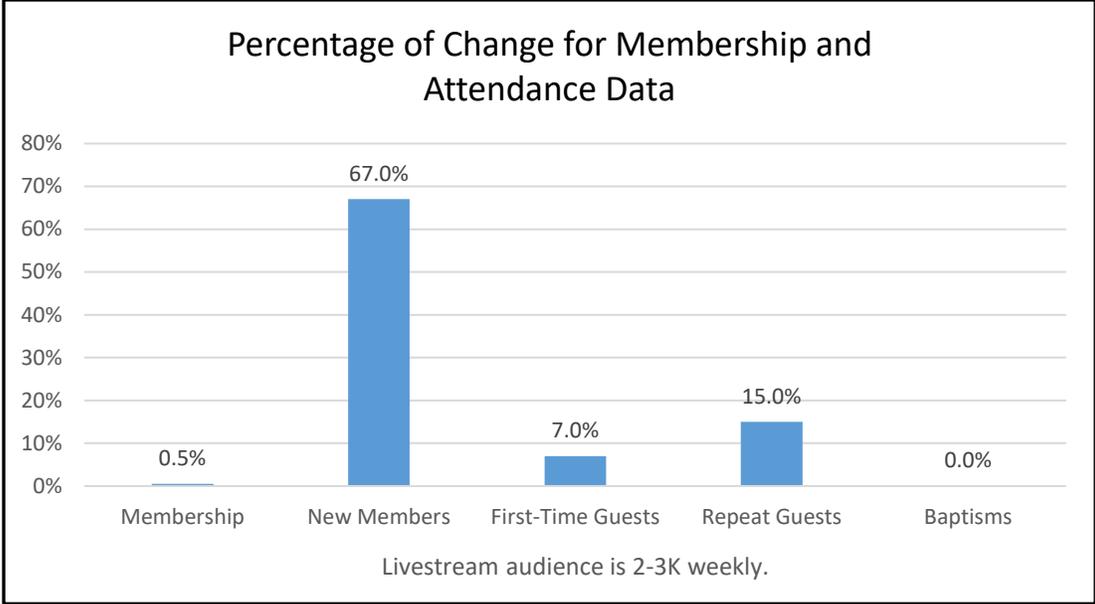


Figure 26—Percentage of Change for Membership and Attendance Data

Chapter 5

Conclusion

This work has shown if a congregation is taught and implements the biblical roles of the pastor and the church Body, the church should grow in the same way that the test church for this action research project grew both quantitatively and qualitatively. This growth was realized using discipleship channels and the formation/continuation of a small group ministry, where the roles of the Pastor and that of the Body was delineated, taught, and practiced. Emphasis was placed on how God has equipped every member of the Body to perform ministry within the church and outreach from the church. Even with some concessions due to COVID-19 to the overall research plan, which are outlined herein, growth was the reality as predicted by the thesis project proposal. One can only imagine in an environment not threatened by a pandemic that the quantitative growth would be much greater.

While other churches have implemented similar training programs under the heading of “Purpose Driven,” this action research plan has shown that what is taught devotionally, for want of a better term, is, in fact, academically sound. Approaching the concepts of “Purpose Driven” outlined by Warren and others have now been proven, not just anecdotally, but academically. As a result of this study, this writer will hold to this model for church growth for the rest of his ministry career and will highly encourage others to do the same.

Bibliography

- Arnold, Jeffrey. *The Big Book on Small Groups*, 2nd ed. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2004.
- Bock, Darrell L. *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Acts*. Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein, eds. Grand Rapids: Backer Academic, 2007.
- Bruce, F. F. *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Epistle to the Hebrews, Revised*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990.
- Bryson, John R., Lauren Andres, and Andrew Davies. "COVID-19, Virtual Church Services and a New Temporary Geography of Home," in *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie 111*, no. 3 (2020): 360-72, doi: 10.1111/test.12436 (accessed April 29, 2021).
- Cole, Neil. *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005.
- DeVries, Brian A. "Spiritual Gifts for Biblical Church Growth," in *Die Skriflig 50*, no. 1 (2016): 1-10, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1815404993?accountid=12085> (accessed April 9, 2020).
- Doehring, Carrie. *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1981, e-book, ProQuest Ebook Central (accessed April 2, 2020).
- Donahue, Bill, and Russ Robinson. *The Seven Deadly Sins of Small Group Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.
- Edwards, Seth, and Paul Stock. "Application of the Pareto Principle in Today's Church." *ResearchGate*. February 2018. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323127023_Application_of_the_Pareto_Principle_in_Today's_Church (accessed April 22, 2020).
- Eidsmoe, John. "Quarantining the Church? During the COVID-19 Lockdowns, Churches Have Had to Fight Against Unjust Efforts to Close Their Doors by Secular Authorities Using the 'Pandemic' to Single Them Out," *The New American*, 36, no. 22 (2020): 24-30, <https://thenewamerican.com/print/quarantining-the-church> (accessed April 29, 2021).
- Froud, Helen. "Returning from Exile? Reconciliation within the Church after COVID-19," in *Practical Theology 14*, no. 2 (2021): 123-31, doi: 10.1080/1756073X.2020.1861402 (accessed April 29, 2021).
- Guthrie, George H. *The NIV Application Commentary: Hebrews*, Terry Muck, gen. ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998.
- Hammett, John S. *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches: A Contemporary Ecclesiology*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2005.

- Homolka, Walter, and Heinz-Günther, eds. *Rabbi-Pastor-Priest: Their Roles and Profiles through the Ages*. Berlin/Boston: DeGrutyer, Inc., 2013, e-book, ProQuest Ebook Central (accessed April 16, 2020).
- Howell, Don N., Jr. *Servants of the Servant: A Biblical Theology of Leadership*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2003.
- Hughes, R. K. *Ephesians (ESV Edition): The Mystery of the Body of Christ*. Wheaton: Crossway, 1990, e-book, ProQuest Ebook Central (accessed April 15, 2020).
- Issler, Klaus. *The Formation of Christian Character: Living into the Life of Jesus*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012.
- Lee, Michelle V. *Paul, the Stoics, and the Body of Christ*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, ebook, doi: 10.1017/CBO9780511584541 (accessed April 15, 2020).
- Lim, David. *Spiritual Gifts: A Fresh Look*. Springfield: Gospel Publishing House, 1991, e-book, ProQuest Ebook Central (accessed April 9, 2020).
- Longenecker, Richard N. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary with the New International Version: Acts, Volume 9*, Frank E. Gaebelin, gen. ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981.
- Mahlberg, Arden, and Craig L. Nessaf. *The Integrity of the Body of Christ: Boundary Keeping as Shared Responsibility*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2016, e-book, Proquest Ebook Central (accessed April 15, 2020).
- Malphurs, Aubrey. *Being Leaders: The Nature of Authentic Christian Leadership*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003.
- McNeal, Reggie. *Practicing Greatness: Seven Disciplines of Extraordinary Spiritual Leaders*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- Measure of America. *Social Science Research Council*, n.d. <http://www.measureofamerica.org> (accessed January 23, 2013).
- Mitchell, Michael R. *Leading, Teaching, and Making Disciples*. Bloomington: Cross Books, 2010.
- Moss, Brian. "Leadership Development in the Local Church: An Intentional Strategy for Developing Leaders at Every Level" (2014). *Doctoral Dissertations and Projects*. 950. <http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/950> (accessed October 12, 2017).
- Nichols, Tim. "The Pastor's Role in Vision-Based Leadership," in *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 2, no. 1 (2007): 20-31, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/751869916?accountid=12085> (accessed April 16, 2020).
- Pettit, Paul, ed. *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ*. Grand Rapids, Kregel Publications, 2008.

- Pillay, Jerry. "COVID-19 Shows the Need to Make Church More Flexible," in *Transformation* 37, no. 4 (2020): 266-75, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265378820963156> (accessed April 29, 2021).
- Plüss, Jean-Daniel. "COVID-19, the Church, and the Challenge to Ecumenism," in *Transformation* 37, no. 4 (2020): 286-96, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265378820961545> (accessed April 29, 2021).
- Poirier, Alfred. *The Peace Making Pastor: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict*. Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 2006.
- Powell, Ivor. *Exciting Epistle to the Ephesians*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1989.
- Rees, Erik. *S.H.A.P.E. Finding & Fulfilling Your Unique Purpose for Life*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.
- Smither, Edward L. *Augustine as Mentor: A Model for Preparing Spiritual Leaders*. Nashville: B & H Academic, 2008.
- Turner, Max. "Spiritual Gifts and Spiritual Formation in 1 Corinthians and Ephesians," in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 22, no. 2 (2013): 187–205, doi:10.1163/17455251-02202007 (accessed April 9, 2020).
- U.S. Census Bureau. *Lenoir County North Carolina*, n.d. <http://www.co.lenoir.nc.us/statistics.html> (accessed April 22, 2020).
- Van Aarde, Timothy, A. "The Missional Church Structure and the Priesthood of all Believers (Ephesians 4:7-16) in the Light of the Inward and Outward Function of the Church," in *Verbum Et Ecclesia* 38, no. 1 (2017), <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquestcom.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1909590482?accountid=12085> (accessed April 9, 2020).
- Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message & Mission*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.

Appendix A

C.L.A.S.S. 101 Membership Covenant

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and having been baptized; and being in agreement with Neuse's statements, strategy, and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Neuse church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

I. I WILL PROTECT THE UNITY OF MY CHURCH

By acting in love toward other members
By refusing to gossip
By following the leaders

"So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together." Romans 15:19 (Phillips)

"Live in complete harmony with each other—each with the attitude of Christ toward each other." Romans 15:5 (LB)

"Have a sincere love for your fellow believers, love one another earnestly with all your hearts." 1 Peter 1:22 (GN)

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs. . ." Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)

"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you." Hebrews 13:17 (NIV)

II. I WILL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MY CHURCH

By praying for its growth
By inviting the unchurched to attend
By warmly welcoming those who visit

"To the church . . . we always thank God for you and pray for you constantly." 1 Thessalonians 1:2 (NIV)

"Go out into the country . . . and urge anyone you find to come in, so that My House will be full." Luke 14:23 (LB)

"So, warmly welcome each other into the church, just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified." Romans 15:7 (LB)

III. I WILL SERVE THE MINISTRY OF MY CHURCH

- By discovering my gifts and talents
- By being equipped to serve by my pastors
- By developing a servant's heart

"Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you . . ." 1 Peter 4:10
(Phillips)

"God gave . . . some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of ministry, so that the body of Christ may be built up. . ." Ephesians 4:11-12 (NIV)

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ . . . who took on the very nature of a servant. . ." Philippians 2:3-4, 7 (NIV)

IV. I WILL SUPPORT THE TESTIMONY OF MY CHURCH

- By attending faithfully
- By living a godly life
- By giving regularly

"Let us not give up the habit of meeting together . . . but let us encourage one another."
Hebrews 10:25 (NIV)

"But whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ."
Philippians 1:27 (Phillips)

"Each one of you, on the first day of each week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for the offering." 1 Corinthians 16:2 (NIV)

"A tenth of all you produce is the Lord's, and it is holy." Leviticus 27:30 (NIV)

Disciple's Signature/Date

Discipler's Signature/Date

Appendix B
C.L.A.S.S. 201 Maturity Covenant

Realizing the truth contained in God’s Word which reads, “Take the time and trouble to keep yourself spiritually fit. Bodily fitness has a limited value, but spiritual fitness is of unlimited value, for it holds promise both for this present life and for the life to come” (1 Timothy 4:7, Phillips)—I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

I. I WILL ESTABLISH A DAILY TIME WITH GOD

- By reading through His Word
- By communing with Him through prayer
- By meditating during daily quiet time

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” Mark 1:35 (NIV)

“I will meditate on Your precepts, and contemplate Your ways.” Psalm 119:15 (NKJV)

II. I WILL BE ON A COMMITTED TEAM FOR GOD

- By doing life together with other believers in a Life Group
- By reaching out to unconnected individuals
- By pressing on toward ministry to my group members and others

“Let us not give up the habit of meeting together...but let us encourage one another.” Hebrews 10:25 (NIV)

“Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you...” 1 Peter 4:10 (Phillips)

“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ...who took on the very nature of a servant...” Philippians 2:3-4, 7 (NIV)

Disciple’s Signature/Date

Discipler’s Signature/Date

Appendix C
C.L.A.S.S. 301 Ministry Covenant

Realizing the truth contained in God’s Word which reads, “We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10, NIV) and that we have been equipped “. . . to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Ephesians 4:12, NIV)—I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

I. I WILL DISCOVER MY UNIQUE S.H.A.P.E. FOR MINISTRY AND SERVE IN THE AREA THAT BEST EXPRESSES WHAT GOD MADE ME TO BE

By accepting the fact that service is not optional behavior; God has called me to serve in a Christ-like lifestyle

By understanding that God has uniquely made me and gifted me to serve in my ministry

By appreciating that I am needed for ministry

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45 (NIV)

“But you are not like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.” 1 Peter 2:9 (NLT)

“Each of you has been blessed with one of God’s many wonderful gifts to be used in the service of others. So use your gift well.” 1 Peter 4:10 (CEV)

“All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is a part of it.” 1 Corinthians 12:27 (NLT)

II. I WILL DEMONSTRATE A SERVANT’S HEART BY SERVING IN SECONDARY MINISTRIES AS THE BODY NEEDS ME.

By discerning the needs of the Body and stepping out to meet them as led by the Holy Spirit

By glorifying God through all that is done in ministry to others

By remaining accountable for my ministry and understanding that I will be rewarded for it

“Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you. . . .” 1 Peter 4:10 (Phillips)

“Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16 (NIV)

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” Colossians 3:23-24 (NIV)

III. I WILL COOPERATE WITH OTHER MINISTRIES AND PLACE THE GREATER GOOD OF THE WHOLE BODY OVER THE NEEDS OF MY MINISTRY

By understanding that every ministry is important

By recognizing that the ministries in the Body are intertwined with all the others

By maintaining a spirit of cooperation and striving to remain unified with the other members of the Body

“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Jesus Christ . . . who took on the very nature of a servant...” Philippians 2:3-4, 7 (NIV)

“God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be . . . The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’ On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.” 1 Corinthians 12:18-22 (NIV)

Disciple’s Signature/Date

Discipler’s Signature/Date

Appendix D
C.L.A.S.S. 401 Missions Covenant

“The most important thing is that I complete my mission, the work that the Lord Jesus gave me—to tell people the Good News about God’s grace.” Acts 20:24 (NCV)

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.” 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 (NIV)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes to you. Then you will be my witnesses to testify about me in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8 (GWT)

“. . . Whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him. I do this to get the Gospel to them and also for the blessing I myself receive when I see them come to Christ.” 1 Corinthians 9:22b-23 (LB)

“Jesus said, ‘Go everywhere in the world, and tell the Good News to everyone.’” Mark 16:15 (NCV)

“Jesus replied, ‘Let me assure you that no one has ever given up anything . . . for love of me and to tell others the Good News, who won’t be given back, a hundred times over . . . All these will be his here on earth, and in the world to come he shall have eternal life.’” Mark 10:29-30 (LB)

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’” Isaiah 6:8 (NIV)

In consideration of the Scriptural evidence that God has called us to witness for Him, I commit the rest of my life to being a messenger of God’s Good News to other people and using my time, my talent, and my treasure for His kingdom regardless of where it leads or what it costs.

Disciple’s Signature/Date

Discipler’s Signature/Date

Appendix E
Project Bulletin Announcements

For NBC:

Church growth is not a mystery! God wants His church to grow and we all need to be a part in making that happen. Pastor Greg is planning a project looking at church growth and how we can grow in ways never seen before at NBC. If you want to be a part of this initiative to bring glory to God as we grow His church, join us for an informational gathering in the Fellowship Hall on _____.

For ORBC:

The members and leadership at ORBC have unlocked the formula for church growth. How would you like to share what you know? Pastor Greg is looking for volunteers to help Neuse Baptist grow. It will only take a few minutes to complete the data collection form and then take part in a follow-up interview. What you share could be the catalyst to bringing new life to an older congregation. For more information, or to sign-up to help, contact your Venue Pastor.

Appendix F
Project Flyer Announcements

Research Participants Needed

Increasing Church Growth Potential through Education and Implementation of the Biblically Defined Roles of the Pastor and the Body of Christ

- Are you 18 years of age or older?
- Do you want to help the church to grow?
- Do you want to grow in your spiritual walk?

If you answered **yes** to all three questions, you may be eligible to participate in a church growth research study.

The purpose of this research project is to teach church members the scriptural role of the pastor and the church Body. After signing a consent document, candidates will complete an initial survey to determine required training and small group registration (if not currently one). After completion or verification of training, participants will be given the opportunity to live out their role in the Body of Christ by participating in an audio-recorded interview, an audio-recorded focus group, actively participating in ministry, attending a small group, and mentoring someone younger in the faith. It should take one year to complete the elements listed. God has equipped you for ministry in the church. This research project will document the manner that you perform your ministry through two additional surveys administered at six and eleven months into the project and a focus group discussion.

The study is being conducted at Neuse Baptist Church



Pastor Greg Kincaid, a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Please contact Pastor Greg Kincaid at [redacted] or [redacted] for more information.

Research Participants Needed

Increasing Church Growth Potential through Education and Implementation of the Biblically Defined Roles of the Pastor and the Body of Christ

- Are you 18 years of age or older?
- Do you want to help the Church to grow?
- Do you want to help others grow in their spiritual walk?

If you answered **yes** to all three questions, you may be eligible to participate in a church growth research study.

The purpose of this research project is to teach church members the scriptural role of the pastor and the church Body. After signing consent candidates will complete a 15-minute survey describing their attitudes and practices regarding ministry in the church. Your answers will be used as a benchmark. You will also be asked to participate in a 30-45 minute, audio-recorded interview.

The researcher will come to Oak Ridge to facilitate information gathering and for your convenience.

Pastor Greg Kincaid, a doctoral candidate in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Please contact Pastor Greg Kincaid at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] for more information.

Appendix G

Talking Paper on Action Research Project

- God desires that His people grow
 - The nation of Israel appointed as God’s witnesses (Isa 44:8), equipped with God’s Word through which He accomplished great things (Isa 55:10-11)
 - God appointed and equipped additional witnesses (Acts 1:8), equipped with His Word and by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4)
 - The Body of Christ is to spread the Gospel message to foster growth in the church
 - Jesus said, “I will build my church, and all the powers of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt 16:18, TLB)
 - By God’s:
 - Appointment of ambassadors for His cause (2 Cor 5:20)
 - Equipping of the saints through the Word and by the Holy Spirit
 - With Jesus’ expressed desire to build His church
 - Church growth is understood as part of the plan for the Body of Christ and is to be part of its mission
 - The biblical mission of the church:
 - *The Great Commission* (Matt 28:19-20)
 - “Go therefore and *make disciples* of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,
 - *teaching them to observe all that I commanded you*; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (*emphasis added*).
 - Discipleship—constant exposure to the Word and ways of God should foster growth in the Church; both quantitative and qualitative

- The Priesthood of Believers must be willing to do their parts to add to the collective growth
 - Paul differentiated the work in this way when writing to the church at Corinth: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters are anything, but only God who gives the growth” (1 Cor 3:6-7, HCSB)
 - There are different roles within the Body of Christ.
 - Each member is gifted explicitly by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:4)
 - Each member is provided ministry contexts by Christ (1 Cor 12:5) through which they work
 - And God produces the results (1 Cor 12:6) through the yielded Body performing His will and purpose
 - The early church recognized this mission and followed it explicitly (Acts 2:42-47)

- Church culture has shifted where commitment and differentiation of roles is no longer the norm
 - Some see the church as a “spectator sport” rather than a place of ministry where each member has a part
 - If there is work to be accomplished, members look to the pastor as the sole provider of ministry
 - A return to the biblical mandate is required

- My thesis is as follows:
 - If the congregation is taught and implements the biblical roles of the pastor and the church body, then the church should grow
 - Proposal:
 - Using discipleship channels: S.L.D.P. and C.L.A.S.S. system teach/reteach the roles of the pastor and that of the Body
 - Through the formation/continuation of a small group ministry provide a “safe” environment to practice varying roles
 - Placing emphasis on how God has equipped every member of the Body to perform ministry within the church and outreach from the church

- Volunteers will be recruited who:
 - Attended or will attend C.L.A.S.S. 301
 - Are or are willing to be an active member of a small group
 - Will move toward utilizing their S.H.A.P.E. in the church to include beginning a mentor relationship with someone younger in the faith
 - Are willing to provide data through surveys, interviews, and focus groups as they move forward in their growth journey
 - Are willing to participate in this research project for the calendar year 2021

Appendix H
Consent/Participation Form—Neuse Baptist

Title of the Project: Increasing Church Growth Potential through Education and Implementation of the Biblically Defined Roles of the Pastor and the Body of Christ

Principal Investigator: Greg Kincaid, BSR, MATS, MDiv, ThM, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be: 1) Members in good standing, 2) Age 18-65, 3) Have attended or will attend C.L.A.S.S. 301, 4) Are active members of a small group or willing to join one, and 5) Are willing to enter into a mentoring relationship with someone younger in the faith. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

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

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

The purpose of this research project is to teach church members the scriptural role of the pastor and the church Body. Then participants will be given the opportunity to live out their role in the Body of Christ. God has equipped you for ministry in the church. This research project will document the manner that you perform your ministry after receiving the proper training.

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 3 participant surveys at the beginning, middle, and end of the study—approximately 15 minutes each.
2. Participate in an interview that will be audio recorded for transcription—approximately 30-45 minutes,
3. Participate in a focus group discussion that will be audio recorded for transcription—45 minutes to 1 hour.
4. Complete training on church ministry (C.L.A.S.S. 301) if not already attended—2.5-3 hours.
5. Join a ministry team and perform ministry in the church during CY 2021 (one-year commitment)—time varies depending on selected ministry and involvement with the team.
6. Join or continue in a small group for support during CY 2021—approximately 1-2 hours weekly.
7. Mentor a fellow believer who is younger in the faith during CY 2021—time varies depending on the needs of the mentor/mentee.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

While there are no tangible benefits from this study, participants should expect to grow in their spiritual walk as they participate. As in all things, the participant will receive benefits directly proportional to their efforts expended.

Likewise, the church, as a corporate entity, will grow as the individual members grow.

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.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of codes. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic and hardcopy records will be deleted.
- Interviews/focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Neuse Baptist Church. If you decide to participate, you are free to not 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, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be

included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

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

The researcher conducting this study is Greg Kincaid. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED] and/or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr Thomas Spotts, 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, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] or email at [REDACTED].

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing 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 study team 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-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Consent/Participation Form—Oak Ridge Baptist

Title of the Project: Increasing Church Growth Potential through Education and Implementation of the Biblically Defined Roles of the Pastor and the Body of Christ

Principal Investigator: Greg Kincaid, BSR, MATS, MDiv, ThM, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must: 1) Be a members of Oak Ridge Baptist Church in good standing, 2) Be between the ages of 18 and 65, 3) Have attended C.L.A.S.S. 301 (or a similar course of study), 4) Be an active members of a small group, and 6) Be in a mentoring relationship with a younger member of the faith. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

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

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

The purpose of this research project is to teach church members the scriptural role of the pastor and the church Body. Information gathered from you and other members of Oak Ridge will be used as a benchmark for members of Neuse Baptist to attain. After participants from Neuse have been trained and equipped for ministry, as you have been, they will be given the opportunity to live out their role in the Body of Christ. This research project will document the manner that Neuse Baptist participants grow individually and corporately.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to:

1. Complete a survey designed to gather information about your attitudes and practices concerning ministry (15 minutes).
2. Complete an audio-recorded, in-person interview with me to verify information obtained (30-45 minutes).

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from participating in this study.

While there are no tangible benefits from this study, the information you provide will be used as standard for Christian life and practice. Through your willingness to share, other Christians' growth can be measured and improved.

Likewise, the church, as a corporate entity, will grow as the individual members grow.

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.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of codes. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. Hard copy data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. After three years, all electronic and hardcopy records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Oak Ridge Baptist Church. If you decide to participate, you are free to not 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 Greg Kincaid. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED] and/or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr Thomas Spotts, 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, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] or email at [REDACTED]

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing 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 study team 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-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Appendix I Participant Survey 1

Printed Name: _____

Date (mm/dd/yyyy) ___/___/_____

I have attended C.L.A.S.S. 301 or a similar course of study: YES NO (date of attendance, if no, date scheduled to attend, mm/dd/yyyy) ___/___/_____

I am an active (attend at least half of scheduled meetings) member of a small group (Sunday school class): YES NO (name of group: _____)

Place an "X" in the column that best describes your current position

Element	Disagree (-2)	Somewhat Disagree (-1)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (0)	Somewhat Agree (+1)	Agree (+2)	Comments (if any)
I understand my role in the Body of Christ.						
I understand the role of the pastor in the Body of Christ.						
I understand my S.H.A.P.E. (Spiritual Gift, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experiences)						
I serve in the Body based on my S.H.A.P.E.						
My small group helps and encourages me to serve.						

Please place an "X" in the column that describes your current position with 5 being the highest rating

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Comments (if any)
I feel God has gifted me to serve in the Body.						
I feel equipped to perform my ministry in the Body.						
I feel my ministry is important in the Body.						

I feel I have grown since salvation.						
I feel I am intentionally investing in another's life (mentoring).						
I feel my small group helps and encourages me to serve.						

Research Team Use Only

Control Number: _____

Entered into Database: Y N by (initials) _____ on (date, mm/dd/yyyy) ____/____/____

Appendix J
Participant Interview Questions

Why do you want to **PARTICIPATE** in this study?

What, if anything, do you hope to **GAIN** through participating in this study?

What, if anything, do you want to **CONTRIBUTE** to this study?

What is the **ROLE OF THE PASTOR** in the Body of Christ?

What is your understanding of **YOUR ROLE** in the Body of Christ?

What is **YOUR S.H.A.P.E.**?

Spiritual gift(s)?

Heart/life passion?

Abilities?

Personality (introvert/extravert, works well with others, *etc.*)?

Life experiences?

In what **MINISTRY** do you serve, or have served in?

In what way is that ministry position a **GOOD FIT** for your S.H.A.P.E.?

How do you **SERVE THE BODY** through your ministry?

In what way, if at all, do your **SMALL GROUP MEMBERS** help and encourage you to serve?

In what way, if at all, do you **HELP AND ENCOURAGE** others to serve?

What is your responsibility in **SHARING THE GOSPEL** message with nonbelievers?

What **SPIRITUAL GROWTH**, if any, have you seen in yourself over the **LAST YEAR**?

What **SPIRITUAL GROWTH**, if any, would you like to see over the **NEXT YEAR**?

What **INFORMATION** do you **WANT TO SHARE** with me that we have not already talked about?

Appendix K
Training Outline C.L.A.S.S. 301, *Discovering My Ministry*

- I. C.L.A.S.S. Content
 - a. Part One: Made for Ministry
 - i. What the Bible says about ministry
 - ii. The process for discovering my ministry
 - iii. How has God S.H.A.P.E.d me for ministry?
 - iv. Identifying my unique S.H.A.P.E.
 - b. Part Two: Serving through NBC
 - i. NBC's vision for ministry
 - ii. Previewing the opportunities—"Ministry Menu"
 - iii. Developing a heart to serve
 - iv. Where do I go from here?

- II. Three Phases to Completing This C.L.A.S.S.
 - a. Attend C.L.A.S.S. 301
 - b. Complete your S.H.A.P.E. personal profile
 - c. Meet with a Personal Ministry Guide

- III. The Goals of This C.L.A.S.S.
 - a. Trainees will discover their unique design (S.H.A.P.E.) for ministry and commit to developing and using their God-given gifts and abilities in serving God and others through the Body of Christ
 - b. Trainees will select and begin serving in the ministries of the church that best expresses what God made them to be
 - i. Their primary ministry
 - ii. A secondary needed ministry

Appendix L Participant Survey 2

Printed Name: _____

Date (mm/dd/yyyy) ___/___/_____

I have attended C.L.A.S.S. 301 or a similar course of study: YES NO If “no,” why not?

I am an active (attend at least half of scheduled meetings) member of a small group (Sunday school class): YES NO If “no,” why not?

I am actively investing in another member’s life in the Body of Christ: YES NO If “no,” why not?

Place an “X” in the column that best describes your current position

Element	Disagree (-2)	Somewhat Disagree (-1)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (0)	Somewhat Agree (+1)	Agree (+2)	Comments (if any)
I understand my role in the Body of Christ.						
I understand the role of the pastor in the Body of Christ.						
I understand my S.H.A.P.E. (Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experiences)						
I serve in the Body based on my S.H.A.P.E.						
My small group helps and encourages me to serve.						

Please place an "X" in the column that describes your current position with 5 being the highest rating

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Comments (if any)
I feel God has gifted me to serve in the Body.						
I feel equipped to perform my ministry in the Body.						
I feel my ministry is important in the Body.						
I feel I have grown since salvation.						
I feel I am intentionally investing in another's life (mentoring).						
I feel my small group helps and encourages me to serve.						

Research Team Use Only

Control Number: _____

Entered into Database: Y N by (initials) _____ on (date, mm/dd/yyyy) ____/____/____

If the participant has not attended C.L.A.S.S. 301, is not in a small group, or is not actively investing in another's life (mentoring), what intervention was accomplished?

Will the participant continue in the study? YES NO If "no" date scrubbed from the database (dd/mm/yyyy): ____/____/____

Appendix M

Focus Group Questions

How has participation in this study helped or hindered your spiritual growth?

How has participation in this study helped your church?

How is the pastor supposed to serve the church?

What does it mean to be part of the Priesthood of Believers?

What happens in the church when the Body begins to serve faithfully?

How does understanding the concept of S.H.A.P.E. (**S**piritual Gifts, **H**eart, **A**bilities, **P**ersonality, and **E**xperiences) help members of the Body to serve?

How does being a part of a small group help and encourage members of the Body to serve?

Who is responsible for mentoring believers in the church?

What is your responsibility in sharing the Gospel message with nonbelievers?

What information do you want to share with me that we have not already talked about?

Appendix N Participant Survey 3

Printed Name: _____

Date (mm/dd/yyyy) ___/___/_____

I am an active (attend at least half of scheduled meetings) member of a small group (Sunday school class): YES NO If “no,” why not?

I am actively investing in another member’s life in the Body of Christ: YES NO If “no,” why not?

Place an “X” in the column that best describes your current position

Element	Disagree (-2)	Somewhat Disagree (-1)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (0)	Somewhat Agree (+1)	Agree (+2)	Comments (if any)
I understand my role in the Body of Christ.						
I understand the role of the pastor in the Body of Christ.						
I understand my S.H.A.P.E. (Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, and Experiences)						
I serve in the Body based on my S.H.A.P.E.						
My small group helps and encourages me to serve.						

Please place an “X” in the column that describes your current position with 5 being the highest rating

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Comments (if any)
I feel God has gifted me to serve in the Body.						
I feel equipped to perform my ministry in the Body.						

I feel my ministry is important in the Body.						
I feel I have grown since salvation.						
I feel I am intentionally investing in another's life (mentoring).						
I feel my small group helps and encourages me to serve.						

Research Team Use Only

Control Number: _____

Entered into Database: Y N by (initials) _____ on (date, mm/dd/yyyy) ____/____/____

If the participant has not attended C.L.A.S.S. 301, is not in a small group, or is not actively mentoring, what intervention was accomplished? _____

Will the participant continue in the study? YES NO If "no" date scrubbed from the database (dd/mm/yyyy): ____/____/____

Did the participant successfully complete the study? YES NO

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

January 14, 2021

Gregory Kincaid
Thomas Spotts

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY20-21-345 Increasing Church Growth Potential through Education and Implementation of the Biblically Defined Roles of the Pastor and the Body of Christ

Dear Gregory Kincaid, Thomas Spotts:

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 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

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