

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY  
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

**Leadership Culture: An Effective Leadership Strategy for Church Growth and Spiritual  
Maturity**

Submitted to Dr. Farid Awad

In fulfillment of the requirements for the completion of  
the Doctor of Ministry Degree

Department of Christian Leadership and Church Ministries

by

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November 2022

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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

**Thesis Project Approval Sheet**

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## THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, November 20, 2022.

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In every organization, leadership culture patterns require a constant assessment to ensure members adhere to corporate practices. In church settings, leadership culture not only creates change but also transforms ministry strategy. Often, church leaders do not perceive culture as the driving force behind effective ministry operations. At Gateway Church, the researcher encountered church growth issues that other ministries struggle with as well, from organizational structure to leadership style. These problems will continue to be a challenge unless the church reinvents an effective leadership strategy focusing on ministry development.

This research aims to address the leadership development issue at Gateway Church and investigate the cause for dwindling membership by presenting a pragmatic framework remedy for the lack of commitment from a theological perspective. To achieve this, the researcher employed a system to reshape the culture of the church and call into action a strong desire to improve things across the board. The researcher has also taken a critical view of spiritual maturity and assessed its mandates for self-development.

The survey portion of the study invited participation from members of the church who are at least 18 years old. The results identified some weaknesses at the leadership level that prompted a lack of interest within the organization. The findings also demand an effective strategy for leadership development that challenges current practices and focuses more on leadership culture. If successful, the outcome will help other churches facing similar problems to address them by identifying specific areas for leadership development in their ministry endeavor.

*Keywords:* Leadership development, biblical discipleship, cultural diversity, church growth, spiritual maturity

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## Abbreviations

DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
EDI	<i>Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion</i>
IRB	<i>Institutional Review Board</i>
LUSOD	<i>Liberty University School of Divinity</i>
YHWH	<i>Yahweh</i>

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

In the book, *True Discipleship: The Art of Following Jesus*, Koessler states that “Truth is a necessary catalyst for spiritual growth, but true growth occurs only when truth is applied.”<sup>1</sup> As numerous ministries are closing their doors, many are opening their doors with new ideas. Be it as it may, churches are no longer a remedy for moral decay in this modern society, especially among the youth. People have stopped believing that churches can help them achieve spiritual enhancement. Some church leaders are more interested in self-promotion and fame by building a career, than in becoming champions for Christ. While some churches have “fallen into the trap of letting every ministry compete against each other for attention,”<sup>2</sup> some focus on the gospel. The latter pursue the unchurched and are doing whatever is necessary to save lost souls. With such significant changes and disparities witnessed among multiple churches, the researcher aims to identify the problem, with the ultimate goal being the promotion of church and ministries’ expansion across the globe.

To protect the identity of participants, the researcher will name the organization at the center of this study as ‘Gateway Church.’ This dissertation attempts to address issues confronting Gateway Church and to investigate the reason behind the decline in church attendance. This research will also examine other churches experiencing comparable circumstances and their chosen means for addressing those challenges. The researcher will further employ a quantitative

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<sup>1</sup> John Koessler, *True Discipleship: The Art of Following Jesus* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2003), 59.

<sup>2</sup> Jared C. Wilson, *The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto against the Status Quo* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 123.

research method to assess those instances, by focusing on leadership development and culture within the organization.

As part of the research literature under review for this dissertation, Stanley insists that change and vision are two separate issues. While he sees ‘vision’ as the driving force behind movement, ‘change’ propels the organization to a higher level. The leadership team must therefore embrace ‘change’ and ensure that the vision of the church prevails.<sup>3</sup> People will commit to be a part of the church community and partake in its activities if the church continues to do the right thing and empowers leaders to function in their respective areas.

### **Ministry Context**

The Gateway Church is located in the Southwest part of Houston, residing in Harris County, approximately half an hour away from the downtown area. Houston is considered one of the most populous and largest cities in America. The researcher is the Lead Pastor of Gateway Church. According to the United States Census Bureau, the demographic data of the city as of 2018 was 2.33 million residents with a median age of 33.1 and household income of \$51,203.<sup>4</sup> The church’s mission is to make faithful disciples by welcoming people of every race, regardless of economic background and ethnicity, and lead believers to a life-changing relationship with God. Mature followers will be equipped to perform works of ministry, and thereby support and uplift the disenfranchised through unconditional love.

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<sup>3</sup> Andy Stanley, *Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 273.

<sup>4</sup> County and City Data Book (Online), *Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Commerce* (U.S. Census Bureau, 1949).

The church is located at the city center, where ministry is mainly needed. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the leadership team was able to strategically identify the area where the unchurched people were located. Geiger and Peck assert that “Leadership is much like nuclear energy. It is able to warm a whole city or bring it to waste in death and destruction; it is all in how it is used.”<sup>5</sup> Unlike corporate entities, churches may be located anywhere in the city and still be able to reach out to the unchurched, as the goal is spreading the gospel and reaching out to lost souls.

However, things have changed, and travel distance has become a motivating factor for many people. Church leaders and planters focus more on searching for a location where they can have access to an audience to influence. Before moving to the downtown area, the researcher considered all options, since it was closest to the area where ministry was mainly needed. The location is surrounded by derelict buildings that provide dwelling to many homeless people. The church moved from home Gateway to a permanent location within the first year of its existence, and the leadership team launched its operation at the permanent location with twelve people in attendance and experienced an exponential increase in the number of parishioners, before those started to decline.

The researcher noticed some leadership concerns during the first three months of the church’s existence, as things were not proceeding in the right direction. He found that while the members were willing to serve in various ministries, they were not allowed to get involved by the leadership team, which could have been the factor that reduced the overall attendance numbers. Upon meeting with the leadership team to address the issue, the researcher found that

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<sup>5</sup> Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck, *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2016), 61, accessed November 21, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

the leaders turned down the applicants as they did not have the necessary skills to perform the job. This incident revealed leadership problems and a lack of adequate training within the church establishment, given that the leadership team could not implement the appropriate strategies to expand operations and encourage people to join the church.

While it had an excellent worship team, the instruments were not sophisticated enough to impress members. People are always looking for new inventions, but implementing change is not easy. The goal is to demonstrate the love of God; as Lidstone argues, “Jesus washing his disciples’ feet is a foreshadowing of the cross—in both cases, his humiliation leads to cleansing for his disciples.”<sup>6</sup> The church tried to accommodate members’ demands and help those in need, but these efforts were not sufficient for retaining the new converts. While similar situations “occur naturally in many settings, churches tend to consciously or unconsciously put into place systems and structures to resist change.”<sup>7</sup> This was very frustrating for the leadership team. As more people were joining, many were also leaving. The researcher attempted to investigate why people were leaving for other churches.

Demographically, the church is made up of a diverse pool of participants: Black or African American 22.6%, Hispanics 45%, Caucasians 24.4%, Asian 6.8%, American Indian 0.3%, and Others 0.9%.<sup>8</sup> The church has a zero-tolerance policy with regards to racial discrimination. The researcher warned the leadership team not to discriminate against anyone regardless of their economic status or ethnic background because “Contemplative leadership in

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<sup>6</sup> Julyan Lidstone, *Give Up the Purple: A Call for Servant Leadership in Hierarchical Cultures* (Carlisle: Langham Creative Projects, 2019), 52, accessed November 21, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>7</sup> Cameron Trimble, *Piloting Church: Helping Your Congregation Take Flight* (Ashland: Chalice Press, 2019), 120, accessed April 2, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>8</sup> County and City, Data Book (Online).

its purest form cannot exist in either nation, as blatant evangelization could not be tolerated in either setting.”<sup>9</sup> As the numbers grew initially, the church created different ministries to accommodate the members appropriately. Currently, the church has eight ministries: men’s ministry, women’s ministry, young adult ministry, children ministry, service ministry, global ministry, prison ministry, and pastoral care ministry. A mature leader, prayerfully selected by the Holy Spirit, leads each ministry.

The church currently runs only one service on Sunday and may soon add another service to encourage participation. It also has a good choir. Those in the worship ministry are very talented and spiritually gifted, ensuring that they lead the church to the presence of the Lord. The Greeters welcome members as they step into the sanctuary and lead them to open seats to keep the House of the Lord in order. Weekly bulletins are always available at the entrance door for worshippers before service. At the end of the service, the pastor makes altar calls and extends invitations to new converts to the faith and those interested in re-commitment. Thereafter, the pastoral team meets with the new converts, prays with them, and encourages them to participate in church activities. There is also a new beginning class for new converts, or anyone interested in the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

During the beginning class, new converts learn the importance of having a relationship with the Father. The believer receives a new spirit and obtains new life. While believers initially do not comprehend that they have gained a new spirit and that the Holy Spirit will reside in them, the Holy Spirit gloriously reveals Himself eventually. The gospel of the “word of God sets them free to follow and serve the Lord Jesus.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Merylann J. Schuttloffel, *International Explorations of Contemplative Leadership in Catholic Education* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 68.

<sup>10</sup> Lidstone, *Give Up the Purple*, 5.



Even if a faithful person is unaware of the presence of the Holy Spirit, it is an invariable truth that they have received the Holy Spirit from God. The believer has gone through regeneration, purified from their sins, and acknowledges the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, if a believer focuses on the phenomenon of regeneration and is satisfied with having a new spirit, they will not have a powerful and happy life ahead.

It is, therefore, the responsibility of the leadership team to ensure members undergo this process and help them in their walk with the Lord. While the church leadership tried its best to retain the members, many eventually left for other churches, and leadership began noticing a steady decline in attendance as people were no longer interested in coming to church. Webb, an expert in ministry coaching, affirms that “if you influence others, you are leading, regardless of the position you hold. Some leaders are recognized, and many are not. Everyone has influence; the question is, how are you using that influence?”<sup>11</sup> The researcher also noticed a shift in how members view the church’s operations correlated to the decline in the level of commitment, which the researcher believes is a significant setback from a financial point of view. Their perceptions changed since their needs were no longer being met.

As part of the initiatives to attract more people, the church devised a program to improve church attendance, called ‘Feed the Hungry.’ This program was implemented to assist those in need, and the church periodically received donations from companies in the area to support the program. Every Thursday at 10:00 a.m., the church opens its doors to the public for food donations. While initial response was good, it only lasted for a couple of months because people

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<sup>11</sup> Keith E. Webb, *The Coach Model for Christian Leaders: Powerful Leadership Skills for Solving Problems, Reaching Goals, and Developing Others* (Newburyport: Morgan James Publishing, 2019), 39, accessed April 12, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

in need were more interested in receiving cash donations than food items. At the same time, the church must ensure that the leaders involved in these endeavors possess an outstanding biblical character and a propensity to lead by example to make the operation successful. It does not matter whether the church is “utilizing servant leadership, empowering leadership, or transformational leadership.”<sup>12</sup> The researcher met with the leadership team to investigate why the program was not a success, even though the church did everything possible to encourage participation.

Vanderbloemen and Bird assert that “Finding and grooming leaders for succession is one of the chief tasks of leadership.”<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, the leadership team at Gateway Church did not seem able to identify the root problem that caused these efforts to fail and kept on implementing different strategies by trial and error. The leadership made another attempt to take a more aggressive approach towards evangelism. Every Saturday, the team visited different parts of town to distribute fliers, spread the message of Christ, and encourage people to attend the Sunday service and participate in church activities. Team members also made follow-up calls to thank those in attendance and invite them back to church. This strategy seemed to work for a while as attendance improved, but it did not prove sustainable. The church, having exhausted all of its resources, could not devise a way out of this conundrum; the team, nevertheless, continued in its efforts to spread the gospel and help those in need.

Corder summarizes this problem by stating that when a church is a primary force in a predominantly Christian culture, communication becomes a secondary activity “like the kitchen

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<sup>12</sup> John Charron Vincent, *Leadership Development Creating a Culture of Developing Leaders in the Church* (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty University, 2020), 25.

<sup>13</sup> William Vanderbloemen and Warren Bird, *Next: Pastoral Succession that Works* (Ada: Baker Books, 2014), 147.

or the altar guild, because those activities were not directly part of the disciple-making process.”<sup>14</sup> The researcher believes this program was an eye-opener as it indicated that the problem was not about membership, but how people perceived the church’s organizational culture. The researcher realized that the leadership culture needs to be re-examined to resolve the problem and bring the correct change that the church needs

Also, in the book of Mark, the Scripture says, “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”<sup>15</sup> God has called every believer to go and make disciples. It is the ultimate goal of the researcher to explore this avenue and investigate the cause of low attendance at the Gateway Church to ensure that the church continues to spread the gospel.

The problem is, therefore, framed as placing greater focus on leadership development and culture. The church needs to focus on how the leadership team addresses ministry issues across the board, and it is integral for the church leaders to provide leadership training to the members to experience growth. Fink points out that one must be able to understand the culture of the organization and advocate it in order to be successful.<sup>16</sup> Having the right people in the proper position will not only propel the church to a higher level, but also allow the organization to manage resources effectively.

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<sup>14</sup> Don Corder, *Connect: How To Grow Your Church In 28-Days Guaranteed* (Chicago: HigherLife Publishing, 2019), 125, accessed April 2, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>15</sup> Mark 16:15, King James Version (KJV).

<sup>16</sup> Dean Fink, *The Succession Challenge: Building and Sustaining Leadership Capacity through Succession Management* (London: SAGE Publications, 2010), 54.

## **Problem Presented**

The problem this project attempts to address is that Gateway Church is not experiencing growth in the number of people regularly attending church service on Sundays. In 2019, before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, church membership experienced a decline in the retention rate by 45%; 2020, however, exhibited the lowest membership the church has ever had. The researcher believes that those who attend the weekly service at Gateway Church are more interested in material needs, with little to no interest in serving or participating in church activities.

Like every other church, the leadership team does its best to ensure members experience spiritual growth. However, this can only happen if members are willing to participate in various church activities, such as Bible study, new converts class, marriage counseling, etc. The church exists to serve the community, and the researcher believes the church will experience growth once those measures are implemented. This dissertation, therefore, aims to investigate why Gateway Church is not experiencing such growth and identify ways to solve the problem.

Another concern for the researcher is the site of the church's downtown area location, surrounded by unoccupied buildings, although this should not be the main reason why people are unwilling to participate in church activities.

The ultimate goal of this project is to reassess the current organizational culture and explore different areas of church operation. The dissertation will also address the problem facing the Gateway Church by encouraging members to get more involved in church activities. To achieve this, the researcher will conduct a literature review on leadership development to understand better how to address the attendance problem.

## **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry study is to embark on leadership development at Gateway Church. The researcher conducted a review of the literature to identify the areas for potential improvement. It was determined that the church should focus on organizational culture and leadership development.

The prominent reason members are unwilling to commit to the Christian community or engage in church activities is due to a lack of training and management awareness. Church leaders must be properly trained and provided with adequate resources. Some members want to get involved in church activities but are not allowed to participate by the leadership team. The unchurched are looking for leaders who care about their well-being and give them attention when needed, and personal commitment on behalf of leadership figures is one of the factors that motivates people to get involved in ministry work. The researcher will address these issues with the leadership team.

The researcher also aims to identify the kind of leaders that the church wants on the team. Church attendance will improve if the church assigns members to different areas of ministry with adequate resources. Moreso, having a new leadership system in place will ensure a different approach and ideology that embraces modern life and encourage members to commit to the Christian community, resulting in positive changes in the church. The church will serve its community well when people see the gospel “standing before them on the spiritual precipice of heaven and hell.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Wilson, *The Prodigal Church*, 117.

The researcher will conduct quantitative research to identify potential areas of disadvantage, in which the participants will have the opportunity to voice their concerns and let the church know how they can benefit from the organization. Participation in this research is voluntary.

The researcher will also embrace an open-door policy, whereby parishioners would be free to express their concerns. It is assumed that in any hierarchical organization, the rank-and-file often try to avoid confrontation with those higher up because of fear of possible retaliation. Similarly, parishioners may be of the mindset that church leaders may deny them participation or refrain from helping them in times of need if they voice any criticism. Likewise, no one should be discriminated against based on economic status, ethnicity, or race within church circles, as everyone has equal rights before the Lord. It is therefore also important to encourage new converts to participate in ministry work and let them learn the organization's history and culture so as to better bring them into the fold.

### **Basic Assumptions**

The researcher believes the Gateway Church will experience tremendous growth once the new schedule is in effect, particularly in what concerns management training. Church leaders will be trained and equipped for the work of God since knowledge is transferable only if it is made available to future leaders. In the book of Romans, the Scripture states that “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”<sup>18</sup> In this light, it is further assumed that church

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<sup>18</sup> Romans 15:4, KJV.

members would be able to provide thoughtful information based on their leadership experience if given the opportunity.

The church location will be used for the research in order to maintain the integrity of the project, and the church shall remain open for the entire service duration. However, any changes to this arrangement in future may affect its outcome, should the church unexpectedly shut its doors due to unforeseen circumstances. The researcher also assumes that participants would support the initiative and take part in the research study. Any changes to this expectation may negatively affect the result of the study.

The researcher also assumes that the church may attract more members during the recruiting process. Although the researcher will not discriminate against anyone, only new and current members will be allowed to participate in the study. Lastly, the researcher will not include data pertaining to those subjects who drop out of the research study or are ineligible to participate. The researcher will not force anyone to participate in the study.

### **Definitions**

This section defines some concepts or words that may not be necessarily familiar to readers, to avoid any ambiguity in interpreting them correctly.

*Church:* A church is a religious organization or group of people who have confessed their faith in Jesus Christ. It is also when a congregation comes together to identify itself as a local church. However, “to be considered a church, those who gather as a group must identify themselves as the local expression of the body of Christ.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> J. D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 22, accessed June 4, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

*Coaching:* Unlike mentoring, coaching is “a process to help people discover what they need to know, and then how to act upon that knowledge.”<sup>20</sup>

*Discipleship:* Is an act of following Jesus that “requires help that is much more personal and relational.”<sup>21</sup> It is also a way of leading people to Christ.

*Evangelism:* Is an act of sharing the good news about salvation with people through their repentance and confession. The character and expression of evangelism is the “passionate proclamation of the message of the gospel to the end that people will be redeemed as they trust Christ and his saving work at the cross to receive forgiveness and eternal life.”<sup>22</sup>

*Leadership:* Similarly, to other corporate environments, leadership in churches entails the ability to lead, direct, and influence others. Clinton argues that leadership is “a dynamic process over an extended period of time in various situations in which a leader, utilizing leadership resources and by specific leadership behaviors, influences the thoughts and activities of followers” to create mutual benefits for everyone.<sup>23</sup> It is also a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.<sup>24</sup>

*Leadership Development:* Defined as the ability to train potential leaders who are willing to lead and demonstrate leadership aptitude in every area of their lives. Malphurs and Mancini define leadership development as “the intentional process of helping established and emerging

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<sup>20</sup> Keith Webb, *Coaching in Ministry: How Busy Church Leaders Can Multiply Their Ministry Impact* (Bellevue: Active Results LLC, 2015), 36, Kindle.

<sup>21</sup> Wilson, *The Prodigal Church*, 144.

<sup>22</sup> Dave Earley and Wheeler David, *Evangelism Is.....* (B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 6, accessed June 4, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Clinton, *The Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development* (Revised 2nd ed., Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2012), 16.

<sup>24</sup> Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, Ninth edition (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2019), 6.



leaders at every level of ministry to assess and develop their Christian character and to acquire, reinforce, and refine their ministry knowledge and skills.”<sup>25</sup>

*Mentee*: One who “requests mentoring to help cope with the pressures and stresses of decisions based on a perceived need for change.”<sup>26</sup>

*Mentor*: One who “offers knowledge, insight, perspective or wisdom that is helpful to another person in a relationship that goes beyond doing one’s duty or fulfilling one’s obligations.”<sup>27</sup>

*Mentoring*: Mentoring is a relationship between a mentor and a mentee in which both parties seek ways to share knowledge to fulfill God’s mission. Stanley and Clinton assert that “Mentoring is a relational experience in which one person empowers another by sharing God-given resources.”<sup>28</sup>

### **Limitations**

This dissertation attempts to investigate leadership problems at the Gateway Church. The researcher is constrained by the timeframe the School of Divinity has imposed for this project to reach completion, as well as other potential limitations associated with this research.

For instance, the number of participants is a variable factor that cannot be determined in advance, which may potentially affect the outcome of the project. While appropriate measures

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<sup>25</sup> Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders: Blueprint for Developing Leadership at Every Level of Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 28.

<sup>26</sup> Ann Brewer, *Mentoring from a Positive Psychology Perspective: Learning for Mentors and Mentees* (Cham Switzerland: Springer, 2016), 5.

<sup>27</sup> Jim Osterhouse and Gary Teja, *Masterful Mentoring: The Role of Mentoring in the Local Church* (Sauk Village: Multiplication Network Ministries, 2015), 12.

<sup>28</sup> Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1992), 33.

will be implemented to motivate more people to participate in this project, the result may not represent the entire population of potential parishioners.

The researcher is also aware that a higher number of people may not participate in the project as anticipated due to unforeseen circumstances, such as military personnel who may have to take a leave of absence and not have the opportunity to partake in the study. The researcher further anticipates that some people may be unwilling to take part in the study, or may be untruthful about discussing their situation.

Lastly, the researcher does not have control over the number of participants included in the study. One or two churches in the area, which have experienced the same low level of attendance, may also be surveyed for further examination and insight. The researcher believes a 3-year study will suffice for investigating how those churches have experienced growth over this time period.

### **Delimitations**

The researcher will employ a quantitative research method to collect data, but it may not represent the entire population based on age, ethnicity, or gender.

The focus of this research is to develop leaders invested in a leadership style that uses their gifts and unique skills to edify the body of Christ. The researcher will embrace Jesus' non-academic leadership style and focus more on mentoring. In 2 Timothy, the Scripture indicates that "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> 2 Timothy 2:2, KJV.

Participants must be at least 18 years old to be able to partake in the study. Additionally, the church does not discriminate against anyone's racial identity, which is why the researcher will not peruse or vet the racial or ethnic background of any candidate for this research, provided they fulfill the church membership requirements. The researcher neither assumes that the research findings will be global, nor will he include every theory related to the research, since the study is exclusively for church members.

### **Thesis Statement**

For church membership to grow, the Gateway Church has to embark upon a leadership development program. Leaders play a vital role in every organization, and ministry is no exception. The church must reorganize its leadership team, initiate leadership development, and reshape its culture to experience growth.

The researcher will investigate existing gaps in the literature to ensure that every area of the project is thoroughly examined. The researcher will further assign each leader to a specific area of the ministry to ensure accountability. The Scripture states that "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our LORD Jesus Christ."<sup>30</sup> The researcher will carefully review the identified themes to ensure they are relevant to the area of research.

The researcher is optimistic that church attendance will improve once leadership structure is reshaped, and that the organization as a whole will benefit from this research, thereby providing an avenue for further research in the future.

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<sup>30</sup> 2 Peter 1:8, KJV.

## **CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Introduction**

This dissertation aims to address the leadership problem at the Gateway Church from a theological perspective concerning the church, and to investigate the causes of its low attendance. To identify areas of improvement, the researcher conducted a literature review on leadership development and investigated why members were not committed to the Christian community.

The study is organized into eight themes: small groups and discipleship, leadership and commitment, training and spiritual guidance, diversity and cross-cultural model, team coaching and mentoring, spiritual transformation and identity, challenges and self-awareness, and communication and accountability.

### **Literature Review**

The problem facing the Gateway Church concerns church growth, and the researcher has identified leadership development as the primary solution to the problem. The researcher reviewed several articles and books on church growth and spiritual maturity to analyze the growth barrier and why the church has not grown. George and Warren assert that one needs to “Push your imagination further by asking what kind of personality is needed to pastor a church of five hundred, one thousand, five thousand, or fifty thousand. If you think these numbers are too high, think of how many unchurched people are within a fifteen-minute drive of your place

of worship.”<sup>31</sup> This model would allow the church leaders to think outside the box by analyzing “what has worked in the past and what has not.”<sup>32</sup>

### Small Groups and Discipleship

Every leader knows that church growth is impossible without a body of disciples, and that it requires effort and determination. While leading people to the Cross is good, it demands continuous teaching and discipleship to help them grow and mature into faithful servants of God.

When Jesus gathered his twelve disciples, He did not leave them by themselves. Instead, he constantly taught them and reviewed their progress to identify problem areas and resolve the barriers to their growth. Mentoring entails thorough teaching, and the mentor must continually provide guidance and feedback.<sup>33</sup> Mentoring is “a relational experience by which one person empowers another by transferring God-given resources.”<sup>34</sup> The Holy Spirit empowers believers to understand the nature of growth and to know how to fulfill the mission of expanding the kingdom of God.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, every leader may have some character flaws and weaknesses, but that does not stop them from leading their people toward the right path. They know that the Holy Spirit has empowered them with giftings but sometimes allows the flesh to control their

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<sup>31</sup> Carl F. George and Bird Warren, *How to Break Growth Barriers: Revise Your Role, Release Your People, and Capture Overlooked Opportunities for Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2017), 64, accessed April 2, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>32</sup> George and Warren, *How to Break Growth Barriers*, 46.

<sup>33</sup> Vincent, *Leadership Development*, 23.

<sup>34</sup> Yevgeni A. Strannik, “Developing Spiritually Healthy Leaders for the Vineyard Churches in Russia,” (Order No. 13811363, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Intercultural Studies, 2019), 51, In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu>.

<sup>35</sup> Aaron Burke, “Developing a Church Planting Growth Strategy for Growing Metropolitan Communities in the United States,” (Order No. 27964378, Southeastern University, 2020), 27, In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu>.

emotions. The leadership team must focus on discipleship and develop a program leading to church multiplication.<sup>36</sup> The positive aspect of this view is that leaders' flaws are part of God's plan to get them to the place that is their destiny to inhabit, as long as they learn from their past mistakes.<sup>37</sup>

The growth of a church begins with a single relationship built at the individual level. Church is not a place to go to casually but an environment where everyone feels safe and liberated enough to express themselves, share concerns and problems, and offer recommendations for improvement. If well-organized, it may lead to a long-lasting relationship and “eventually become a more extensive gathering where more individuals are building relationships and breathing life into them, and then reaching out to others.”<sup>38</sup> Small groups also function as a free-market society regardless of whether the “group is a Bible study, a running group, or a group that focuses on missions and outreach, and the leaders must be trained and equipped to lead within their area of interest.”<sup>39</sup> If God is calling the church to increase its size several times over its previous membership, then there is a need for new social architecture to make it work.<sup>40</sup> Holley affirms, “Small group leaders need to develop relationships outside of this particular environment that will enable them to become friends or neighbors with those who are not connected to a church” because people are always looking for a way to connect with God

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<sup>36</sup> Erich Baumgartner and Andres Flores, “Creating a Spiritual Learning Space: The Changing Leadership Roles in the Life Cycle of a Church Plant,” *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 11, no. 2 (Fall, 2017), 9, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu>.

<sup>37</sup> Brian Moss, *Leadership Development in the Local Church: An Intentional Strategy for Developing Leaders at Every Level* (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty University, 2014), 48.

<sup>38</sup> Vincent, *Leadership Development*, 90.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>40</sup> George and Warren, *How to Break Growth Barriers*, 136.

and people of faith.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, “pastors must think of themselves not as leaders of one big church family but as leaders of groups who give leadership cues appropriate to the level of need of the persons who require it.”<sup>42</sup>

### Leadership and Commitment

A major area of concern for the church, as identified by the researcher, is leadership and commitment. Sometimes, people are willing to commit but reluctant to do so because the leadership style prevents them from moving forward. To grow and expand the church’s membership, leaders must utilize the appropriate means and strategies in their teachings. This process begins with how the church identifies members’ emotions, and those on the leadership team.

Another way to collect information is by asking questions and practicing self-observation along with other measures.<sup>43</sup> The inability to identify the appropriate teaching methods will, in the long run, lead to a decline in “both religious and secular teachings due to a lack of practical methods.”<sup>44</sup> It must be noted, therefore, that “the leadership development process is aimed at developing leaders” for the church’s various activities that will potentially attract the

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<sup>41</sup> H. F. Holley, "Developing a Small Group Leadership Curriculum for the Twenty First Century Church Based on the Class Leaders of the Wesleyan Class Meetings," (Order No. 10605869, Regent University, 2017), 130, In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global; Social Science Premium Collection, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu>.

<sup>42</sup> George and Warren, *How to Break Growth Barriers*, 86.

<sup>43</sup> Aubrey Malphurs, *Developing Emotionally Mature Leaders: How Emotional Intelligence Can Help Transform Your Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2018), 73, accessed April 11, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>44</sup> Marion Diane Jones, *Youth Decline in Church Growth and Attendance* (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty University, 2020), 46.

unchurched.<sup>45</sup> Leadership coaching must also “focus primarily on ministry skills since all leaders are already required to be a part of a small group for discipleship.”<sup>46</sup>

Church leaders must also allocate their resources wisely; otherwise, it will be considered a weakness and may harm the church as a whole.<sup>47</sup> As Jessie argues, “Effective development of Christian ministry skills and attitudes is more apt to occur where there is continual interaction with a sector of the community of faith, at least in terms of a relationship with a mentor, or better yet, a mentoring network within a larger circle of the Christian community.”<sup>48</sup> Experts have stressed that the personal qualities and communication skills possessed by church leaders leading the community are some of the most crucial factors in church regeneration.<sup>49</sup> Even the larger churches “hold that biblical pastoral leadership does not require formal seminary training, working full-time, or having ministry credentials.”<sup>50</sup> Many leaders find solutions to hindrances and obstacles in church life “by being creative and flexible, exploring solutions, using wisdom, and being joyful when hindrances are overcome.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Moss, *Leadership Development*, 88.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>47</sup> George and Warren, *How to Break Growth Barriers*, 15.

<sup>48</sup> Kimberley A. Stout Jessie, "Contextual Model for Local Congregational Leadership Development in the Bridge Network of Churches in Virginia," (Order No. 10745768, Regent University, 2017), 8, In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu>.

<sup>49</sup> John Mehn, *Multiplying Churches in Japanese Soil* (Pasadena: William Carey Publishing, 2017), 144, accessed April 2, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.



## Training and Spiritual Guidance

The researcher has absorbed much spiritual wealth through an informative and instrumental literature review. Corder identifies a couple of trailing indicators among the parishioners' population, such as attendance, baptism, and giving records, which church leaders may use to gain knowledge of problematic areas that require intervention, and thereby be able to address problems.<sup>52</sup> Servant leaders must go beyond the mere attendance numbers and seek other ways to connect to members without bias. They must also believe that "people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions" because everyone is gifted in one way or another.<sup>53</sup> In the book of 1 Timothy, the Scripture says, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery."<sup>54</sup> Therefore, church leaders must embrace the power of spiritual empowerment and do whatever it takes to use those gifts.

Tang and Charles extensively discuss the student-teacher relationship. No person can attain the highest level of spiritual growth without the help of another person,<sup>55</sup> and understanding this will enable church leaders to create the proper environment for others to participate and serve the church. Those in leadership positions must be willing to deal with the challenges of church planting, namely, that it is not about their skills in preaching but rather the level of their spiritual growth. In other words, "discipleship should not be seen in the light of

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<sup>52</sup> Corder, *Connect*, 133.

<sup>53</sup> Shirley Adams Stanley, "Leadership Development for Youth: Insights and Discoveries for St. Peter Baptist Church," (Order No. 10749938, Virginia Union University, 2018), 30, In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu>.

<sup>54</sup> 1 Timothy 4:14, KJV.

<sup>55</sup> Len Tang and Cotherman Charles E., eds., *Sent to Flourish: A Guide to Planting and Multiplying Churches* (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 78, accessed April 2, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central.

teaching oneself” to achieve the highest level of spiritual growth.<sup>56</sup> The ability to understand and identify the unique attributes of each leader will go a long way if the dynamic of the entire leadership adheres to the church’s organizational culture.<sup>57</sup> Webb introduces a powerful concept on coach leadership, stating that sometimes leaders use their “spiritual authority to force others to do something rather than finding ways to draw out natural abilities, interests, and motivations out of them.”<sup>58</sup>

Spiritual empowerment will only work if the mentees are allowed to exercise their options without being forced.<sup>59</sup> The goal of spiritual formation is to be conformed to the image of the One who gave it all, “remained constant across the centuries in diverse communities, and must be shared across Christian confessions.”<sup>60</sup> However, it takes time for a vision to become manifest, especially when things are not going in the right direction. Creativity and production work together to create content.<sup>61</sup> Content in this sense is the ability to recognize what God is trying to do for His glory. Church leaders must allow the Holy Spirit to intervene and provide a safe place where people can confess their sins and accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.<sup>62</sup> There is no vision when people take Jesus out of the equation. He is the only one who can draw people

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<sup>56</sup> Vincent, *Leadership Development*, 8.

<sup>57</sup> Mehn, *Multiplying Churches*, 142.

<sup>58</sup> Webb, *The Coach Model*, 40.

<sup>59</sup> Strannik, “Developing Spiritually,” 30.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>61</sup> Corder, *Connect*, 106.

<sup>62</sup> George and Warren, *How to Break Growth Barriers*, 144.

closer. In the long run, it will help the researcher to “identify the leaders who carry more influence.”<sup>63</sup>

### Diversity and Cross-Cultural Model

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) oversees all activities and issues in the ministry setting, and therefore necessitates urgent attention before any change can occur, as there is no place for discrimination in ministry. Everyone is a masterpiece in the eyes of the Lord, and church leaders must set aside any preconceived ideas about individuals of different ethnic backgrounds.

Since many churches had to close their doors merely because they allowed discrimination to get in the way, ministry leaders are challenged to pray for diverse talents, economic backgrounds, and ethnic identities. Age should also not be the driving force. Through this avenue, all parishioners will be able to serve and be a role model for the type of church one is planting.<sup>64</sup> The direction must change if the church wants to experience growth. In his dissertation, Moss argues that church leadership must embrace intentionality in the way they relate to their members, which must be embedded into ‘the very fabric of the church’ and cannot be another program of its own. It must be stated everywhere that the church does not discriminate.<sup>65</sup> Ministry leaders must also affirm it within the group and during training sessions.

In another setting, Jones contends that one significant factor impacting the ministry is “the reality of increasing diversity in many communities and churches, which increases the

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<sup>63</sup> Vincent, *Leadership Development*, 52.

<sup>64</sup> Tang and Charles E. eds., *Sent to Flourish*, 133.

<sup>65</sup> Moss, *Leadership Development*, 113.

practical significance of the need to provide culturally appropriate forms of worship and engagement.”<sup>66</sup> The culture of ‘Sending’ was also introduced in Newton’s book, where the author argues that culture must be the driving force for church growth by “giving away opportunities in the Kingdom and watching others get credit for successes” that anyone could have easily achieved.<sup>67</sup> Church leaders must recognize and adapt to the organizational culture, which sustains the foundation of every organization, even in the corporate world, to experience growth.<sup>68</sup> Regardless of the process, there is always a possibility to resolve cultural conflicts from a transformational point of view if the church leaders understand the process.<sup>69</sup> Such leaders must also demonstrate quality leadership skills in every area of their lives, both in character and spiritual walk.<sup>70</sup>

### Team Coaching and Mentoring

Coaching and mentoring are essential components of ministry, but most churches do not have the necessary guidance or direction to develop strong leaders, particularly at the entry-level. Some church leadership groups talk about it but often fail to deliver.<sup>71</sup> All participants in the organization require training regardless of ethnic or racial background, and ministry is no

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<sup>66</sup> Jones, *Youth Decline*, 123.

<sup>67</sup> Phil A. Newton, *The Mentoring Church How Pastors and Congregations Cultivate Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2020), 130.

<sup>68</sup> Katie Donihoo, "Best Practices and Strategies used by Church Leaders to Mitigate and Prevent Burnout among Church Volunteers," (Order No. 10642156, Pepperdine University, 2017), 45, In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu>.

<sup>69</sup> Vincent, *Leadership Development*, 28.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>71</sup> Malphurs, *Developing Emotionally*, 11.

exception. This vision in the ministry context is intended to create an “environment where anybody could explore their quest for a meaningful life and a faith that wrestled openly with the question.”<sup>72</sup>

When people come to Christ, they seek church members’ support and kindness. Church leadership must develop a training schedule that allows members to become better in their spiritual work. It is one thing to receive Christ, but another thing to attain spiritual maturity.

The church must also assess the current leadership situation to ensure the development process complies with the “actual implementation of the intended intervention.”<sup>73</sup> Leadership development is an excellent path to the expansion of membership numbers. As more people are trained and mentored by the team to occupy leadership roles, this sequence creates an avenue for other potential leaders to become involved in various ministry activities.<sup>74</sup> The church needs to have church leaders become involved in welcoming newcomers and providing them with the necessary support. The leadership team must also encourage church members, especially new converts, to attend basic membership classes where they would learn more about the history of the church and the vision that the Lord has for the leadership.<sup>75</sup> It is also a perfect opportunity for the church to train the next generation and transmit the Christian faith to future leaders.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Baumgartner and Flores, “Creating a Spiritual,” 6.

<sup>73</sup> Vincent, *Leadership Development*, 51.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>76</sup> Jessie, “Contextual Model,” 20.

## Spiritual Transformation and Identity

The synergy and interdependence between various bodily parts is reflected in, and plays a vital role for the ministry; if one part gets hurt, it reflects on other parts, and vice versa.<sup>77</sup>

Spiritual transformation is not an overnight task. It requires personal commitment and dedication. Everyone engages in spiritual formation since God created man in His image.<sup>78</sup> In his dissertation, Nguyen uses the spiritual formation of children to address the role of the young generation in ministry. He concludes if one fails “to help kids make a practical investment of time and energy into serving others, their hearts will never mature in learning to care for and serve others.”<sup>79</sup>

Spiritual transformation involves three entities: mentor, mentee, and the Holy Spirit. While the mentor provides physical learning tools, the Holy Spirit guides the mentee mentally to receive His words. The mentees also have the opportunity to discover their purpose in life “through present action of God and intimacy with God.”<sup>80</sup> Trimble further argues that as leaders become more involved in ministry networking, “they have a spiritual maturity that gives them eyes to see a longer trajectory and strategic options for their ministries.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Trimble, *Piloting Church*, 57.

<sup>78</sup> Philip J. Rasmussen, "Developing Character in Ministry Leadership: A Leadership Development Course for Student Leaders at Northwest University," (Order No. 10747268, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, 2018), 103, In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login>.

<sup>79</sup> Tim T. Nguyen, "Raising Commitment among First-Generation Vietnamese Churches to Developing Second-Generation Leaders in San Jose, California," (Order No. 10811888, Nyack College, Alliance Theological Seminary, 2018), 37, In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu>.

<sup>80</sup> Robert Frederick II. Cook, "The Development of a Training Manual for Church Leaders to Become Mentors for Developing New Leaders in the Church," (Order No. 10811562, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018), 14, In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu>.

<sup>81</sup> Trimble, *Piloting Church*, 40.

## Challenges and Self-Awareness

Challenges are inevitable. God equipped all of humanity with the ability to accomplish things. Sometimes people do not realize what they are capable of until problems arise. Similarly, it becomes a problem "when churches fail to address the appropriate fit" of an individual for ministry work as they negatively impact the overall performance of the church.<sup>82</sup> A church that shows foresight by fomenting interpersonal relationships and puts in place a supportive organizational system before the onset of crisis can offer enough care that can overcome one growth barrier after another.<sup>83</sup> Also, the inability to establish a growth mindset could serve as a lesson for other church groups that may not be able to increase their attendance numbers. If things are correctly positioned, "identifying and addressing the complexities, barriers, insecurities, and shortcomings of the leader will benefit future training."<sup>84</sup>

Another pitfall, which was discussed in the reviewed literature, is the definition of 'mission.' According to Tang and Charles, "starting a church from scratch is akin to building a skyscraper. The weight it puts on a planter's soul, mind, body, and relationships is acute. If we are not committed to building down, we will certainly not be able to build up."<sup>85</sup> Therefore, it is indisputable that many churches face challenges these days because they cannot pass on their faith to the younger generation due to a lack of biblical understanding.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Moss, *Leadership Development*, 94.

<sup>83</sup> George and Warren, *How to Break Growth Barriers*, 99.

<sup>84</sup> Vincent, *Leadership Development*, 97.

<sup>85</sup> Tang and Charles E. eds., *Sent to Flourish*, 82.

<sup>86</sup> Jones, *Youth Decline*, 3.

## Communication and Accountability

Accountability is a vital tool for the growth of any individual. Leaders must be held accountable if the organization is to succeed, and the only way to achieve this is by being transparent and honest with members. Leaders lead by example, not by their words alone. Those who live outside the will of God or engage in inconsistent lifestyles should be held accountable to the highest standard so as to amend their ways.

There must be a firm commitment to the Gospel's message, and leaders must be always on their guard.<sup>87</sup> The church needs to scrutinize potential members and identify those with the knowledge and leadership skills to lead by example.

The new leadership training will “accentuate the vision and mission of the church” and will maintain leaders accountable for developing a future leadership echelon.<sup>88</sup> Feedback is at the “core of analyzing the effectiveness of the current strategy and reassessing it for possible volunteer burnout. It must also include formal and informal processes of personal and relational connections between volunteers and leaders.”<sup>89</sup> Throughout the process, “the mentor offers honest feedback to help the mentee identify areas for needed growth. The mentor works with the mentee to guide and direct them towards growing in the areas of spiritual concern.”<sup>90</sup>

In a nutshell, things begin to change when one perceives a lack of commitment in the strong leaders of the church: “the community loses a sense of accountability to its vision or its

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<sup>87</sup> Joshua Nador, "Developing Missional Church Leaders through Spiritual Fathering in Liberia," (Order No. 13811193, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Intercultural Studies, 2019), 15, In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu>.

<sup>88</sup> Vincent, *Leadership Development*, 62.

<sup>89</sup> Donihoo, "Best Practices and Strategies," 143.

<sup>90</sup> Cook, "The Development," 142.



people and ceases to be a relevant, vital embodiment of the body of Christ in the world.”<sup>91</sup>

Communication is so vital that it “becomes the oil of the congregational change process; without it, the engine of such change process will grind to a halt.”<sup>92</sup> As communication “paves the way for connection to take place and the disciple-making process begins, some people will connect for a while, whereas some will never do. However, some will connect and grow by attaching their lives to Christ.”<sup>93</sup>

### Conclusion

The issue of church growth should no longer be a problem at the Gateway Church once the leadership team is in place. The church will continue to assist members and take appropriate measures to ensure full accountability of its leadership echelon. It will also continue to expand its network and advocate for spiritual growth among its membership. Those themes will help the “church engage in a high-capacity leadership style and take the whole ministry to a new level.”<sup>94</sup> The researcher believes that if the church improves its training curriculum, it will experience significant growth within a year.

### Theological Foundations

“In the Beginning was the Word” not only references the existence of the Word (*logos*) before creation but also sets God’s redemptive work in the context of the eternal existence of the

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<sup>91</sup> Trimble, *Piloting Church*, 58.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>93</sup> Corder, *Connect*, 42.

<sup>94</sup> Moss, *Leadership Development*, 98.

Logos.<sup>95</sup> Kanagaraj describes the role of the pre-existent Logos in creation as “all things” that came into being through Him and “not even one that has come into being” came without Him.<sup>96</sup> People often view the church as the physical location where the congregation of believers assembles. Conversely, the word ‘church’ (*ecclesia*) in Greek refers to an assembly, congregation, or association of people. The church could not provide open access and expect people to stream in but rather “live into its primary calling as a sent community by following the lead of the sending God.”<sup>97</sup> However, “since the Holy Spirit is the one that draws people to God and reveals the truth to them, those who reject the good news have no other opportunity for salvation.”<sup>98</sup>

The book of Acts illustrates a perfect design of how churches should operate. In the early church, people came into fellowship with one another, guided a common purpose—to advance the kingdom of God. What began in Jerusalem with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the proclamation of the apostles continued in Galilee, where Jesus began to preach the good news of the arrival of the kingdom of God and to help people in need.<sup>99</sup> On the Day of Pentecost, apostle Peter, during his address, rebuked those who doubted the outpouring of the Spirit. The Scripture asserts, “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were

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<sup>95</sup> Jey Kanagaraj, *John: A New Covenant Commentary* (Havertown: Lutterworth Press, 2013), 1, accessed June 29, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>97</sup> Tang and Charles E. eds., *Sent to Flourish*, 11.

<sup>98</sup> Mark L. Strauss, *Mark: Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 173, accessed June 29, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>99</sup> Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Acts: Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2012), 67, accessed June 29, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

added *unto them* about three thousand souls.”<sup>100</sup> This day was a turning point for the body of Christ.

The event by “which the Messiah saves His people from their sins is His sacrificial death, and the resulting relationship between God and the messianic community,” as well as “promises of blessing and sustenance and threats of cursing, all brought here into legal force by the shedding of Christ’s blood.”<sup>101</sup> The church of God is not about ethnicity or race but rather about those who confess their faith in the Lord. When Jesus walked the earth, He led a significant number of people to come to faith in Him, resulting in exponential church growth.<sup>102</sup> Those “who do not live in union with Him will eventually be destroyed, just like the branches that are not linked with the vine are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burnt.”<sup>103</sup>

God created man, placed him in the Garden of Eden, and gave him dominion over all other creatures, hoping to have a long-lasting relationship with him. Instead, man disobeyed God by consuming the forbidden fruit that broke the valuable trust, separating man from the Creator. Klein asserts that there cannot be any relationship without trust, as loyalty demands mutuality. Sin would not have been part of human nature had the first man (Adam) acted according to God’s command. God gave him the free will to do whatever he wanted but expected him to abide by the “essence of the covenant relationship in place, which also means covenant to show loyalty and mercy to people.”<sup>104</sup> Similarly, “Jesus’ mission on earth is not just a physical one being

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<sup>100</sup> Acts 2:41, KJV.

<sup>101</sup> Tremper Longman and David E. Garland, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* Revised edition (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2005), 666, accessed June 29, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>102</sup> Schnabel, *Acts: Zondervan Exegetical Commentary*, 479.

<sup>103</sup> Kanagaraj, *John: A New Covenant Commentary*, 153.

<sup>104</sup> George Klein, *Zechariah: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 67, accessed June 29, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

played out on the stage of human history, but also a cosmic one that concerns the spiritual forces of good and evil, the dominion of Satan versus the Kingdom of God.”<sup>105</sup>

Nevertheless, the mercy of God led to another means to redeem humanity through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. The book of John affirms that “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”<sup>106</sup> Jesus only lived for thirty-three years before he ascended to heaven. According to Lightfoot and Witherington, “As this ascension from earth to heaven was real and sensible, so shall His descent from Haven to earth be not figurative – but literal, real and sensible.”<sup>107</sup>

### Biblical Foundation of the Old Testament

The Bible highlights numerous instances where God had used mighty men to fulfill His divine purpose. This dissertation will discuss the role of those leaders throughout history and how they influenced the early church. The aim is to learn from those outstanding leaders and emulate their teachings to improve church attendance. In the book of Genesis, the Scripture says, “And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.”<sup>108</sup> Noah was a righteous man, separated by God from the rest of humanity for His divine purpose. God instructed Noah to build an ark before the

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<sup>105</sup> Strauss, *Mark: Zondervan Exegetical Commentary*, 101.

<sup>106</sup> John 3:16, KJV.

<sup>107</sup> Joseph B. Lightfoot and Ben Witherington, III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Newly Discovered Commentary* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 74.

<sup>108</sup> Genesis 7:1, KJV.

destruction brought upon the earth in the deluge by God's wrath. Noah accepted God's commandment by faith and followed God's instructions. He was described as a respectable person but highly flawed. He was upright before God and always wanted to do the right thing.

Abraham, though not perfect either, was nevertheless righteous, making him known as a friend of God, which led to him being declared the father of all nations. He was indeed one of those who desired to do the will of God, seeking to obey whatever God commanded him.<sup>109</sup> At the inauguration of the divine mission to restore creation, "YHWH promises the opposite of curse in the form of life-giving blessing for both Abram's family and, through them, all the people of the world."<sup>110</sup>

God instructed him to go on a secret journey to sacrifice his only son Isaac, and he did so without question, indicating that he was a man of great faith. On this account, God promised Abraham and his descendants His blessing without requesting anything in return.<sup>111</sup> In the corporate world, leaders likewise often reach a point where they must take a risky step forward, resulting in tremendous success.

Another notable example of a righteous leader is Joseph, the son of Jacob and Rachel. He was Jacob's favorite son, but his brothers, being fed-up of Joseph's lording it over them and jealous of his favored status in their father's eyes, disowned him and sold him into slavery in Egypt. God, however, had turned his fate around. Joseph underwent a fundamental human

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<sup>109</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, *I Will Lift My Eyes Unto the Hills: Learning from the Great Prayers of the Old Testament* (Ashland: Lexham Press, 2018), 14, accessed June 29, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>110</sup> Brad E. Kelle, *Telling the Old Testament Story: God's Mission and God's People* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2017), 59, accessed June 29, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>111</sup> Robert Eisen, *Gersonides on Providence, Covenant, and the Chosen People: A Study in Medieval Jewish Philosophy and Biblical Commentary* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 40, accessed June 29, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

transformation, from a self-absorbed teenager, to the most forgiving being on earth.<sup>112</sup> His heart was full of such kindness that even after his brothers wronged him, he forgave them. Having risen to a high position in Pharaoh's court, Joseph's leadership skills were put to the test when Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce him. He resisted and was later falsely accused of improper behavior. While in prison, he offered Pharaoh the interpretation of his dream, and Pharaoh, in return, appointed him as head of the storehouse. Joseph was indeed a man of impeccable character. His skillset "prompted ancient authors to view him as a courtier and a role model, while some Bible scholars see Joseph as emblematic of the Bible's Wisdom tradition."<sup>113</sup> The Bible tells how Joseph's brothers, seeking to find relief from famine in Canaan, came to Egypt and bowed before Joseph, not knowing that he was their brother. Then Joseph did something remarkable: he welcomed them warmly, without letting their past transgressions against him prevent him from showing mercy. Again, Joseph's greatest challenge came to pass.

Moses, the servant of God, was second to none. He was one of the most outstanding leaders in human history and a man of valor determined to save his people. He was a great leader and was not afraid to return to Egypt following his exile in Midian. Sailhamer notes that "Moses reminds Israel that the great display of God's power in the giving of the Law at Sinai was to underscore the basic foundation of their wisdom – the fear of the Lord."<sup>114</sup> Moses' prophecy was unique in being exclusively occupied, and his record "functions as the central source for guiding

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<sup>112</sup> Douglas S. Earl, *Reading Old Testament Narrative as Christian Scripture* (Winona Lake, IN: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017), 106, accessed June 29, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>113</sup> Alan T. Levenson, *Joseph: Portraits through the Ages* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2016), 87, accessed June 29, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>114</sup> John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch As Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 1995), 433.

the Israelites to perfection in moral and intellectual matters.”<sup>115</sup> He was forced to become a visionary leader, "knowing that a major task lay ahead, following the events that brought him together with the Israelites to Midian."<sup>116</sup>

God not only delivered the Israelites but also chose them as His people. Moses knew he was chosen to lead them out of bondage. He fearlessly went back to Egypt to demand their release. At the parting of the Red Sea, Moses had complete faith in God and obeyed Him by stretching his hand over the Sea. He led his people through the Red Sea into the wilderness by the mighty hand of God.

Moses was also a mediator.<sup>117</sup> He assumed moral responsibility for Israel and showed them how to follow the will of God. He is known as one of the greatest spiritual leaders. His journey was cut short because of his disobedience at the water of Meribah. The Scripture says, “And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.”<sup>118</sup> Moses did not die of old age, and his eyes were not weak. Joshua took over from Moses and led the Israelites to the promised land. Sailhamer confirms that Joshua was “filled with the spirit of wisdom and thus able to do the work of God.”<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Eisen, *Gersonides on Providence*, 76.

<sup>116</sup> Arthur J. Wolak, *Religion and Contemporary Management Moses as a Model for Effective Leadership* (New York: Anthem Press, 2016), 90.

<sup>117</sup> Michael Widmer, *Moses, God, and the Dynamics of Intercessory Prayer a Study of Exodus 32-34 and Numbers 13-14* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 73.

<sup>118</sup> Numbers 20:12, KJV.

<sup>119</sup> Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch As Narrative*, 478.

David is another example of a notable leader. He was known as the giant killer, and God described him as a man of his own heart. He was a political leader because of the servant role with his predecessor, King Saul, and possessed great religious significance.<sup>120</sup> He killed Goliath with a stone fired from a slingshot when others never dared to confront him. David was also anointed as the next King of Israel after Saul, with the desire to lead God's people. He was a warrior and did all he could to demonstrate his leadership skills. He was also a "unifying political force who inspired ardent loyalty."<sup>121</sup>

Like every other prophet, however, David had flaws, and his life did not end well. He willingly stepped up and offered himself to be used by God but was not considered a prophet of the same scale as Moses. His journey highlights that good leaders always act when no one is willing.

All these leaders demonstrated great faith in God and excellent leadership skills. Noah was a visionary leader who never allowed pride to get in his way and became the most fearless person on earth. Abraham, the father of all nations, was a transformational leader and always stood up for people in times of need. Regarding integrity, Joseph was a disciplined and strategic leader, a man full of mercy and grace. Moses humbled himself before the Lord in the burning bush and never hid his weaknesses. He held people accountable and took responsibility for their lack of belief. His successor, Joshua, also led God's people with passion and confidence. Lastly, David, who was courageous and humble, refused to shy away from his weakness and accepted responsibility.

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<sup>120</sup> Paul R. Abramson, *David's Politics: Servant, Rebel, King* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016), 18, accessed June 29, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>121</sup> Blaire A. French, *Chronicles through the Centuries* Chichester (England: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 43.



## Biblical Foundation of the New Testament

The birth of Jesus was predicted and came to pass. John the Baptist's purpose on earth was to introduce the Lord's coming and call people, and especially sinners, to repentance. The goal was not only to change people intellectually but also to initiate, "a radical transformation of the entire person, a fundamental turnaround involving mind and action and including overtones of grief, which results in fruit in keeping with repentance."<sup>122</sup> John was a man of integrity with a strong will to exercise his convictions. His leadership style was noted when Jesus came to him and asked him to serve as Jesus' Baptist. The Scripture says, "But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?"<sup>123</sup> He was known for his humble heart.

The greatest of all, Jesus Christ taught His disciples and those who followed Him how to remain humble, and He followed a consistent leadership style throughout His entire journey. The voice from heaven declared, "You are my Son, the beloved; with you I am well pleased. This is the Father's commissioning of the Son of God and Messiah to His redemptive mission, endowing Him with the authority and power of the Holy Spirit as the Father's representative par excellence and agent of salvation."<sup>124</sup> The sheep of Jesus was His possession for whom He had unfailing love. Kanagaraj asserts, "When all his sheep come out of the fold, the shepherd goes before them and the sheep follow Him by recognizing rightly their shepherd's voice."<sup>125</sup> He did not let His divine power get in the way, even up to the point of death. He came to earth to serve

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<sup>122</sup> Longman and Garland, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 164.

<sup>123</sup> Matthew 3:14, KJV.

<sup>124</sup> Diane Chen, *A New Covenant Commentary: Luke* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), 54.

<sup>125</sup> Kanagaraj, *John: A New Covenant Commentary*, 107.

rather than be served, reproofed His disciples out of love, and constantly warned them of the danger ahead. Jesus also forgives sins and performs miracles so that the onlookers may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to “forgive the sins of His people.”<sup>126</sup> The disciples accepted His leadership style because they knew who He was.

In one instance, Jesus condemned Peter’s action and asked him to put back his sword into its sheath after he cut off the right ear of the high priest’s servant at the time of His arrest. Another critical concept learned from Jesus’ leadership was a positive attitude. He believed there is a greater propensity for growth if “the leaders keep the church focused on the mission of bringing others into the community to promote the spirit of love and unity.”<sup>127</sup>

Jesus led with love and compassion, never allowing His needs to overrule that of his followers. He performed His first miracle in Cana, in Galilee, when He turned water into wine and manifested His glory. Moreso, the “resurrection of Jesus opened the eyes of Jesus’ community to see the reality behind His signs and symbolic acts.”<sup>128</sup> While Jesus only ministered for three years out of the 33 years on earth, He led by example and ensured His followers were given clear goals and direction. He believed in responsibility and accountability, realizing that people cannot be responsible for their sinful actions unless they have been given a clear moral path from their leader to follow.

Everyone Jesus called saw something special in Him, making them answer His call. In the book of Matthew, Jesus saw Peter and Andrew at the sea of Galilee “And he saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”<sup>129</sup> Jesus did not see them as fishermen but as

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<sup>126</sup> Kanagaraj, *John: A New Covenant Commentary*, 9.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>129</sup> Matthew 4:19, KJV.

those who could make a difference in people's lives. He transformed their common menial professions into a form of spiritual calling.

The reconstruction of the Twelve through the election of Matthias underscores the identity of the community of Jesus' followers as the people of God. The mission was to appoint another disciple (to replace Judas Iscariot), who presumably had first-hand knowledge of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.<sup>130</sup> Peter was one of Jesus' disciples and the first to speak openly about Jesus on the Day of Pentecost. He never doubted that Jesus was the Messiah.

Peter gave up his career as a fisherman to become a follower of Christ and was the first to initiate a healing miracle in Jesus' name. He led with passion and fortitude. Although he denied the Lord in three instances at the most critical time, he never allowed his flaws to stop him from following in Jesus' example. Sadly, after "hearing the rooster's crowing and suddenly remembering Jesus' earlier words" about Peter's impending denial of Jesus' divinity, Peter broke down and wept.<sup>131</sup>

While apostle Paul was not among the Twelve, he had a significant impact on the early church. He met the Lord on his way to Damascus and later devoted his life to Jesus, becoming one of his followers. His legacy remains central to the Christian faith to this day because of his discipleship to Jesus.

Apostle Paul wrote almost two-thirds of the New Testament and assumed the position of spiritual father to Timothy and Titus. His outstanding leadership skills were demonstrated by governing the people in his ministry and promoting accountability, but he always did it with

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<sup>130</sup> Schnabel, *Acts: Zondervan Exegetical Commentary*, 87.

<sup>131</sup> Strauss, *Mark: Zondervan Exegetical Commentary*, 665.

passion. He also wrote pastoral letters to the Church about Christian liberty and ministerial remuneration. Paul contested the claim that Christ's death was not completely sufficient; it would support the false teachers' contention that something more than Christ was required to receive divine blessings.<sup>132</sup>

The purpose of the Pauline Letters is twofold. First, to reveal the mystical nature of the Church on how the Jews and the Gentiles could work together. Second, Paul wanted to remind both congregations of their appointed places in heaven, clarifying that salvation is God's work alone through faith, thereby warning them against following false teachings.

If one would be inclined to rank leadership qualities in the New Testament, no one can compare to the Lord Himself, Jesus, who spoke the ultimate truth and showed limitless compassion to His people. He exhibited boundless grace and mercy, forgiving even those who caused him harm. Peter did not let his past mistakes affect his future, whereas Paul was God's servant at heart and always willing to do the right thing. He was a man of integrity and remained faithful even up to the point of death, being humble and very devoted to his calling.

The researcher believes that the leadership team at Gateway Church will emulate the skills and personalities of these great Biblical leaders and do whatever it takes to make their mission at the church a success.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

Leadership plays a vital role in every organization. God uses church leaders to send messages to His people. The Bible is the only authoritative book given to humankind. The

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<sup>132</sup> G. K. Beale, *Colossians and Philemon (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament)*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 160, accessed June 29, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

Scripture says, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”<sup>133</sup> The researcher believes that Gateway Church will experience church growth if it embarks on leadership development “since the sanctification of God’s name involves preserving God’s reputation and honor.”<sup>134</sup> To achieve this goal, the reviewer conducted a literature review on leadership development and investigated how culture affects organization structure. Greear asserts that “strategy without culture yields fatigue, frustration, and failure.”<sup>135</sup> The researcher would also inquire with those who had experienced similar situations in the past because “sometimes God puts ministry opportunities right in front of our eyes; we tend to miss them, however, because we are thinking and praying about other things or are absorbed in our own ways of doing things.”<sup>136</sup>

Stanley identifies a couple of themes directly related to church growth and leadership culture. He affirmed that “You should never begin a conversation about change by addressing where you are now. You should always begin with where you want to be.”<sup>137</sup> In this context, Stanley views ‘change’ as a by-product of vision and as a movement. Change is possible, but the organization must be willing to do whatever it takes to make it work. The researcher will ensure that the leadership team embraces the church’s vision since the lack of ‘mission’ results in a lack of a ‘vision.’ The mission is the driving force behind the organization’s vision.

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<sup>133</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16, KJV.

<sup>134</sup> Chen, *A New Covenant Commentary*, 160.

<sup>135</sup> J. D. Greear, *Gaining by Losing: Why the Future Belongs to Churches That Send* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 156, accessed December 7, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>136</sup> Eric Swanson and Rick Rusaw, *The Externally Focused Quest: Becoming the Best Church for the Community* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2010), 121, accessed December 7, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>137</sup> Stanley, *Deep & Wide*, 315.

Moreover, Stanley asserts that the issue of evangelism emerged as a warning sign for church leaders across the board. He urges the leadership team to focus its attention on the unchurched rather than going after the saved because “there is more rejoicing in heaven over newly found people than people who haven’t been lost for a long time.”<sup>138</sup> Stanley also encourages others not to discount those interested in ministry work because of their economic status or ethnic background, as they too can play a major role in the expansion of the church. Halter and Smay state that “the gifting of the leader is crucial to assess because it will not only help the leadership team to understand the amount of time necessary for change to occur” but also permit the organization to measure the effectiveness of the policy in place.<sup>139</sup>

Wilson, a writer and ministry consultant, shares his theological worldview on leadership culture. It was far different from how other theologians addressed leadership development as he employed a missional model to explain his ideology on church growth. Wilson highlights an important question: at what point do leaders realize they had made a mistake? It is one thing to make mistakes, but another to learn from them. Those who refuse to accept their mistakes can never make good leaders. Leaders are not those who never make mistakes but rather ones who know how to identify their mistakes, learn from them, and transform them into their strengths. An essential part of a church’s discipleship is when people learn how “to take responsibility for their faith and begin to live it out according to biblical wisdom in Christ.”<sup>140</sup> Wilson also argues that leaders should always live by example and always have the desire to share the good news about salvation with others. He addresses the issue of accountability and recommends periodic

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<sup>138</sup> Stanley, *Deep & Wide*, 271.

<sup>139</sup> Hugh Halter and Matt Smay, *And: The Gathered and Scattered Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 99, accessed December 7, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>140</sup> Wilson, *The Prodigal Church*, 117.

training to ensure those in leadership positions have access to resources, also regarding accountability as a means of controlling deviant behavior.

Halter and Smay affirm that “disciples are called out of their selfish ambitions with the understanding that the longer they follow Jesus, the more uncomfortable they will be and the more sacrifice and effort” will be required of them.<sup>141</sup> According to Boyer, effective leadership helps others to “understand the purpose of events by focusing on the unity of purpose, positivity and cohesiveness, trust and cooperation, collective identity, activity performance, organizational learning, support and resources, development and empowerment, and justice and morality.”<sup>142</sup>

The researcher highlighted another problem facing the church, which was the attitude of the unchurched toward the Gospel message. There is always an unwavering power in grace when people “take up ministry crosses, die to visionary selves, and follow Christ’s ways.”<sup>143</sup> Church leaders must take appropriate measures to help members achieve spiritual maturity by asking them to focus more on Jesus. They must also be intentional in their missionary work and embrace every race, irrespective of their economic status.

The church must offer the unchurched the same opportunities and guidance as those offered to its own congregation so that they can experience the love of God. After all, everyone was once unsaved before receiving God’s mercy. Church leaders must focus on spiritual empowerment and be always eager to help those in need.

The researcher aims to develop a model to address the problem facing the Gateway Church by carefully examining specific areas, including church growth, evangelism, salvation,

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<sup>141</sup> Halter and Smay, *And: The Gathered*, 64.

<sup>142</sup> Stuart W. Boyer, *Biblical Leadership Development: Principles for Developing Organizational Leaders at Every Level* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 179.

<sup>143</sup> Wilson, *The Prodigal Church*, 184.

spiritual maturity, and leadership culture. To truly rediscover and recommit to Jesus, the church “must understand the institutional missteps that have brought us to this place.”<sup>144</sup> The

dissertation will therefore address the following questions:

1. How is the issue of sin addressed within the church, to accommodate those struggling with their past?
2. Does the church have procedures in place to ensure the gospel reaches the lost, and how does the church become involved in members’ spiritual well-being?
3. What rules are in place to ensure church leaders abide by the code of ethics and continue to operate within the applicable guidelines?
4. What is the demographic composition of the congregation, and how does the church view the EDI protocol?
5. What are the rules regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and how does the church lead new converts to Christ?

God’s people need leadership and care to remain healthy and grow in their faith. Similarly, “the local church needs healthy leadership to fulfill its calling to make, baptize, and teach followers of Jesus Christ.”<sup>145</sup>

The researcher will ensure that the leadership team embraces this model to nurture gifted leaders and make it a priority for the local church. Most importantly, it is integral to treat everyone fairly and equally. If we want to grow and expand our churches, we cannot relegate ‘missions’ to a specific department in the church. Being a disciple means being sent. So, sending

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<sup>144</sup> Mike Slaughter, *Change the World: Recovering the Message and Mission of Jesus* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 40, accessed December 7, 2021, ProQuest Ebook Central.

<sup>145</sup> Scott Andrew Nichols, "Training Leaders for Ministry at Crossroads Community Church in Carol Stream, Illinois" (Order No. 28148413, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020), 10, In PROQUESTMS ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu>.



should pervade every aspect of discipleship development. Everything one does and learns in the “Christian faith ought to be in the context of the Great Commission.”<sup>146</sup>

The researcher will continue searching for information to ensure every area of the ministry is covered by the proposed reform plan while reviewing the church’s organizational culture. The leadership team likewise needs to “pitch their wonderings and musings in ways that open and enlarge space for exploration rather than close and shut it down.”<sup>147</sup>

The church may continue to experience growth problems if it does not change its position on church diversity. If leaders are going to reach new people, they “have to take radical actions related to the reallocation of resources.”<sup>148</sup> Many churches are still struggling to survive because they fail to recognize the importance of culture in their organization. Authentic leaders remain “guided by the qualities of the heart, passion, and compassion as they are by qualities of the mind” with a major focus on empowerment and betterment of others.<sup>149</sup> In the book of 1 Timothy, the Scripture says, “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Greear, *Gaining by Losing*, 112.

<sup>147</sup> Michael Paterson and Jessica Rose, *Enriching Ministry: Pastoral Supervision in Practice* (London: Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd, 2014), 223.

<sup>148</sup> Slaughter, *Change the World*, 74.

<sup>149</sup> Boyer, *Biblical Leadership Development*, 180.

<sup>150</sup> 1 Timothy 3:15, KJV.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

As noted in Chapter 1, this study addresses the problem facing the Gateway Church, particularly the declining numbers and members' unwillingness to commit to the Christian community. To accomplish the proposed reform, the researcher aims to determine the nature of the problem and identify a specific intervention approach that will eliminate the growth problem.

The researcher reviewed several works of literature to seek guidance on how to reshape the leadership structure at the Gateway Church, and embarked on a work plan that will reorganize the existing leadership culture to accomplish this goal. He also considered a study through research questions that will generate feedback from those willing to participate in the study. Ultimately, the researcher will re-evaluate and make recommendations based on the outcome of the research.

To be effective, the team must develop a relational connection within the church environment and know how to function well in every difficult situation. Leadership development is not just about identifying potential candidates but also about building and maintaining relationships, which requires dedication and a high degree of commitment.

Many church leaders do not view leadership as the basis for the spiritual foundation in ministries. The leadership issue is one of the main reasons the church members are not committed to the community at Gateway Church. Pettit contends that servant leaders are mostly inspired by the accomplishment of God's calling for their ministries and those He wants

to use for His glory.<sup>151</sup> The church leadership needs a new direction to ensure that the church leaders lead by example and show evidence of spiritual maturity.

Maxwell identifies five different levels of leadership hierarchy and explains its various levels, from entry-level to the pinnacle of the organizational structure. According to the author, leadership potential is a common trait that everyone possesses and presumably can use to lead, but not everyone can become a leader. Success in leadership depends on individual preferences and how far they are willing to commit to the application process and its ramifications. Although the opportunity to serve may carry some benefits, some people have no desire to get into management. Those committed to taking a leading role in management must still be trained to lead others.

Maxwell situates each level as the starting point of leadership, where those interested in leadership positions try to impress and influence others in order to gain a higher station. At the same time, things can quickly get complicated as the leader moves up to the next level. With the help of others, leaders gradually learn how to adapt to the environment until they become comfortable with the process.

The researcher will introduce the concept to the leadership team and will solicit feedback for future assignments. Maxwell introduces the different areas of management levels as follows:

### *Position Level*

Maxwell describes the first leadership level as a position or entry-level leadership, the lowest rank in the leadership hierarchy. He views the entry-level as a supervisory level position.

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<sup>151</sup> Paul Pettit, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: a Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2008), 180.

One way of attaining the rank is by demonstrating a high commitment and excellent work ethic. People only follow those with leadership skills and the ability to issue clear instructions, making it easy for them to respect and look up to them for directions and decisions. The position is less demanding because people in that position are not leaders.

### *Permission Level*

The next level is the permission level of leadership, which requires the leader to be trustworthy and honest. It also relates to how individuals present themselves to the outside world. As Maxwell asserts, “You cannot lead people well without liking them.”<sup>152</sup>

People may be disposed to follow the leader but are uncertain about how much effort the leader is willing to invest in showing their ability to lead. The position also requires the leader to be able to handle tough decisions and unexpected challenges. If care is not taken, the team may abandon the leader if they attempt to rule by force. However, people at this level are more interested in learning about people in their inner circle because of their influence.

### *Production Level*

The next level is production-level leadership. At this level, the production level soars, and things are looking good because of the leader's ability to execute tasks and bring them to completion. The actual teamwork begins at this level.

This leader is known to be a high-risk taker, and the team can see a clear path ahead as the leader charts the course and leads them toward their goal. The leader also feels comfortable taking control of the business operation, for they know the area of the decision-making process

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<sup>152</sup> John C. Maxwell, *How Successful People Lead: Taking Your Influence to the Next Level* (First Edition. New York: Center Street, 2013), 11.

that may negatively impact the organization. While this may be considered a breaking point in the leadership hierarchy, work may be overwhelming for someone rated as 'ready with development.'

### *People Development Level*

There is always room for leadership development at this level, as leaders play a vital role in empowering others to improve. The production leader enables others to get involved and share in their success. However, the people development leader is prepared to take on additional pressure and lead by example. Prior engagements prepare them for the work ahead.

Leaders who make it to this level always inspire others to do the same. It is the level where the leader experiences intense responsibilities, and they may be tempted to resist. The researcher will do his best to ensure those interested in management are thoroughly trained and well-equipped to deal with these intense responsibilities that involve commitment and focus on moving to the pinnacle level.

### *Pinnacle Level*

The last stage is the pinnacle leadership level, which only top-notch level achievers can reach. It is the highest leadership rank, and only a few leaders can achieve this level.

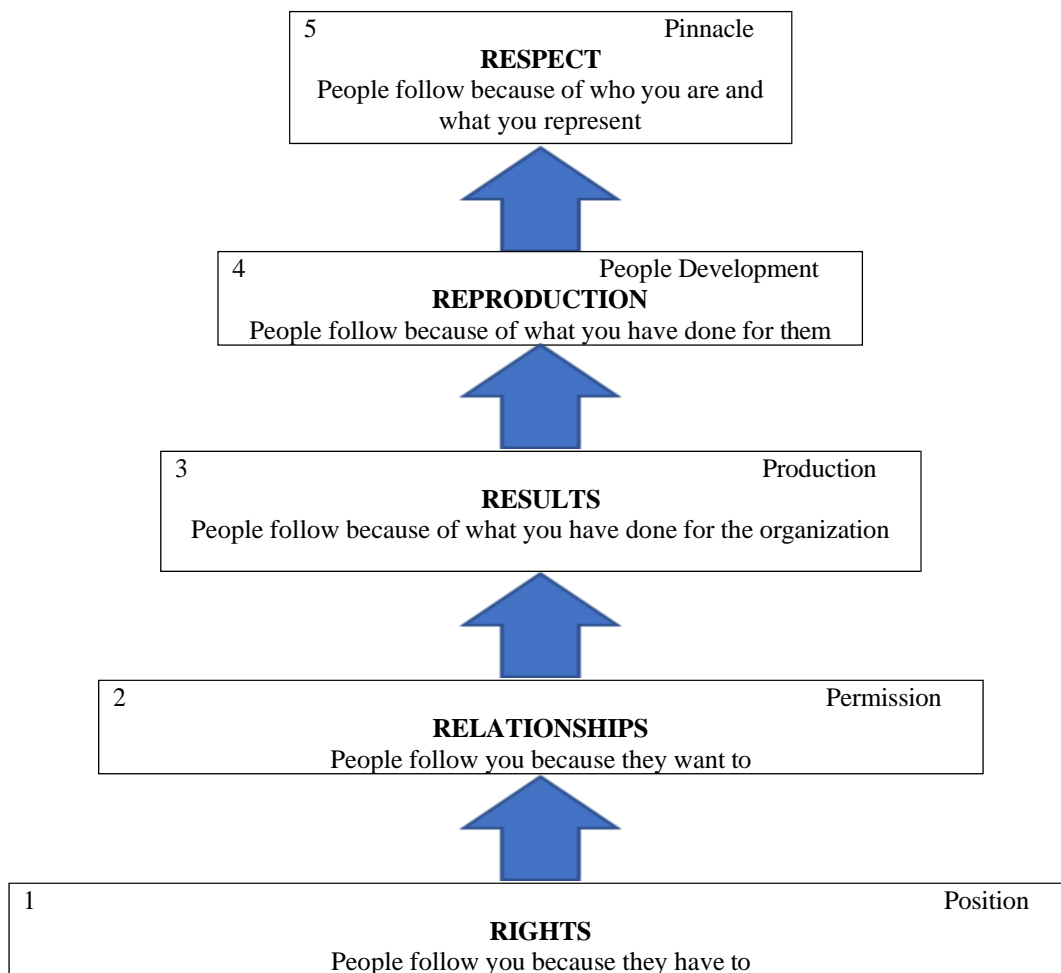
Pinnacle leaders take ownership of the environment, ensuring the organization achieves its goal. They pass their acquired experience to others who have the potential to become leaders and uphold their legacy. There is nothing else for them to strive for other than making sure people behind have the same opportunity to pursue their future goals.

Pinnacle leaders also mentor and coach subordinates since they have reached the level of an expert to whom leadership comes naturally. They know how to get the job done no matter the

constraints or intense pressure. While their subordinates look up to them due to their accomplishments, pride due to their successes may sometimes occlude their judgement. Figure 1 below illustrates the five levels of leadership identified by Maxwell.

**Figure 1.**

Overview of the 5 Levels of Leadership



Maxwell affirms in this diagram that leaders must always work in obedience and demonstrate their commitment. They must show humility and prepare to manifest a high level of integrity in every area of their lives, both within and outside the work environment.

In this light, the researcher aims to introduce a strategy that will address the problem facing the Gateway Church from a leadership point of view. The intervention design will also address the steps detailed below and provide other avenues for the church to experience growth.

**Table 1.1**

*Training Schedule*

<b>Leadership Development Action Plan</b>	
Step 1	Each leader must take a leadership assessment test to identify current skills, strengths, and weaknesses.
Step 2	The researcher will evaluate each candidate based on the assessment results and share information with the leaders. The privacy of the participants will be protected.
Step 3	The researcher will announce and schedule a leadership meeting via email to discuss how to move things forward. Attendance is highly encouraged.
Step 4	The five training sessions will take place every other week, and each session will last 160 minutes. Training will focus on five areas: spiritual maturity, cross-cultural awareness, disciple-making process, evangelism, and performance and accountability
Step 5	1 <sup>st</sup> Training Session: The researcher will teach spiritual maturity. He will email the assignment to the participants after the meeting. Submission due the following week individually by email. The researcher will review and provide feedback to the participants.
Step 6	2 <sup>nd</sup> Training Session: Training will focus on cross-cultural awareness, diversity, and inclusion. The researcher will email the assignment to the leaders and provide feedback through email the following week.
Step 7	3 <sup>rd</sup> Training Session: The researcher will instruct the disciple-making process, emphasizing balancing work and family life. The assignment will be emailed to the participants. The researcher will review and respond via email the following week.
Step 8	Mid-Cycle Review: The researcher will schedule a conference call with each leader before the next session to address areas of improvement and answer questions.
Step 9	4 <sup>th</sup> Training Session: The researcher will teach leaders the importance of street evangelism and how to reach out to the lost. Feedback will be provided via email based on responses to questions on evangelism.
Step 10	5 <sup>th</sup> Training Session: The researcher will address performance problems and accountability, emphasizing problem-solving skills. Thirty minutes will be reserved for teamwork and feedback. There will be no assignment on this topic, but the researcher will encourage participants to reach out with questions or concerns.

Step 11	The researcher will provide outside training opportunities to the participants for further development.
Step 12	The researcher will continue to monitor progress and provide feedback from time to time.
Step 13	Update in Six Months: The researcher will review and evaluate the program. He will also offer feedback to the leaders for further improvements.

In the action plan detailed above the researcher provided a chronological sequence of how Gateway Church would address the leadership problem. First, all leaders would undergo an online self-assessment test through a third-party company that will evaluate each candidate in the area of spiritual concerns, emotional distress, and relational domains. This assessment will help the researcher to focus more on leadership development. The church will pay for the test to encourage participation. The researcher will also discuss assessment results with each potential leader and develop a plan to identify the right leader for each area of the ministry.

Second, the researcher will meet with the leadership team to discuss the training schedule. Each module will focus on leaders' strengths and weaknesses based on overall assessment results. The training will be held every two weeks and last two and half months. The team will also meet every other week on Monday from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The researcher will record every session and make it available for those who cannot attend the meeting. There will also be weekly assignments based on the training materials and group discussions. Candidates will be required to respond to those questions and send responses to the researcher via email for feedback. On-time submission will be emphasized throughout the entire process.

Third, sessions will be held over the course of two-and-a-half months. The researcher will perform an off-week assessment via conference call on any day of the week before the next



training session. During the off weeks, the researcher will schedule an individual session with each participant to discuss their progress and provide feedback.

The mid-cycle week serves as an opportunity for candidates struggling with their assignments or any ministry-related issues to meet with the researcher to discuss any issues and resolve problems.

The next training session deals with evangelism, and the last focuses on performance and accountability. Candidates will learn how to apply problem-solving skills to every problematic situation that arises within the ministry context. There will be no take-home assignment at the end of the last session, but the candidates will be allowed to work in groups and share their learning experiences.

Fourth, the researcher will contact outside organizations or ministries for leadership training. The church will cover the cost to encourage participation and avoid financial burdens or other hindrances that may likely discourage participants from attending the training. Of course, outside training is not mandatory and will not be used as part of performance evaluation. The researcher also understands how beneficial it will be for the team to have an expert share their leadership skills, experience, and tips to help them improve their leadership skills and shift their paradigm. The researcher will continue to monitor progress and periodically provide feedback to the leadership team.

Lastly, the leadership team will dedicate two hours to street evangelism every Saturday at 10:00 am to spread the word of God and encourage people to participate in church activities. Fliers and business cards will be created that the team can distribute during these sessions. In addition, the researcher will make periodic announcements during church service to encourage church members to invite family members and friends to church. He will also ensure that people

at the front doors are excellent representatives of the church, as their actions and demeanor will determine whether members, especially new converts, will return for future services.

### **Long-Term Intervention**

The long-term intervention involves a strategic plan that the researcher intends to execute. The current or ongoing intervention plan will be tested over the course of six months from the program's inception, to see whether the organization is on the right track, identify any problems, and highlight which facets of the program are most effective for furthering the church's cause. This phase would also be dependent on the results of the initial intervention plan and will only commence after six months. Ultimately, the researcher will conduct an assessment test involving the leadership team and re-evaluate the current situation.

This section aims to implement a long-term intervention plan, focusing on leadership assessment, church attendance, and discipleship. The researcher will review and evaluate each area throughout the six months to ensure that the plan is still functioning. Each leader will be accountable for what worked well and what did not work in their respective ministries. The researcher will use the results to determine the following line of action.

Once the cause of the problem is identified, the researcher will meet with the leadership team to address the issue. Depending on the nature of the problem, the team has two options: rectify the issue and try for another three months or go back to the initial intervention plan.

The attendance records and visitors' logbooks will also be subjected to a periodic review. The researcher will further investigate whether the church has experienced growth in the last six months.

## Leadership Assessment

The leadership assessment considers all activities that have occurred since the beginning of the project. As part of the assessment process, the researcher will evaluate the effectiveness of the program and, if necessary, conduct a short interview with two or three members from each department. The participant identification will remain anonymized, and the subject matter will remain confidential. However, the researcher will perform periodic performance evaluations and, if necessary, make recommendations to the leadership team.

This section also addresses the skills and spiritual gifts of those in the leadership team and determines whether they have been slotted in the right ministry. The researcher anticipates seeing changes in this area once the intervention plan is in force. He will also assess the team and provide additional resources, if necessary.

The following are some of the questions the researcher would ask the participants:

- Have you noticed any changes in the way the church operates lately, particularly in the area of your assigned ministry? If yes, what are they?
- Do you think you are growing spiritually based on your learning experience?
- Would you be willing to invite friends and family members to the church based on what you have witnessed and experienced in the church so far?
- Is there any area of concern in your ministry that needs improvement? If yes, what are they, and what do you suggest that the leadership team should do to solve the problem?
- Finally, are you proud to be a member of this church? If so, why?

The researcher believes these questions will assist in the overall assessment. The identity of the individuals will be protected, and the researcher will ensure that all issues highlighted in this assessment are properly addressed at the leadership level.

## Church Attendance

After the first six months, the researcher will review the attendance record and schedule a team meeting with the leaders to share the assessment updates. The goal of this meeting will be to evaluate the program results and seek the next course of action. The researcher will use Microsoft tools to gather and analyze data.

Past attendance records will be compared with current results. The researcher will consider additional intervention measures if the organization fails to achieve its goals. The challenge in this section is to see whether attendance numbers have remained the same, declined, or if more members have joined the church. The corrective action, therefore, depends on the outcome of the intervention plan.

The spiritual well-being of members is another area of concern for the researcher as there is bound to be a setback in case the members are not growing spiritually, which could further impact the church growth problems. The researcher will take the following steps in case the results show that the church is still struggling:

- Evaluate the results and assess the current situation
- Have a meeting with the team and investigate the cause (goals not met)
- Identify the areas where things went wrong
- Implement a new strategy to rectify the situation
- Conduct another review in three months
- Revisit the initial intervention plan (if the problem still exists)

## Discipleship

The researcher is anticipating a positive change in the area of discipleship, which is an integral part of the intervention program. The researcher is more concerned about developing new leaders in the church. However, very few people recognize the need to implement new leadership programs to improve participation.<sup>153</sup> The researcher will create more small groups and encourage members to join.

Members are bound to feel a sense of belonging when they can participate in various church activities, so it would be in the best interest of the leadership team to encourage participation and allow members to become more engaged. Jessie declares, “Leaders know that bringing the right people together will provide the solutions to the challenges and problems that need to be addressed. Additionally, they provide the motivation that leads the team to work their own process and solve the recognized challenges and problems.”<sup>154</sup> The church will continue to address the leadership problem and assist members in their spiritual walk with the Lord.

## Intervention Design

The researcher is the Lead Pastor of Gateway Church. The church is located in Houston, Texas. Members are from different economic and ethnic backgrounds, and they are unrelated to the researcher.

This study will be independently conducted without any interference from church members not participating in the study to protect the integrity of the project. Those selected for

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<sup>153</sup> Stanley, *Leadership Development*, 4.

<sup>154</sup> Jessie, "Contextual Model," 48.

the study would be given the opportunity to withdraw their consent before or during the project. Personally identifiable information, such as social security numbers, date of birth, addresses, etc., would not be requested or stored to protect the identity of members. Participants would also have the option to remain anonymous throughout the entire process.

This researcher employs a practical approach focusing on church growth and leadership development in five different areas: spiritual maturity, cross-cultural awareness, disciple-making process, evangelism, and performance and accountability.

Spiritual maturity requires study participants to take an assessment test or answer basic questions about who they are in Christ. The outcome of this test would allow the prospective leader to usher “the followers into spiritual maturity and develop their ministry capabilities by working together with the followers for a designated period of time.”<sup>155</sup> This step aims to assess the spiritual maturity of members and asks if the person is already saved.

In step two, the researcher will address the importance of cross-cultural awareness. The church has a non-discriminatory policy that prohibits unwelcome practices against members based on their ethnic or economic background.

Step three will also address the disciple-making process to encourage involvement in the work of the ministry, making study participants the disciple-makers. Every leader is spiritually empowered to engage in the disciple-making process by teaching others how to develop a good relationship with the Lord.

The next phase will focus on evangelism. The book of Matthew states, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy

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<sup>155</sup> Otto Lui, *Development of Chinese Church Leaders: A Study of Relational Leadership in Contemporary Chinese Churches* (Carlisle: Langham Creative Projects, 2013), 269.

Ghost.”<sup>156</sup> Every believer is commissioned to go and preach the gospel to all nations with the aim to send, seek, and multiply.

The last phase is centered on performance and accountability. This step entails periodic assessment and performance evaluation. Accountability must be enforced at all levels if the organization wants to experience growth.

### Design Process

The researcher petitioned the Institutional Review Board (IRB) office by submitting all required paperwork and did not commence field research until the IRB office approved the application (see Appendix E). Upon receiving approval on November 23, 2021, the researcher designed a practicable timeline to prepare for the study.

The research questions were designed to address different areas of church operation, using an easy-to-comprehend approach and moderate language. The researcher advised each participant to read the consent form (see Appendix A) before making decisions and informed them that the survey was optional. He also followed the implementation guidelines given by the IRB to ensure the project was executed correctly.

This project required the researcher to conduct an online survey through a third-party company called Survey Legend. The researcher contacted the company to set up an account. Once the setup was successful, the company sent a portal link to the researcher to access the portal. The researcher entered survey questions on the portal where participants could submit their responses. The researcher thereafter emailed research information to all participants and the consent form for further action (see Appendices B–D).

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<sup>156</sup> Matthew 28:19, KJV.

Additionally, the researcher emailed all participants to let them know the purpose of the research. He also advised them in the email that the participation was voluntary. The electronic copy of the Consent Form was included in the email along with the link. In the document, the purpose of the study was clearly stated, and participants were informed that their information would not be stored to protect their identity. Participants will access the website directly from their email accounts to take the survey.

To be eligible to participate in the survey, all individuals must be members of the church and should be at least eighteen years of age or older. Moreover, the study would not discriminate against anyone based on race, gender, or socioeconomic status. The researcher expected the sample size to be between forty and forty-five people, depending on how many church members would be willing to participate.

There is a specific cost associated with the website set-up, as the company (Survey Legend) charges a monthly fee of \$19 for the service, based on the duration it takes to complete the project. The researcher would also need a computer, printer, and stationery items to complete the project.

To uphold the ethical requirements for the study, the researcher employs a methodology that would protect the identity and personally identifiable information of the participants. The researcher encouraged participants to be truthful in their responses to improve the quality of the study. He also advised participants to contact him for any questions or concerns. Participants were not required to provide names or other information that would identify them, and all responses were confidential. The timelines for the research are stated in the table below.



**Table 1.2**

Research Timeline

Activity	Timeline (Weeks)
Creation of letters and Forms	1
IRB Documents Submission	2
Email and Website Setup	2
Response Waiting Period	3
Data Collection and Compilation	1
Assessment and Synthesis	2
Data Reporting	2

Research Questions

This section outlines the main objective of the project as it pertains to the culture and mission of the church. It also addresses issues that are preventing the organization from experiencing church growth.

Due to its application process, the researcher will use the quantitative method to encourage participation and seek ways to avert possible pitfalls during implementation. Most questions require yes or no answers, and a few questions require additional feedback in certain areas from participants.

The use of the qualitative method is beyond the scope of this study, which is why the selected approach would assist the researcher in addressing questions that focus on leadership training and culture.

The researcher drafted thirty-two questions based on the problem identified in Chapter 1 and grouped those questions into five areas: spiritual maturity, cross-cultural awareness, disciple-making process, evangelism, and performance and accountability. The researcher identified and

focused on those areas potentially affecting church operations. He will provide recommendations on the outcome of the research questions and explain how their outcome affects ministry leadership culture. Most of the questions are of the type ‘yes/no’ or ‘true/false.’

In the survey, the researcher asked questions on issues that affect church culture and leadership styles of those in authority. There are only two open-ended questions in the survey.

### *Spiritual Maturity*

This section examines members’ spiritual well-being and assesses their spiritual maturity since the church members aim to experience growth in their lives and seek positive transformation. The researcher would like to see some improvements in this area.

The church will grow when members experience the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, as church members want to be a part of a community that allows them to grow and flourish. Nevertheless, it is one thing to present opportunities, but another to use them and benefit from them.

This theme examines how church leaders lead members within the church—having people clustered in a smaller group would help the church reach out to many people and keep things in perspective. Gull affirms that one requires spiritual leadership to distinguish “the great from the terrible or between great, better, and best in a universe of limitless conceivable outcomes.”<sup>157</sup>

Also, the researcher thought it necessary to have some questions included in the research that would challenge each leader—questions seven, eight, and twelve attempt to gather

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<sup>157</sup> Maleehah Gull, *Spiritual Leadership* (Ashland: Society Publishing, 2019), 66.

information from the participants. Question seven asked whether the participant would like to take part in ministry work and to what extent.

Question eight is a follow-up question to question seven. The researcher thought six hours of commitment to church work a month would be practical, considering the urgency of the task. In question twelve, the researcher would like to know whether anyone would be interested in joining LifeGroup.

LifeGroup is another way of connecting people to spiritual growth, strengthening relationships among church members by encouraging members to get involved in group activities. The researcher will find a way to promote the program within the church and encourage members to consider joining while also providing the church leaders with appropriate training for managing and organizing the program.

There are two questions on spiritual maturity: twenty and twenty-one that focus on how the pastoral team functions within the ministry. The pastoral staff oversees the coaching and mentoring aspect of the ministry. These questions aim to evaluate its performance and assess areas where adjustment is mostly needed.

Question twenty-five seeks participants to state their opinions regarding the benefit of teamwork. The researcher believes that the outcome of the study will reveal the preferred method and allow the leadership team to re-evaluate the system in place. The researcher will also provide the right resources for team leaders to effectively do their job.

Lastly, questions twenty-eight and twenty-nine attempt to explore different areas of spiritual mandates, their ultimate goal being to challenge the spiritual experience of the church members.

### *Cross-Cultural Awareness*

Diversity is a complex issue, given church members aspire to be part of a supportive community and blend in. One major issue identified in the leadership assessment process is the “increase of complexities in the situational variables brought about by different cultures.”<sup>158</sup> Therefore, the church leaders must not only have to manage all the ministry work but also ensure members abide by the organizational culture.

In ministry, there is no room for discrimination. The first thing people notice when they walk in the door is the attitude of the greeters. Did they welcome or reject them? The reception they receive will help them decide whether or not they will return for future service. Consequently, the researcher anticipates paying attention to this area if Gateway Church wants to experience growth.

In question fourteen, the researcher asked whether participants felt welcomed when they walked through the door, thereby seeking to assess the performance of the service ministry.

Question nineteen focuses on the way participants perceive leadership culture at the Gateway Church. Do they believe that an unhealthy leadership culture can affect church growth? Most of the participants responded affirmatively to this question.

### *Disciple-Making Process*

As Harrington and Robert affirm, “Discipleship is the hope of the church, and we get to be a part of a new movement that Jesus is stirring up.”<sup>159</sup> There is nothing more important than

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<sup>158</sup> Lui, *Development of Chinese*, 51.

<sup>159</sup> Bobby Harrington, and Patrick Josh Robert, *The Disciple Maker's Handbook: Seven Elements of a Discipleship Lifestyle* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 177.

doing what Jesus accomplished during His ministry. Church leaders must learn how to make disciples and turn them into disciple-makers. This task aims to make them adhere to the image of the One who did it all. It is a revolving task for every church leader. The researcher will ensure the team works together to accomplish this goal.

Challenges are unavoidable, and the researcher anticipates the emergence of many obstacles during the intervention phase. Disciple-making is vital in ministry as it allows the organization to keep things in perspective. It also empowers ministry leaders to focus on the mission and vision of the church.

This section has three questions (questions eleven, sixteen, and seventeen), which address issues facing the Gateway Church in the area of disciple-making. The researcher will make every effort to ensure that the leadership team is proactive and watch out for any obstacles. Any recommendations made by participants would be carefully reviewed and, if necessary, included in the leadership training.

### *Evangelism*

Every believer has had the opportunity to have a personal experience with Jesus at least once throughout their spiritual journey, in whichever shape or form this experience may take. Evangelists possess unique gifts that enable them to share the good news about salvation with the unchurched, empowering them to know how to disseminate information to those in need. Many people deploy this gift without even noticing that they possess it, as they never took the time to put it into use. Therefore, it is imperative to note that every believer is an ambassador of Christ and is expected to partake in the kingdom work.

At the Gateway Church, the researcher has identified some individuals who are great evangelists but are either unaware of this gift or do not know how to use it efficiently. The low participation among church members makes it extremely difficult for the church to reach out to the unsaved. As Clinton suggests, “A major function of all leadership is that of selection of rising leadership. Leaders must continually be aware of God’s processing of younger leaders and work with that process.”<sup>160</sup> This section will explore all available avenues and encourage those gifted in this area to come forward and take a step of faith.

Some questions in the survey address the issues of evangelism, including questions six, ten, eighteen, twenty-six, and thirty-one, to generate feedback from the participants. In question ten, the researcher asked whether participants would be interested in leadership positions. While this question aims to assess and evaluate how the church will raise its future leaders, the remaining questions (questions eighteen, twenty-six, and thirty-one) focus on commitment and outreach programs. The researcher will provide training and help those gifted in this area further develop that gift and help them externalize it.

In the training schedule, Step 9 requires the leadership team, or those participating in the leadership training, to provide feedback on issues related to evangelism via email for further review. With the help of the Holy Spirit, the researcher is optimistic that the church will be able to experience growth once the intervention plan is implemented. The researcher will issue additional guidance to ensure leaders operate effectively in their respective ministries as time progresses.

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<sup>160</sup> Clinton, *The Making of a Leader*, 136.

### *Performance and Accountability*

The last area of intervention concerns performance and accountability. The researcher is aware of how the desired results of the intervention plan will be affected if accountability is not enforced. This includes workload reviews, comments and feedback, personal assessments, periodic ratings, and attendance records.

The rules and regulations of the church will be communicated to the team members across the board. The researcher will also make every effort to ensure church leaders understand this principle and that they function well in this area. This task will not only assist the researcher in assessing the area of deficiency but also enable him to make adjustments where improvement is needed.

Everyone is subject to accountability except God, who is supreme, above all things, and not accountable to anyone. The work at hand requires proper accountability since executives in corporate settings hold people accountable for their actions and discipline those who deliberately violate the law. The same standards apply to ministries.

This section will also address the issue of accountability by examining questions fifteen, twenty-two, twenty-three, and twenty-four that attempt to focus on members' performance and accountability. Church leaders must be responsible and trustworthy, use their judgment, and learn to be good stewards. The researcher will employ Moses' leadership style and conduct periodic reviews to ensure the team stays on course.

### *Questions Related to Church Operation*

All other questions are listed under church operation. The researcher will examine the demographics and gender of those who participated in the survey. No one under eighteen will be

allowed to participate in the study. The research questions also seek opinions on church operations, alongside other suggestions that were deemed necessary.

The researcher would also focus on the leadership culture and assess its impact on the church. Each leader is responsible for activities in their respective ministry, and they are required to notify the researcher of any obstacles hindering the progress of the intervention plan.

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

The researcher thoroughly reviewed the intervention plan to ensure that every activity was executed correctly. Most importantly, the researcher ensured that the documents submitted to the IRB office for approval were as accurate as possible.

Members were contacted by email to inform them of their right to refuse participation in this survey, if they so wished. The researcher chose Survey Legend and accessed the company website to sign up for the service. Research information was also entered into the system and verified to ensure accuracy—no errors were noted. All ‘yes’ and ‘no’ questions were designed with a radio button to make the platform user-friendly. A total of thirty-two questions were entered into the Survey Legend system.

The researcher ensured that participants’ information was fully protected while using the online system. While some questions permitted users to make multiple selections, a few questions demanded only one answer.

There were no interviews and no conversation recordings noted in the system. Upon completion, participants were allowed to hit the ‘submit’ button, after which the system closed the window. Participants could no longer make any changes or delete their answers once the



command was executed. Gentle reminders were also sent to all participants to complete the survey since there was no way to identify those who had not responded.

The researcher retrieved electronic data from the Survey Legend website and analyzed the results. Incomplete responses were excluded from the pool to protect the integrity of the study. Thereafter, the researcher downloaded and printed all survey results and separated them into five groups. Each group was carefully reviewed to ensure there was no duplication and no identifiable information on any reports to conserve the study's commitment to strict confidentiality. While other web-based platforms exist, which the researcher could have used for the survey, he nevertheless selected the company (Survey Legend) because of its reporting system.

The use of electronic devices was limited since there were no interviews to record. The researcher only used essential tools to tabulate the results, including Excel spreadsheets and Microsoft word for graphic images, such as charts, pies, and tables. Results were entered into the Excel spreadsheet and transferred to a Word document. Those questions not attributable to a particular theme were reported under the 'other' section.

As previously noted in this dissertation, the ultimate goal of the researcher is to identify the leading cause of the problem and ensure that the issue under examination and the execution of the study are in line with the IRB office guidelines and the approved research protocol.

### Recording and Data Protection

The researcher ensured that no identifiable information was gathered, and no recordings were performed, to protect participants' identity. The researcher used email accounts provided by participants to send information. Upon completion, the researcher ran the information and

printed the results. Some of the responses were disqualified, either because they were poorly executed or did not make it to the portal. The reports are stored safely and will not be made public.

### Data Collection

The data collection was performed by a third-party company known as Survey legend, and the researcher obtained the results through the website. The system automatically collated and combined those responses into one single report.

The researcher reviewed the individual responses submitted by participants without any identifying information. He also downloaded the report and entered the information into an Excel spreadsheet without including the incomplete responses in the final count.

The researcher will ensure that the report is complete and matches the data in the portal. Graphs and charts were employed to analyze the reports.

### Data Analysis

One of the problems identified earlier in the research was the lack of leadership training and the lack of adequate resources and training for members in their respective areas. The researcher will utilize the training schedule introduced in the dissertation design to solve the development issues facing the church and address the relationship between church members and leaders.

The researcher assigned questions to different themes based on the research problem, each focusing on the area of spiritual concern and leadership development. Leadership culture,

for instance, explored the DNA of the organization and aimed to reaffirm the cross-cultural awareness within the ministry context.

The open-ended questions included in the study were designed to obtain more information from participants rather than just 'yes' or 'no' answers. The researcher will use an Excel spreadsheet and other necessary application tools to analyze the data and offer recommendations. He also aims to ensure the leadership team improves in this area based on the outcome of this project.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

### **Introduction**

This chapter aims to outline the results gathered from the data and identify the issues affecting church growth by examining every aspect of the ministry settings. The researcher revisited the current situation and fleshed out the areas where attention is most needed.

As explained in Chapter 2, the researcher noticed a steady decline in church attendance, compounded by the fact that church members were uninterested in becoming involved in church activities. There were also some concerns over how the church might be able to increase member participation, but it was not obvious yet that the leadership echelon was the major problem within the church, causing these issues.

The researcher conducted the study to investigate the problem facing the Gateway Church by contacting participants, informing them about the purpose of the study and urging them to call or email with any questions or concerns if they consent to participate. He further informed them that the study was voluntary, meaning they had the right to decline participation at any time. According to the survey results, not everyone responded, and not every question was answered. Irrespective of this, the results offered a good cross-section representation of the entire church population.

The results identified leadership development as the leading cause of the problem facing Gateway Church. This realization helped the researcher identify some problems associated with the current leadership and why members were not willing to engage in any church activities.

First, the church needs to re-examine its organizational structure to ensure everything aligns with its vision. Growth does not occur overnight, and the researcher understands it would

take some time to implement the intervention plan completely. The researcher plans to review the discipleship protocol and make adjustments where necessary.

Second, there must be a change in leadership culture, as the results indicated that most participants believed some leaders use their discretion to implement changes in a manner that is inconsistent with the organizational culture. In ministry, leaders must not deviate from the norm as this would negatively impact the organization. The researcher will review the current practice and seek ways to re-enforce the culture of engagement across the board.

Third, the researcher found that the current training curriculum is weak. Without the right training, church operations will continue to be affected no matter how hard leaders try to implement change. In the book of Luke, the Scripture asks, “Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch.”<sup>161</sup> Things fall apart when people in leadership positions lack the ability to lead followers in the right direction, and this could be seen as taking hold of the Gateway Church unless some action is taken. Leaders must be knowledgeable and well-equipped in their respective fields to be able to lead. The researcher will retrain those in leadership positions and provide adequate resources.

Lastly, the only way for this church to experience growth is if church leaders are held accountable to the highest standards. Similarly, those who can outperform should be commended and rewarded for their efforts.

The researcher expects changes in this area within the initial six months of implementation and anticipates more members getting involved in various church activities with a high degree of commitment. The program will be periodically evaluated, and, if warranted, undergo necessary changes.

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<sup>161</sup> Luke 6:39, KJV.

The focus of this chapter is the methodology employed in the study. The researcher will discuss the results in detail, report his findings to the leadership team, and make recommendations accordingly.

### **Survey**

As stated in Chapter 1, the problem of the study focuses on church growth currently experienced by Gateway Church. This project investigates why members are not fully committed to the Christian community.

Over time, the researcher has learned that many churches dwindle and decline due to incompetent leadership that cripples the interest of the church members. This study strategically laid-out methods sought to gauge participants' opinions on how to reach out to individuals who lost interest. The researcher solicited participants who would like to partake in the study to address the issue facing the Gateway Church. The survey was limited to only church members to ensure accuracy in data collection. The researcher aims to obtain responses from people who are somehow responsible for the problem. No personal information of the participants will be stored or withheld to preserve their privacy. Also, in no way would anyone be forced to participate.

The researcher did not revalidate the age requirement of the participants since it was already verified and explicitly stated that all questionnaire takers must be at least 18 years old and participating members of the Gateway Church. Moreover, the researcher used a third-party company to collect data for this research and followed the procedure outlined by the IRB. He also emailed each participant a copy of the consent form and a web link to the Survey Legend website while informing them that participation was voluntary and completely anonymous.

Thirty-two questions were drafted and posted to the website that mainly focused on leadership culture and church growth. The researcher contacted forty-one participants, and thirty-three responded. Seven participants were disqualified for failure to answer the research questions. The researcher also identified some answers that were vague and improperly submitted. The researcher did not receive any responses from the remaining eight. Also, three out of the remaining eight did not respond to the survey, and there was no indication in the system that they attempted to answer those questions. The remaining five came back undeliverable, meaning that the email did not go through, and no further response was received despite multiple attempts to contact these individuals.

#### Survey Question One

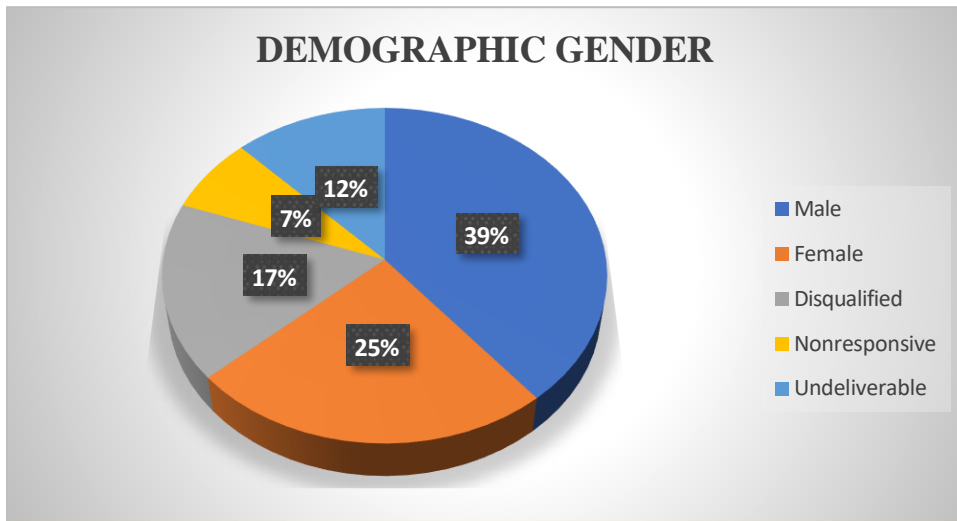
In question one, the study identifies the gender identity of the participant—male or female. The demographic structure of the project was designed to include every eligible candidate, regardless of their ethnicity, color, or race. The survey was conducted and received.

The results indicate that thirty-nine percent of those who took the survey were male, and twenty-five percent were female. The remaining thirty-six percent were either disqualified, non-responsive, or undeliverable. The researcher reasonably believes that sixty-four percent is a good representation of the entire participating group.

The researcher ensured that no identifier information was collected to protect the identity of those who participated in the study. Every church member, 18 years or older, was given an equal opportunity to participate in the study. However, the researcher ensured that the under-aged could access the survey results for knowledge purposes even if they could not participate in the study.

**Figure 2**

*Research Question One* | Source: SurveyLegend.com



The issue of age requirement was the main focus of question two, where the participants had to verify their age so that no one under the age of 18 would participate in the study.

Everyone who participated in the study met this requirement, and no one was disqualified.

The researcher previously identified potential participants to be contacted based on their membership records, including their age. Those who met the criteria were pre-selected and contacted, with responses remaining anonymous. All identities were protected as there was no way to identify any participant. The survey results indicated that the majority of those who participated in the project were between nineteen and fifty years old, with only two in their early sixties.

### Survey Question Three

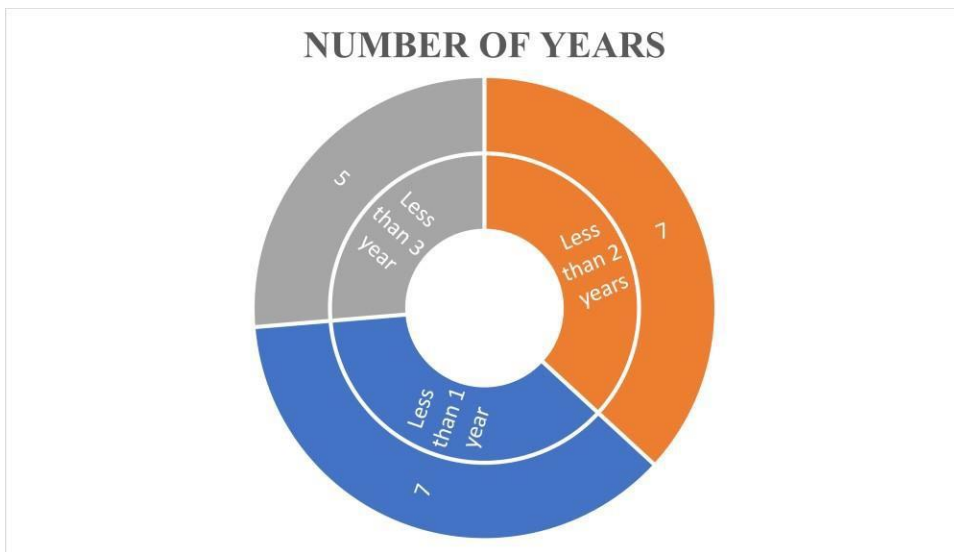
In another setting, the researcher attempted to investigate members' attendance records to determine the number of members who have been with the church the longest. Nineteen out of twenty-six participants answered this question. The results indicate that only five people have



been with the church for three years, while the remaining participants fall within one to two years. The result further signifies that people are willing to stay if the church meets their spiritual needs. Like every other church, it is the ultimate goal of the researcher to see everyone grow in their spiritual walk with the Lord, and he aims to encourage members to make themselves available for the work ahead.

**Figure 3**

*Research Question Three* | Source: SurveyLegend.com



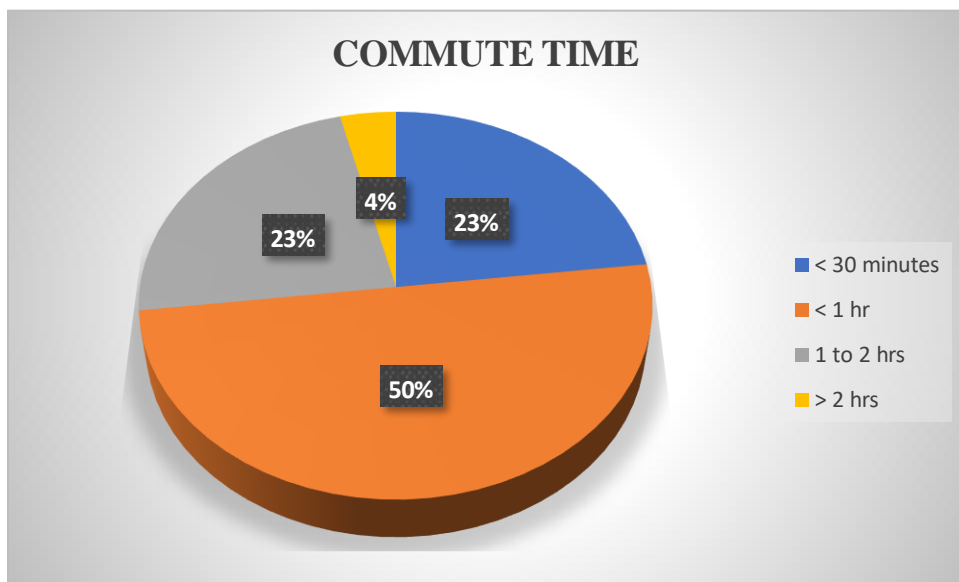
**Survey Question Four**

In question four, the researcher wanted to know how long it takes members to get to the church location. The purpose of the question was to evaluate the current problem of low attendance and conclude whether the church should relocate or open another branch at another location. It will also allow the researcher to evaluate individual circumstances and introduce certain programs that would benefit church members. In addition, the question will help the researcher gauge if any additional services may be required.

The church currently meets for service at 9:00 am. The survey result revealed that it takes some members approximately one to two hours to commute to the church location and return. Seventy-three percent commute to church in less than an hour. Only four percent of participants stated it takes them two hours to get to the location. The researcher sees this as a burden from the members' perspective and aims to reach a solution to assist these people.

**Figure 4**

*Research Question Four* | Source: SurveyLegend.com



#### Survey Question Five

Question five was a follow-up question in which the participants were asked to evaluate the current service time and make recommendations. The current service is held at 9:00 a.m. Based on the results, participants favor another service time to accommodate those who are not available for early morning service or have another commitment that may prevent them from getting to church on time.

The result was overwhelming. However, some opted for ‘no change,’ meaning the church should continue with the current service time for financial reasons. The participants also suggested that the church wait until it acquires more members since introducing a new service at this time would not only discourage many from coming to church, but also interrupt the ongoing project.

The survey results also indicated that thirty-one percent of the population would like another service added between 11:00 a.m. and Noon. Therefore, the researcher will assess the current situation and identify areas of improvement before adding another service.

#### Survey Question Six

In question six, the majority of participants responded positively, with most showing interest in being involved in church activities. This question permits participants to enter multiple interests or opt for nothing if they choose to.

The goal of the question was to see how many people might be interested in serving, rather than randomly assigning people to different areas of the ministry. In Table 1, the researcher analyzed the current ministry areas and responses to the question. It can be seen that only two people highlighted their area of interest as the pastoral care ministry, which is equivalent to five percent of the entire population of the survey.

The ministries that have the most responses are global and men’s ministries. However, this does not necessarily mean they received the most votes since the question permitted multiple entries. A few participants may have indicated they were interested in serving in more than one ministry.

The researcher found the results very interesting and encouraging and aims to ensure that those interested in leadership positions are afforded the opportunity and assigned to their area of interest, where they would be able to demonstrate their skills and utilize their spiritual gifts.

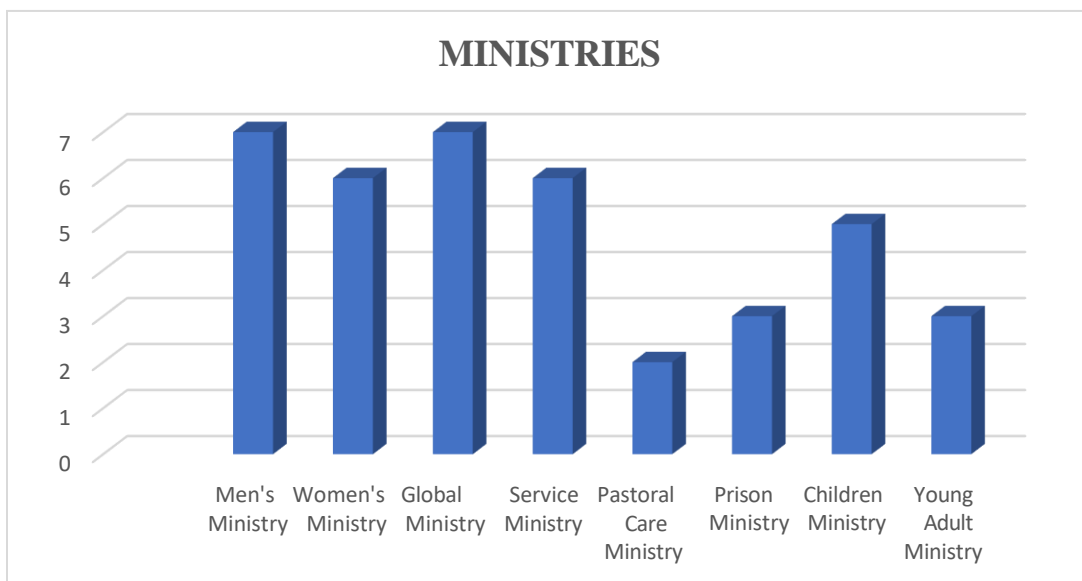
**Table 1.3**

Different Areas of Ministry

Ministry	Response	Percentage
Men’s Ministry	7	18
Women’s Ministry	6	15
Global Ministry	7	18
Service Ministry	6	15
Pastoral Care Ministry	2	5
Prison Ministry	3	8
Children Ministry	5	13
Young Adult Ministry	3	8

**Figure 5**

Research Question Six. Source. SurveyLegend.com



### Survey Questions Seven and Eight

The researcher also attempted to determine whether members are interested in participating in ministry outreach programs and, if yes, how many hours each participant is willing to commit to in a month. While question seven solicits interest in ministry outreach, question eight addresses how many hours each participant is willing to devote. Eighteen participants out of twenty-six indicated that they would support the program, while the remaining eight would not support it. The first group interested in ministry outreach accounts for approximately 69%.

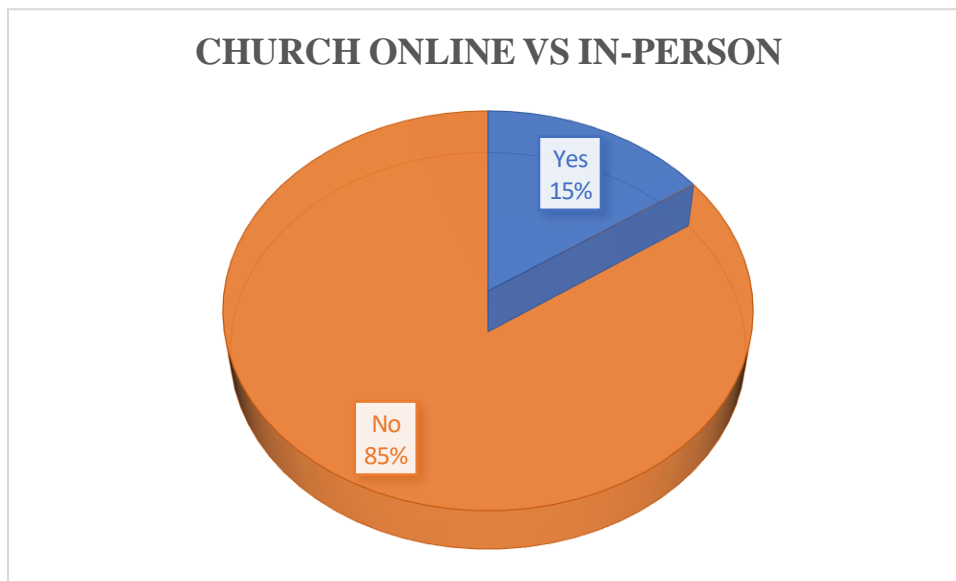
Question eight focuses on the number of hours each participant would be willing to commit. Fifty-four percent of participants opted for two to four hours a month. Eight out of the twenty-six people (31%) who participated in the survey did not answer the question, probably due to other commitments or conflicts in work schedules. The remaining four people (15%) are willing to put in four to six hours a month. The researcher believes the church will be in good shape if those interested participate in the program.

### Survey Question Nine

Ministry nowadays is practically impossible without getting on social media, but the question aims to determine how many members are interested in doing service online. The researcher also wanted to know whether members would prefer online service to in-person service, although committing to either or both options, from the researcher's perspective, would be a boon. The responses to this question indicate that people are still interested in attending the church in person for service. Only 15% opted for online church service, while 85% supported in-house service. The church will continue offering in-person service and making plans for online service.

**Figure 6**

*Research Question Nine* | Source: SurveyLegend.com



#### Survey Questions Ten and Eleven

Questions ten and eleven deal with leadership positions within the church, and the researcher wanted to identify those interested in leadership positions.

While some people may be interested in taking a leadership role, their ability to lead would be based on their current skills. The researcher would also permit those interested and ready with development to move up and equip them with whatever they need to succeed. Sixty-five percent showed some interest, while 35% showed no interest.

As a follow-up, question eleven challenged those already serving in ministries by asking them about their current position. The question aimed to determine whether they were happy and comfortable in that position. The response was almost even. Out of twenty-six, thirteen people answered 'yes,' while eleven stated 'no.' Only two participants skipped the question. However, those who did not answer the question might not be currently serving or never served.

### Survey Question Twelve

LifeGroup is one of the ways people connect to the outside world and assist leaders in identifying and addressing the needs of their members in a faster and more efficient way. It also allows individuals to congregate as a group and minister to one another. On this account, the researcher would use this avenue to get more people involved in ministry work.

Question twelve addressed this issue by asking participants how they feel about getting involved in ministry work. The results were very positive and encouraging. Sixty-nine percent stated they were interested in joining to expand their networking base, whereas 31% rejected the idea. The researcher will revisit the topic and issue directives to the leadership team concerning how they should proceed.

### Survey Question Thirteen

Music is another area of interest that the researcher wanted to explore as it plays a vital role in ministry settings and sets the atmosphere for the Holy Spirit. The church is doing very well in this area but is still having issues with convincing people to join the choir. Unfortunately, no one wants to sing for free, so the researcher will continue to work with the leadership team to see how the problem could be avoided.

Question thirteen was designed to address this issue and seek recommendations from participants. The results revealed mixed feelings. While 54% believe that the current situation is perfect, the remaining 46% expected to see changes in this area. Based on the comments in question thirty-two, the group expressed concerns over the lack of preparation before service. The researcher will re-examine the situation and make recommendations to the leadership team accordingly.

#### Survey Question Fourteen

The researcher is extremely concerned about those assigned to service ministry and how well they interact with visitors. People representing the organization need to know that their presence makes a huge difference. The probability of returning depends on the reception that newcomers are greeted with on the first time that they visit the church. Such people would be discouraged from returning if they formed the wrong impressions of the organization. The church environment should be a place of rest and peace for everyone, and the wrong first impression could show newcomers that the church is not the right place for them.

The researcher also thought it would be interesting to have a question on this topic and see if members would respond positively. Question fourteen asks, “Do you feel welcomed when you enter the church facility?” Approximately twenty-seven percent of those who participated in the study rated the overall performance as deficient, while the remaining seventy-three percent stated they had a positive experience.

The researcher understands the underlying issue and will do his best to improve in this area by ensuring that individuals representing the organization possess a kind, supportive, and welcoming personality.

#### Survey Question Fifteen

The researcher also aims to challenge the issue of accountability in question fifteen by asking members to assess the process based on how the leadership team handles church resources. Most participants answered ‘no’ to question fifteen, meaning they never witnessed or noticed anything inappropriate. Four out of twenty-six participants, meanwhile, stated ‘yes,’ indicating they may have witnessed something inappropriate within the church.



The researcher will investigate and ensure everyone complies with the rules and regulations of the church.

### Survey Questions Sixteen and Seventeen

Church reputation is the focus of two questions in the survey, designed to determine whether participants were comfortable enough to introduce the church to friends and family members. The responses to question sixteen are very encouraging. Seven (27%) out of twenty-six people stated 'no,' while the remaining nineteen (73%) stated they would recommend the Church to friends and family members.

In question seventeen, the researcher asked participants to review the overall performance and provide recommendations. Most participants commented on leadership development by demanding additional training and resources be provided for the leaders to enable them to function well in their respective ministries. Some of the issues highlighted in the report are as follows:

- People at the front door should be more friendly and tolerant.
- The Church should concentrate on more important things.
- The choir team is doing great, but more work required.
- The Church should embark on outreach programs at least once a month.
- People should not be discriminated against based on their color and gender.
- The leadership team should be well-trained and equipped.
- The Church should provide beverages in the morning before the service.

The researcher will address these issues with the leadership team and make recommendations.

**Figure 7**

*Research Question Sixteen* | Source: SurveyLegend.com



#### Survey Questions Eighteen and Nineteen

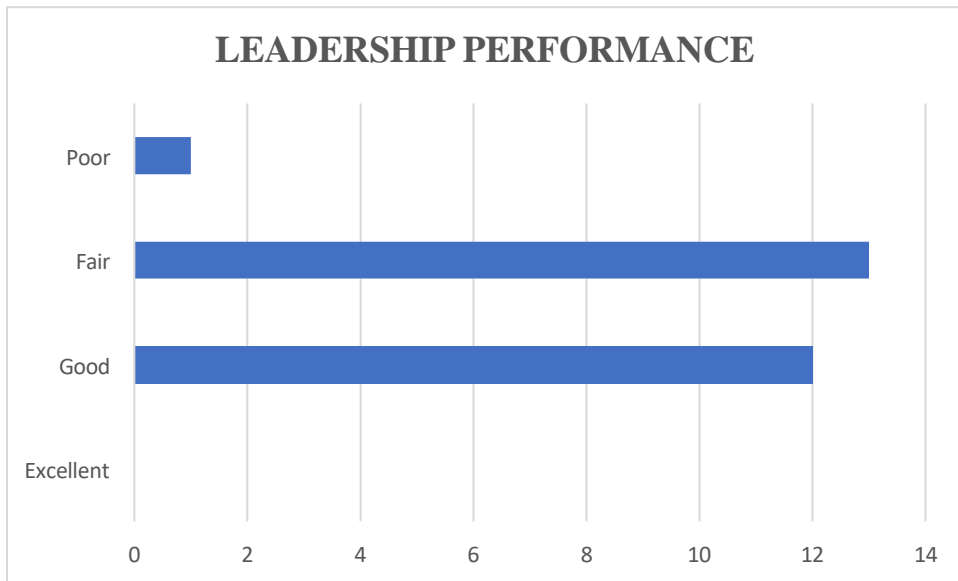
Questions eighteen and nineteen focus on leadership performance. In question eighteen, the researcher asked participants to rate the leadership team, and a majority of the participants rated the team's performance as 'good' or 'fair.' Only one person rated the team's performance as 'poor.'

The researcher realizes this is a wake-up call, and there is still much work to be done in this area. He is determined to do whatever it takes to get the leadership team back on track.

The following question (question nineteen) requests participants to answer 'yes' or 'no' if an unhealthy leadership culture affects church growth. The response was 100% positive, indicating that all participants agreed that an unhealthy leadership culture could hinder church growth. While change is not always easy, it is achievable if an organization can keep things in perspective.

**Figure 8**

*Research Question Eighteen* | Source: SurveyLegend.com



#### Survey Questions Twenty and Twenty-One

In question twenty, the researcher asked whether the pastoral team was doing enough for its members. Fifteen percent answered ‘yes’ (four responses) and 85% (twenty-two people) stated ‘no.’ Those who responded negatively to the question cited a lack of focus and communication problems. In question twenty-one, participants believe leaders are completely disengaged even though no evidence supports this claim.

In the follow-up question (Q 21), however, 54% account for the group that cited a lack of focus. In comparison, 19% stated leaders had not done enough to get more people on board, while the other 19% are in support of improving the communication system. The remaining 8% selected ‘Other’ reason, indicating that only a few members are not committed to the Christian community.

**Table 1.4**

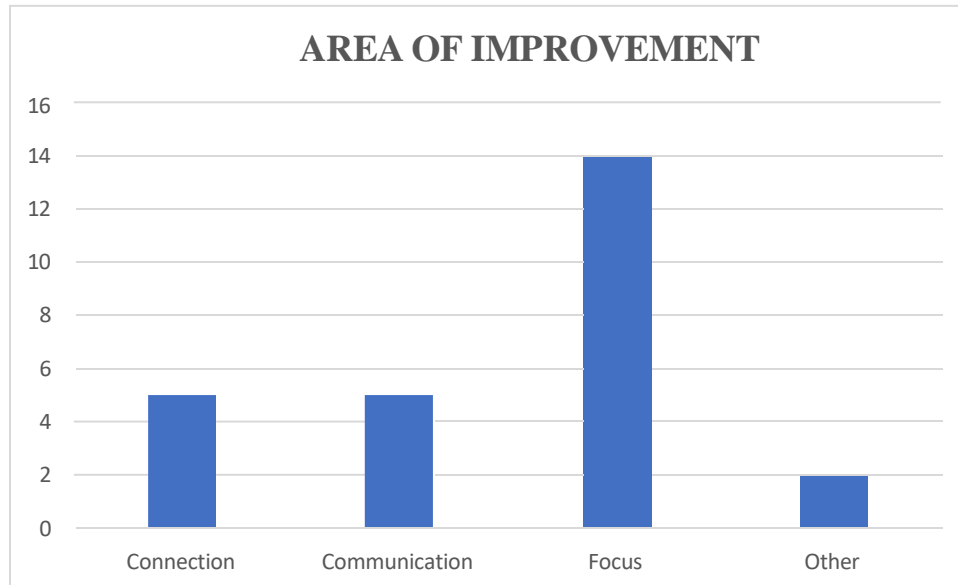
Survey Results on Area of Improvement

Focus Area	Count	Percentage	Identified Issues
Connection	5	19	Evangelism
Communication	5	19	Personality
Focus	14	54	Training
Other	2	8	Spiritual Help
Total	26	100	

Source: SurveyLegend.com

**Figure 9**

Research Question Twenty-One | Source: SurveyLegend.com



## Survey Questions Twenty-Two, Twenty-Three, and Twenty-Four

This section attempts to address leadership problems by focusing on ministry values and personal development. The Scripture says, “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”<sup>162</sup> The Bible highlights those qualities and explains how leaders should lead by example. Church leaders must be humble and respectful of others.

Question twenty-two focuses on the issue of leadership style by asking participants how they felt about church leadership. Out of twenty-six responses, twenty-one participants answered ‘yes,’ meaning that church leaders treat each other with respect and lead by example, but the remaining five participants responded ‘no.’

The issue that was raised in question twenty-three deals with the core value, in which participants were asked to disclose whether any inappropriate behavior was exhibited by the leadership team, in the past, toward church members. Thirty-one percent stated ‘yes,’ while 69% answered ‘no.’ Although the outcome was rather impressive, the researcher feels uncomfortable seeing anyone report that they were treated unfairly by church staff. It is imperative, therefore, that members adhere to the core value of the church and refrain from any unfair treatment. Anyone found misusing their authority will be dealt with accordingly.

Also, in question twenty-four, the participants were asked if they had ever seen the Pastor misuse his position as a leader or disrespect others. The response to this question was overwhelming, with participants indicating they had never seen the Pastor inappropriately use his authority in public or church. All twenty-six participants responded positively.

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<sup>162</sup> Matthew 7:20, KJV.

### Survey Question Twenty-Five

Question twenty-one requests a yes/no answer in which all participants agreed (100%) that the church would grow if leaders could work together as a team. However, the researcher understands that teamwork cannot always be easy within the church with multiple economic backgrounds and cultural issues to manage. The researcher aims to find an appropriate solution to make it easier for the leaders to work together as a team.

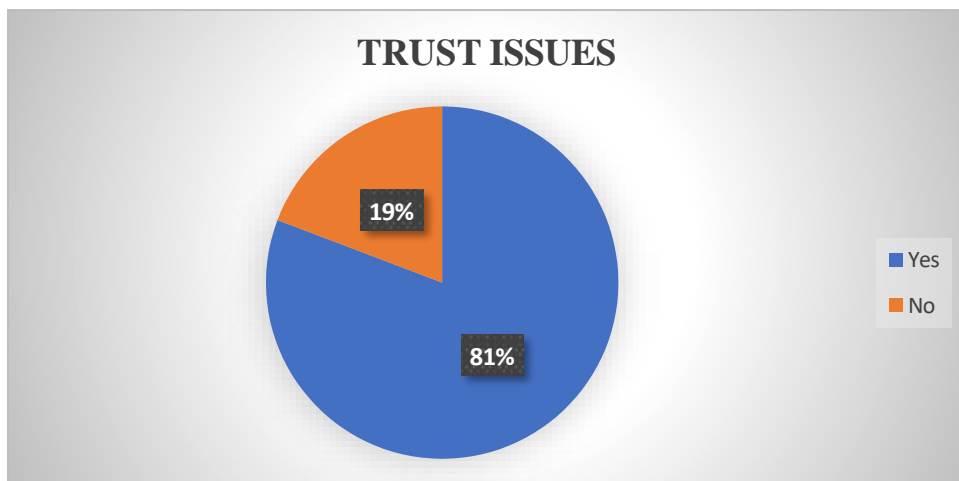
### Survey Questions Twenty-Six and Twenty-Seven

Response to question twenty-six was positive. While 19% of participants stated they have no trust in their leaders, 81% percent responded positively that they have a high degree of trust in the church leaders.

Conversely, in the following question (question twenty-seven), 77% stated that they are not satisfied with the current decision-making process at Gateway Church. Only 23% indicated that they were pleased with the result.

### Figure 10

*Research Question Twenty-Six* | Source: SurveyLegend.com



### Survey Question Twenty-Eight

In question twenty-eight, the researcher asked participants whether they were interested in ministry work if given the opportunity. Eighty-one percent stated they would accept if asked to volunteer, but the remaining 19% declined.

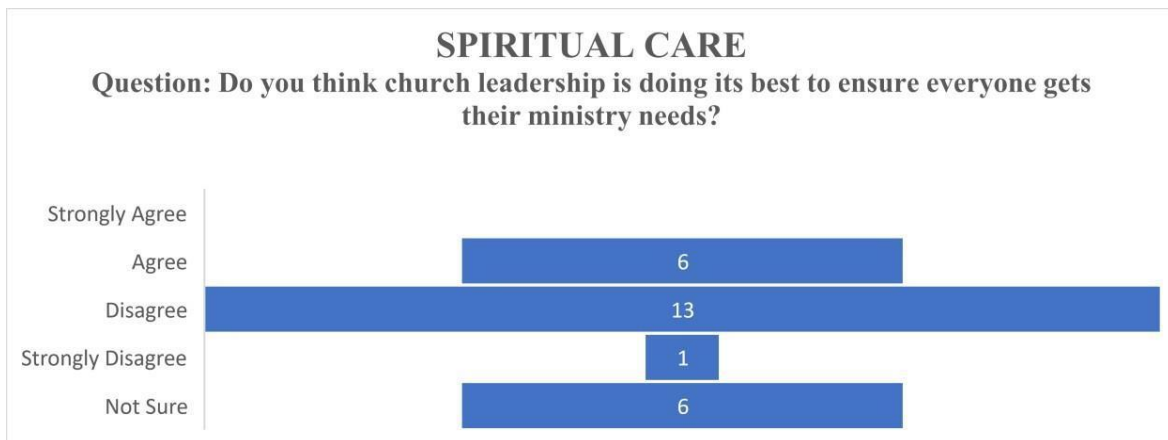
Those interested in getting involved in ministry work will be allowed to serve. The researcher will also ensure that those interested in ministry work are assigned to their area of interest.

### Survey Question Twenty-Nine

The result on the issue of spiritual care was unexpected and disappointing. Most participants disagreed when asked if they believed the church was doing enough for spiritual care. Fifty percent disagreed, 23% agreed, another 23% stated they were unsure, and 4% strongly disagreed. The researcher is concerned about the outcome and will ensure that relevant measures are implemented to provide members with the appropriate resources.

**Figure 11**

**Research Question Twenty-Nine | Source: SurveyLegend.com**



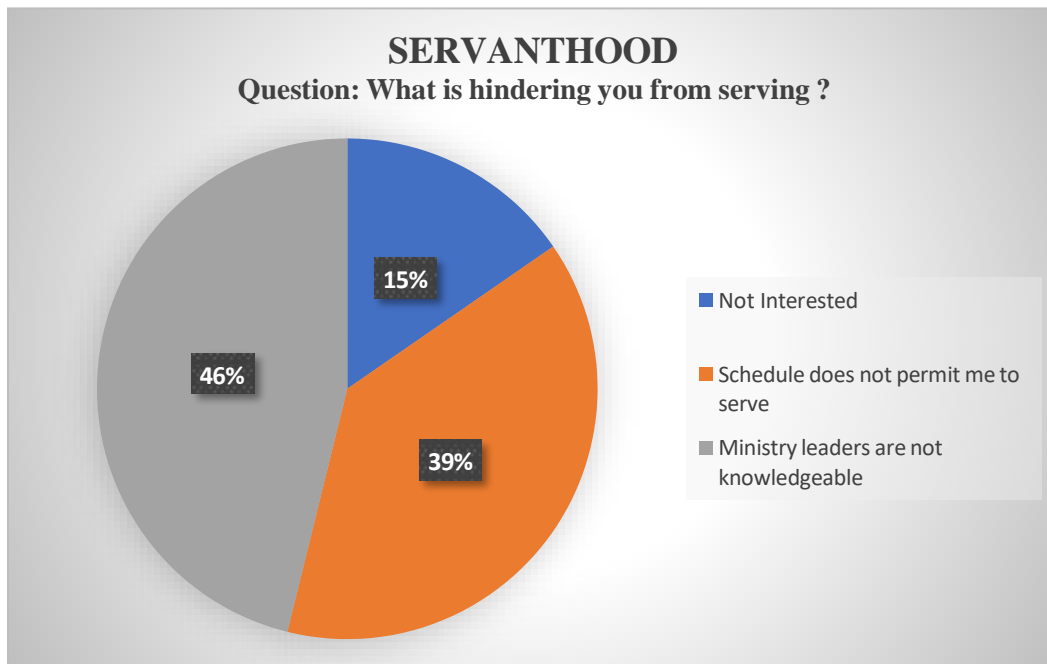
## Survey Questions Thirty and Thirty-One

Question thirty asked: Do you agree or disagree that this organization needs growth? The result was overwhelming. Everyone agreed 100% that the church must make some changes in order to experience growth.

Also, in question thirty-one, the researcher wanted to know why some members were not interested in participating in church activities. Not all participants answered this question since they were not required to answer if they had previously served. However, those who answered the question stated that they were uninterested due to conflicts in their work schedule or simply unwilling to serve. Overall, no one disagreed with the vision of the church.

### Figure 12

*Research Question Thirty-One* | Source: SurveyLegend.com





### Survey Question Thirty-Two

This section calls for additional information pertaining to other issues not previously addressed. All survey participants agreed that the church is in need of leadership development and accountability, as most of the answers highlighted concerns related to leadership training and community outreach, already discussed in this dissertation.

The training program analyzed in this dissertation will also assist the church in forming a new leadership team to address the problems facing the Gateway Church. Spiritual development is one of the areas that the researcher will examine to ensure everyone is well-equipped for the work ahead.

In conclusion, the researcher will address all issues raised in this report and implement the intervention plan laid out in Chapter 3, while encouraging those interested in leadership positions to get involved in church activities.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

### **Summary**

The preliminary assumption made by the researcher concerning members not willing to commit to the Christian community was by far underestimated and unsubstantiated, considering the outcome of the survey results. This project aimed to investigate the membership problem facing the Gateway Church and, consequently, re-evaluate the leadership role within the church. The researcher believes the situation will improve once the recommendations for change outlined in the study are fully implemented.

The researcher conducted a literature review on the subject matter to investigate the root cause of the problem. The results showed valuable recommendations while also exposing some underlying issues that might have led to the decline in the membership roll. The review also addressed several problems facing the Gateway Church, with a lack of proper leadership being one of the major problems identified, in particular as it related to training, various forms of discrimination, spiritual empowerment, and accountability. Therefore, it is indisputable that there was a leadership problem at Gateway Church.

After careful consideration, the researcher determined that leadership development was the main force hindering the church's growth in membership. He is optimistic that the Gateway Church will experience growth once the intervention plan takes effect.

### **Research Study**

The study was designed to assess ministry operations and investigate any inappropriate past practices members might have experienced. In the report, the researcher noted a few issues that contributed to the problem facing the Gateway Church.

Concerning the hiring process, staff and volunteers were inadequately equipped and were not professionally trained, while those responsible for the recruiting process failed to address these issues with their members. This resulted in a lack of knowledge about the situation. The team also failed to bring to the attention of the Lead Pastor the imperative need to discuss the problem and take immediate action. The researcher will initiate a plan to prevent such issues from recurring.

A couple of questions regarding leadership performance and training were among the problems that participants highlighted in the report. Participants weighed heavily on this issue because of the way they felt about the process and how leaders had responded to their needs in the past. This issue is a top priority for the researcher. The training schedule introduced in the study will be implemented to ensure that anyone interested in a management position is given the opportunity and will be adequately trained.

In response to one of the survey questions, participants cited a lack of effective communication and a faulty system. Members were not receiving feedback as they were supposed to from their leaders. This resulted in their feeling disengaged, experiencing low excitement and a lack of commitment to the church. This became the major reason some members lost their focus and stopped attending Church.

Another major issue highlighted in this area was that no church leader tried to determine why church members left. No investigation was undertaken, and no follow-up calls were made to find the root cause and take measures to encourage those members to return to the church.

In addition, the results addressed the direction the church was heading as some participants pointed out that the leaders' inability to make commitments was the main problem

obstructing the church's path and progress forward. The researcher learned that leaders were not doing enough for members, and that members' challenges were not being addressed adequately.

The researcher will employ a strategy to reach out to the aforementioned members, who have left the Church, and request that they return. If possible, the researcher will provide guarantees to convince these past members that circumstances have changed at Gateway Church.

The focus of this section is to discuss the outcome of the study and offer recommendations and insights for future research. The researcher will also discuss certain areas noted in the report so that such circumstances do not materialize ever again. The project, in general, was a revelation for the researcher, who vows to ensure that the entire church congregation feels safe. As it stands, the research revealed the following problems, listed below.

#### Leadership Problems

The results concluded that the inability to initially accomplish anything in the church grossly affected church growth, resulting in low participation from the entire membership population. Frustration was very high, but that was not the main reason why some members pulled back. Results also showed that members were not quite motivated, nor were they encouraged to participate in ministry activities, which resulted in poor attendance. The reason behind this was the lack of training of the church leaders.

The leadership team focused more on elements that would not interest church members. Those members who participated in the research cited inadequate training as the leading cause of the problem and felt that the leadership team did not provide sufficient information to prepare them for the work ahead.

Another concern highlighted in the results was the lack of a competent leadership team. The past few months have been very challenging for the church regarding coping with the

leadership issue. According to the survey results, most participants believe that leaders were not doing enough to support church members' spiritual needs. They expressed concerns over a lack of direction and inability to connect to any of the leaders. The lack of cooperation among the team members was also addressed in the survey.

The researcher plans to ensure all church leaders undergo adequate training and are available to provide guidance and assistance to all church members as and when necessary.

### Poor Reception

The researcher also concluded that one of the main issues that participants commented on was poor reception. Participants made two observations on this issue: music and reception. There were some concerns over the kind of songs the service team uses during church service. However, the majority of participants agreed that it was a welcoming environment.

The researcher will prioritize improving the support system for the worship team and hold periodic meetings with the service ministry leader to improve participation.

### Service Times

It was evident in the results that some members have concerns about the service times. The researcher will address the issue with the leadership team to ensure no one is deprived of the opportunity to attend church services. While some people may live far away from the church's location, some may live only a few minutes away.

Nevertheless, the researcher is considering adding another service time to address this issue and give church members ease in attending the service. Until another service is added, the researcher aims to explore other options, such as an online service for the members who cannot

attend the church regularly due to driving distance from its location. He is also considering holding another service on one of the weekdays.

### Retention Rate

One primary concern highlighted in the results was the retention rate of the church. One of the questions asked in the study was what the church could do to retain the longest-serving members and the seasoning worshippers. Most participants agreed that the church must reconnect and reach out more to the unsaved and that active participation will increase when members feel a sense of belonging.

The researcher also concluded that the lack of team building was partly responsible for the system failure. The team could not see that the church was not aiming for success.

Furthermore, a median percentage of participants alleged that some members were not treated fairly or blocked from participating in ministry activities due to leadership problems and inadequate training. Leadership culture is also a significant problem. The researcher aims to strengthen the church leadership team through training by ensuring members adhere to the organizational culture, which would also increase the retention rate.

Lastly, the researcher was very concerned about the church's attendance record as this gradual decline in attendance roll was devastating and troubling. The survey results also validated this claim; many participants believed the low turnout was due to leadership problems.

### Hiring Process

The researcher additionally noted an issue with the hiring process for staff members, as many church members were interested in managerial positions but were denied the opportunity

to serve. The researcher, in his role as pastor at the church, was unaware of this issue, and no one ever brought this matter to his attention. As such, he will investigate and appoint the right leader to oversee the hiring process and provide recommendations to the team.

The problem of discrimination was also addressed in the survey. Most participants believed that discrimination was one of the reasons why some people left the church. The survey results also revealed how people in the church leadership discriminated against some members. Although the survey did not solicit proof of discriminatory behavior, the researcher believes that members were not pleased with the way management addressed their concerns.

A non-discrimination policy is currently in place and is part of the organizational DNA adopted by the Gateway Church. The researcher believes that the ambience will improve when members interact with one another and want to provide a safe space for everyone, free of any form of discrimination. He will investigate the matter and again reinforce the non-discrimination policy to ensure members are treated fairly across the board. Furthermore, the researcher will also provide the necessary tools and financial support to encourage participation.

### Organization Culture

The survey also addressed the participants' perception of the church's corporate culture, and the results indicated that work-life balance was a significant concern for the members. The researcher further concluded that the leadership team must be cognizant of their surroundings and be more attentive to their members. Tang et al. affirm that the biblical call for unity is vital "in today's culture and displeased religious consumers starting new churches to escape specific distastes"<sup>163</sup> has become an all-too-familiar phenomenon.

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<sup>163</sup> Tang and Charles E. eds., *Sent to Flourish*, 219.

The issue of differential cultural traits and economic backgrounds is the main focus of this topic. Members are more interested in getting connected and working together as a team. Once an intervention plan is implemented, the researcher hopes to employ an effective leadership program to eliminate the cultural problem.

### Accountability

While there are still areas that require improvement, some of the issues noted by survey participants were positive. For instance, accountability was highly rated, but a fraction of participants reported that they found some irregularities in church operations.

In another setting, where participants were asked to evaluate team leadership and the degree of trust placed on it, the results were highly positive, indicating that church members do trust their leaders. The researcher perceives this as good news and aims to encourage the team to continue the excellent work.

The researcher is also pleased to report that most participants did not note any issues in the way leaders handle church finance and believe that the resources were spent wisely.

The researcher will encourage the leadership team to remain faithful in fiscal matters. Accountability will be strictly enforced across the board to ensure God's resources are well-managed and used for ministry work.

### **Theological Foundation**

This dissertation would be incomplete were it to negate addressing the theological foundation of the project. There are many notable leaders in the Bible that demonstrated outstanding leadership skills.



Moses, for instance, was a great man of God who was hand-picked by God to lead the Israelites to the promised land. Moses' leadership style was focused on commitment, empowerment, and mentoring, as he led with passion without compromising his belief. He was not perfect but was courageous and bold. Moses was also a mentor and role model to many people who knew and followed him.

Joshua, his successor, also had the opportunity to serve under his leadership. Joshua learned from Moses how to work in humility and received his blessings before Moses ended his life's journey. Moses taught Joshua humility, fairness, boldness, integrity, compassion, and leadership development.

The Scripture says, "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips."<sup>164</sup> Moses understood the significance of humility and never allowed pride to get in his way throughout the journey. He fought hard to the point of death and never disowned his heritage. He is well-known to be a good leader and led with passion and fortitude. The researcher aims to emulate his leadership style and counsel anyone struggling in this area.

The Bible also tells us that Moses was consistently fair. God always listened to Moses whenever he made petitions. He believed in giving people second chances and always strived for excellence. Moses boldly and humbly acknowledged his weaknesses before the Lord at the burning bush. He answered, "O my LORD, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue,"<sup>165</sup> but God immediately rebuked him. He was not afraid to go back and meet face-to-face with Pharaoh. He led his people into the wilderness without fear.

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<sup>164</sup> Proverbs 27:2, KJV.

<sup>165</sup> Exodus 4:10, KJV.

The researcher will highlight the exemplary leadership of Moses to encourage the church leaders to be bold and do what God has called them to do. Integrity is all about trust, and Moses almost had it all. The researcher will continue to lead by example and teach the church leaders how to do the same. While in the wilderness, Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, witnessed how Moses interacted with his people and advised him to appoint some elders. On that account, Moses stepped into a new role and became a leader of the leaders. He trained them and watched them grow.

Moses also made sure he nurtured those whom God entrusted to his care. Although he was a man of valor, he still had his leadership tested in several moments. In one instance, he struck the rock twice when God asked him to touch the rock with his rod. The Scripture states, "And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also."<sup>166</sup> This was a faith test, but he failed. The researcher will ensure that the church leaders receive adequate training to avoid such failures in leadership.

Jesus, the Messiah, had the most compelling and impressive leadership style in human history. In the New Testament, the Gospels provided a biblical framework that illustrates how Jesus wanted his followers to lead, which would prove a highly beneficial model for the researcher to guide and train the church leaders in its example.

People loved Jesus and always wanted to be with him. He taught believers to be good shepherds and be around those who would embrace His vision. Jesus' model of leadership is second to none, and most of his teachings are centered on leadership. He not only taught believers

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<sup>166</sup> Numbers 20:11, KJV.

how to embrace servanthood but also how to hold people accountable. Jesus taught his disciple how to live by example and live a Christ-like lifestyle.

He also had a long-lasting relationship with his disciples up to the point of death. He led them, corrected them, and held them accountable. The book of Romans says, “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”<sup>167</sup> Jesus not only led his followers, but he taught them how to be good shepherds. He knew they were not perfect, and He did not let their imperfection deprive them of the opportunity to serve the Lord.

Jesus sent his Spirit to dwell in the heart of believers after the Ascension. The researcher will follow Jesus’ leadership style to ensure the team demonstrates adequate knowledge to function in their respective ministry.

#### *Biblical Leadership Metaphors – Jesus Model*

Ferris et al. extensively illustrate how biblical leadership metaphors could change the dynamic of leadership illiteracy by modeling Jesus’ servant leadership to teach the reader the truths and values of basic human decency. Ferris et al. demonstrate these metaphors being manifested in three simple forms: Stewards, Servants, and Shepherds.

Jesus not only taught these functions but implemented them in his leadership style throughout his time on earth. Anyone in a leadership position who wants to follow the teachings of Jesus, even imperfectly, must follow his leadership style. These three qualities define a person’s attributes as a minister and must reflect in their character. The leaders in any organization are perceived as role models, and people should be able to mirror their behavior.

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<sup>167</sup> Romans 14:12, KJV.

All leaders are stewards. The Scripture tells how this principle was established already with the first man by saying, “And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”<sup>168</sup> God put Adam in the garden to watch over all other things and be a good steward; the same concept applies to all believers in Christian faith. God wants his children to be good stewards and manage the resources entrusted to their care. As Ferris et al. affirm, “Management of the homeowner’s affairs was a solemn trust for which the steward was held accountable.”<sup>169</sup> God expects his children to act responsibly by following His teachings and guidance.

In addition to stewardship, all leaders are servants. Jesus taught his disciples the most thoughtful lesson on leadership: to be humble and ready to serve. Not only that, but He also demonstrates how to do it by washing their feet. The book of John affirms, “After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.”<sup>170</sup>

Conversely, most leaders are unaware of the meaning of servanthood responsibility, believing instead that church members should serve and treat them like royalty because of their elevated position behind the pulpit. Jesus revealed how the world viewed leadership and defined it so that his disciples would know what it meant to be a servant leader.

Lastly, all leaders are Shepherds. Jesus was the chief Shepherd who came and served excellently. He was obedient to the Father and remained faithful to the end. Out of the twelve God placed in his care, only one went astray – the one who betrayed him, Judas Iscariot.

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<sup>168</sup> Genesis 2:15, KJV.

<sup>169</sup> Robert W. Ferris, John R. Lillis, and Ralph E. Enlow, Jr., *Ministry Education That Transforms: Modeling and Teaching the Transformed Life* (Carlisle: Langham Creative Projects, 2018), 63.

<sup>170</sup> John 13:5, KJV.

The Gospel of John accurately summarizes the work of a Shepherd, as revealed by Jesus. Shepherd selflessly cares for their people, humbles themselves, serves others, and puts other people's needs above their own. How many people can boldly claim this fact? Possibly only a few, or none. The lesson from this leadership style model goes beyond mere service and embraces other elements that define a person as a leader. The research results, likewise, reflect those issues noted in the literature review.

The researcher realizes that all church leaders should always live by the many examples God has shown us to make the changes needed in the church and guide the people toward the right path. Members will commit if leaders demonstrate adequate skills. The researcher believes that the results from this study may benefit other church leaders as well.

In summation, the researcher will ensure those prospective leaders at the Gateway Church interested in management undergo a thirteen-week training before being allowed to join the leadership team. He will also emulate this leadership style and ensure the team follows suit so that the church experiences growth. The researcher is optimistic that if leaders humbly model the values a community placed in them for the work ahead, it could result in transformative changes within the church.

### **Research Application**

The research aims to probe the source of multiple problems and issues amongst church members to create the right plan and measures to resolve them. Before this study, the church attempted to make structural changes to alter the leadership, but these measures proved to be unsuccessful. It was at that point that the researcher realized the need for further investigation to identify the root cause of the problem. The results of the survey indicate that it concerned issues

in leadership. The problem in question made it necessary to initiate a thorough review and employ a strategy to avert these problems. Therefore, this dissertation stands to examine the church's operation, identify the underlying issues, and introduce the best approach to solve the problem.

Open communication is critical in every organization to ensure all members understand what is being expected of them and can freely offer feedback. Ministry leaders, likewise, must be able to discuss issues concerning members' progress one-on-one without discouraging or discriminating against the church members, if they want to see real progress. However, care must be taken in how leaders share information with their members.

Discussing issues regarding a particular individual in a degrading way is an invasion of privacy and in no way should be tolerated. The researcher aims to thoroughly review the existing policy to identify any weaknesses and implement relevant changes to make the church non-discriminatory for all members. The researcher will also ensure that team leaders learn how to conduct themselves professionally.

Everyone can learn leadership in the church because it flows out of discipleship, but "leaders must first focus on growing as followers of Christ and then on growing as leaders."<sup>171</sup> As part of the leadership development, the researcher aims to embark on short and long-term goals so that everyone understands their responsibilities and operates in light of a clear set of directions. Each leader would have the opportunity to revisit their career objectives and see where things are heading, rather than wait for the situation to gradually deteriorate and worsen.

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<sup>171</sup> Mike Schreiner and Ken Willard, *Stride: Creating a Discipleship Pathway for Your Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2017), 72.

The researcher views this as the most efficient way to monitor progress and is confident that this procedure will set a clear career path for the entire leadership team and enable members to be in control of their ministry activities. Those interested in management would be allowed to get involved in ministry work by assisting the front-line leaders with some assignments.

The researcher will also perform periodic reviews to avert possible trust issues and lack of engagement that have a tendency to result in poor judgment. Engagement is a critical element of the leadership process, and “leaders must engage followers so that they remain creative, productive, and innovative.”<sup>172</sup> An organization cannot function without adequate resources, which is why the church leaders must have adequate resources at their disposal to ensure all church needs are met and that the church functions well. Having the right resources and training will allow the church leaders to understand the challenges that lie ahead and find the relevant solutions to overcome any obstacles. It will also help the leadership team to be privy of members’ well-being on a regular basis. However, church leaders must ensure that people assigned to various positions receive adequate training.

### **Future Examination**

This project aims to provide research information on leadership development within church circles. The research results indicated a lack of leadership development in all five areas identified in Chapter 3. Although the researcher conducted a thorough research on the subject matter, he believes some areas still require further examination.

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<sup>172</sup> Robyn Wilkerson, *Shattering the Stained Glass Ceiling: A Coaching Strategy for Women Leaders in Ministry* (Ashland: Influence Resources, 2017), 163.

First, the scope of this study was based on quantitative research, which prevented the researcher from commenting on the project's effectiveness. As a result, the researcher could not assess its impact on the organization; he nevertheless aimed to determine the effectiveness of the investigated issue using the qualitative method.

Secondly, even had the researcher utilized the same methodology, there might have been a need for replication due to the difference in geographical settings. On the other hand, the researcher may opt for comparative analysis, using different results to identify additional areas of leadership problems.

Third, the size of the sample may also make a significant difference. Sometimes, using different applications to conduct a larger sample may enhance the quality of the work and even create another avenue for further research.

Therefore, this study's results can benefit many churches, particularly those experiencing a decline in membership numbers and related leadership issues. Moreover, this study will additionally benefit many pastors, ministry leaders, and parents, and the researcher further anticipates that the recommendation made in this dissertation would enable other scholars to explore further leadership issues confronting the global church.

### **Recommendations**

When Jesus walked the earth, He called his disciples individually and invited them into his ministry. When his disciples asked why he always speaks in parables, Jesus answered, "And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto



them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables.”<sup>173</sup> Jesus positioned himself as a leader of the leaders by instructing his disciples on how to execute the Kingdom’s work.

However, the part of the spiritual formation of being a follower of Jesus should involve helping church leaders know how to “introduce Jesus into conversations and be able to pass along relevant information to people who are being drawn to God.”<sup>174</sup> Every believer has a role to play in the body of Christ, and the researcher urges every Lead Pastor to embrace Jesus’ teachings and train their leaders in a way that can reshape their beliefs and positively transform the environment of the church to benefit all the leaders as well as the entire membership. The researcher further hopes that church leaders understand that much effort is required to get the ministry started.

While some churches fail due to a lack of preparation, others have closed their doors due to poor leadership. Fortunately, if things did not work out the first time, it certainly does not mean it will not work again after identifying the root cause of the initial issues and taking necessary measures to avoid repeating the same mistakes. God is always faithful and encourages his people never to give up, which is what the researcher aims to do.

Be a risk-taker and never allow anything to get in the way. Raise new leaders who will help expand the membership base and embrace new ideas that open new doors. Prayer is another way to keep the momentum. Consider having intercession prayers with the prayer team for divine intervention. The researcher believes there will be a breakthrough if leaders keep walking in faith.

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<sup>173</sup> Mark 4:11, KJV.

<sup>174</sup> Reggie McNeal, *Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2009), 82.

## **Conclusion**

Considering the current culture upon which the church was established, Gateway Church will experience growth if the researcher enforces an effective leadership strategy. However, positive changes and increased growth are only possible if the first phase is successfully implemented and depends on how far and well the leadership team is prepared to stay the course.

The researcher plans to review the existing church operations and implement the action plan recommended in this dissertation. He will also employ Jesus' leadership style and continue monitoring the progress to identify any issues that might hinder the progress of the intervention plan. Therefore, the ultimate goal of the researcher is to witness all church members excelling in their spiritual walk and hold the church leaders accountable to the highest standard.

Also, maintaining the right attitude toward culture change is the primary key to learning and growing the church, but it may not occur overnight; persistence will eventually prevail. The researcher will continue pushing for teamwork, invest in corporate training, encourage leaders to remain focused, embark on spiritual empowerment, and ensure that all members are actively involved in ministry work.

The researcher will consider all measures highlighted in this dissertation and pass them to the leadership team to discuss the next steps and ways to implement the plan. He also hopes that the materials presented in this dissertation will benefit other church leaders, ministers, pastors, and parents experiencing similar problems, so that everyone works together to spread the word of God, help the unchurched, and create a welcoming environment for spiritual growth.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **Consent Form**

#### **Leadership Culture: An Effective Leadership Strategy for Church Growth and Spiritual Maturity**

**Sikiru A. Asifatu**

**Liberty University School of Divinity**

You are invited to participate in a research study on leadership culture. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older and a current member of Gateway Church. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take the time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

#### **Researcher:**

Sikiru A. Asifatu, a doctoral student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

#### **Background Information:**

The purpose of the study is to address the problem of leadership culture facing Gateway Church by implementing a procedure that will improve church attendance.

#### **Procedures:**

If you agree to participate in this study, the researcher asks you to complete an anonymous survey. It should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete.

#### **Risks:**

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

#### **Compensation:**

Participants will not receive compensation through this survey.

#### **Benefits:**

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

**Confidentiality:**

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

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

**How to Withdraw from the Study:**

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please do not complete or submit your study materials. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

**Contact Information:**

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is all about. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher, Sikiru Asifatu.

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

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

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Printed Subject Name

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Signature & Date

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Recruitment Email**

#### **Leadership Culture: An Effective Leadership Strategy for Church Growth and Spiritual Maturity**

**Sikiru A. Asifatu**

**Liberty University School of Divinity**

Dear John or Jane Doe:

As a doctoral student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to address the problem of leadership culture facing Gateway Church, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and a current member of Gateway Church. Participants, if willing, will be asked to take a survey. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal identifying information will be collected.

A consent document for the survey is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. After you have read the consent form, please click the link to proceed to the survey. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the survey.

To participate, please click [here](#) to access the online survey.

Sincerely,

Sikiru Asifatu  
Researcher/Pastor

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Recruitment Email: Follow-Up**

#### **Leadership Culture: An Effective Leadership Strategy for Church Growth and Spiritual Maturity**

**Sikiru A. Asifatu**

**Liberty University School of Divinity**

Dear John or Jane Doe:

As a doctoral student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. Last week, an email was sent inviting you to participate in a research study. This follow-up is being sent to remind you to complete the survey if you would like to participate and have not done so already. The deadline for participation is December 17, 2021.

Participants, if willing, will be asked to take a survey. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal identifying information will be collected.

A consent document for the survey is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. After you have read the consent form, please click the link to proceed to the survey. Doing so will indicate that you have read the consent information and would like to take part in the survey.

To participate, please click [here](#) to access the online survey.

Sincerely,

Sikiru Asifatu  
Researcher/Pastor

## APPENDIX D

### Research Questions

1. What is your gender?

- (a) Male
- (b) Female

2. How old are you?

3. How long have you been attending church services at this church?

4. How long does it take you to get to church (commute time)?

- (a) Less than 30 minutes
- (b) 30 minutes to 1 hour
- (c) 1 hour to 2 hours
- (d) More than 2 hours

5. Our only service currently meets at 9:00 am. Do you think additional service times would be helpful? If so, what time would you recommend? (write your answer in the box below)

6. Which of the following ministries would you be interested in leading?

- (a) Men's Ministry
- (b) Women's Ministry
- (c) Global Ministry
- (d) Service Ministry
- (e) Pastoral Care Ministry
- (f) Prison Ministry

(g) Children Ministry

(h) Young Adult Ministry

7. Would you be interested in participating in ministry outreach programs?

(a) Yes

(b) No

8. If yes, how many hours are you willing to serve in a month?

(a) 2 to 4 hours

(b) 4 to 6 hours

9. Would you prefer to attend church online instead of in person?

(a) Yes

(b) No

10. Our goal is to give everyone the opportunity to serve. Would you be interested in a leadership position if available?

(a) Yes

(b) No

11. If already serving, do you think you serve in ministry according to your gifts and talents?

(a) Yes

(b) No

12. Life Group is a great way to connect or make new friends; would you be interested in joining or leading a group?

(a) Yes

(b) No

13. What about worship music? Do you think the church is doing well in this area?

(a) Yes

(b) No

14. Do you feel welcomed when you enter the church facility?

(a) Yes

(b) No

15. Do you think the church spends resources on things that are not important, or have you noticed anything inappropriate?

(a) Yes

(b) No

16. Would you recommend this church to others interested in attending a home church?

(a) Yes

(b) No

17. If not, what should we do to make it more attractive? (Write your response in the box below)

18. How would you rate the leadership performance at this church? (please select one).

(a) Excellent

(b) Good

(c) Fair

(d) Poor

19. Do you agree that an unhealthy leadership culture can affect church growth?

(a) Yes

(b) No

20. Do you think your pastoral team is doing enough for the church?

(a) Yes

(b) No

21. If the team is not doing enough, what area do you suggest we improve?

(a) Connection

(b) Communication

(c) Focus

(d) Other

22. Do you agree that church leaders treat each other with respect and lead by example?

(a) Yes

(b) No

23. Have you ever seen any of the pastoral staff treating church members inconsistently with our values?

(a) Yes

(b) No

24. Have you ever seen the pastor misusing his authority or being disrespectful to others?

(a) Yes

(b) No

25. Do you think the church will experience growth if ministry leaders can work together as a team?

(a) Yes

(b) No

26. Trust is one of the qualities of being a leader. Do you trust people in leadership positions within the organization?

(a) Yes

(b) No



27. Are you satisfied with the current decision-making process?

(a) Yes

(b) No

28. What do you think about getting involved in ministry work? Is it something you are willing to do if given the opportunity to serve?

(a) Yes

(b) No

29. What about spiritual care? Do you think church leadership is doing its best to ensure everyone gets their ministry needs?

(a) Strongly agree

(b) Agree

(c) Disagree

(d) Strongly disagree

(e) Not sure

30. Do you agree or disagree that this organization needs growth?

(a) Agree

(b) Disagree

31. If you are not currently serving, what is hindering you from serving? (You may select more than one)

(a) Not interested

(b) Schedule does not permit me to serve

(c) Ministry leaders are not knowledgeable

(d) Disagree with the vision of the church

32. Please provide additional information, if any, you would like to share with the leadership team in the box below

**APPENDIX E**

**IRB Approval**

**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.**  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

November 23, 2021

Sikiru Asifatu  
Farid Awad

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY21-22-450 Leadership Culture: An Effective Leadership Strategy for Church Growth and Spiritual Maturity

Dear Sikiru Asifatu and Farid Awad,

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 does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study is not considered human subjects research for the following reason:

(2) Your project will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not “designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge” according to 45 CFR 46. 102(1).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not

required to do so. If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word *research* with the word *project* throughout both documents.

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,

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