

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY  
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

ANALYZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PASTORAL  
LEADERSHIP AND CHURCH ATTENDANCE IN BAPTIST  
CONGREGATIONS IN EASTMAN, GEORGIA

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Michael Derek Carruthers

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

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## ABSTRACT

The reality of the decline of the church is evident in many churches today. What is causing the decline in worship attendance? This research study examined 14 of the 42 Baptist churches in Eastman, Georgia, from the Dodge County Baptist Association, where the average weekly reporting worship attendance during 2018 to 2021 was 50 to 150 in attendance. This research used the survey method, where participants anonymously answered questions regarding their church and pastor. The research study's results objectively prove that pastoral leadership can affect church attendance. Further research can be completed to investigate this connection between pastoral leadership and church attendance.

*Keywords:* Attendance, Bootstrapping, Christian, Connection, Declining, Growing, Leadership, Kendall's Tau, Plateaued, Significance, Underlying Cause, Variation

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## Dedication

There are several people to whom I would like to dedicate this dissertation. The first person is the love of my life, Laura. You have brought love and meaning into my life. I love you with all of my heart, and a major thank you for allowing me to continue my educational journey.

Next, I want to thank my sons, Laurentiu and Ethan. I know there were times when I had to complete schoolwork and could not do things with you two. You have also brought the excitement of being called “Dad” into my life. I hope and pray that both of you will continue to grow physically and spiritually.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

Bias-Corrected and accelerated (BC<sub>a</sub>)

Confidence Interval (CI)

The Dodge County Baptist Association (DCBA); AKA “the Baptist Association”

Growing (G)

Plateauing (P)

Declining (D)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

## CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

### Introduction of the Problem

The church in America is facing a significant problem in today's society. While it is evident that there is a spiritual decline within the churches in America today, it is also apparent that there is a decline in strong, effective Christian leadership within the church. "We live in a time when fewer and fewer people attend church, and an increasing number of people identify as 'Nones' in terms of religious affiliation" (Peterson, 2020, p. 3). Jesus, in the Great Commission, told His disciples:

All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (*Christian Standard Bible*, 2017, Matthew 28:18-20)

Today, churches are continually seeking new techniques to apply this teaching to their ministry. Adeloje (2015) writes, "The contemporary church today seems to be losing its original purpose and value" (p. 251). The number of attendees could correlate with the selected variables of the church's leadership. If the church fails to address these variables that are lacking within the pastoral leadership, this could result in churches either declining or plateauing.

This research examined two challenges facing the church. The first challenge is the struggles of Christian leadership. As a result, churches are declining in the number of attendees and church giving. Church leaders are struggling to keep the doors open as an operating church. Hewitt (2014) writes, "Leaders should be prepared to journey with groups of people who are turned off from the traditional inherited forms of being church but who still want to follow Jesus without the institutional burden" (p. 213). With leadership facing so many outside influences, it is no wonder that problems within the church are on the rise.

The second challenge is cultural influences contributing to declining church attendance reporting numbers. Himes (2011) writes, "Throughout history, cultural influences have constantly sought to contain the gospel in ways that serve a mission other than God's" (p. 274). Cultural influences hinder churches from fulfilling their mission of creating disciples who change the world. According to Rossi and Scappini (2014), "Church attendance is the most important and widely used measure to estimate the level of religious practice in a population" (p. 249). With church attendance as the metric used to measure religiosity, it is apparent that the church has declined over the last four years.

### **Background to the Problem**

Several aspects of church leadership need to have the consideration to identify persistent problems within the church. The first thought is the noticeable absence of the Holy Spirit in a leader's life. Petersen (2013) writes, "I freely recognized that I have no chance to imitate Jesus' model of service in leadership without the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in my life" (p. 50). Leadership in the local church means nothing without the presence of the Holy Spirit. Niemandt (2015) writes, "Leadership is a critical gift, provided by the Spirit because, as the Scriptures demonstrate, fundamental change in any body of people requires leaders capable of transforming its life and being transformed themselves" (p. 3). It is a complex situation without the Spirit's presence while leading a congregation. Leaders can find opposition from every direction.

Another important aspect concerning church leadership is the need for leaders to become more like Christ through discipleship. Huizing (2011) writes, "To be the leader that God has called the ecclesial leader to be, there must be an imitation of Christ" (p. 344). The teaching and hearing of the Word of God have changed people's lives. Now, in the 21st century, changing people's lives can be done by imitating the life of Christ. Actions can speak in the world today.

Leadership and discipleship are intertwined and could be considered a direct reflection of each other. Huizing writes, "Discipleship, then, appears to be the primary initiative not only in increasing the number of followers of Jesus but also in the development of Christian leaders" (p. 334).

A third important aspect regarding church leadership is the need for leadership to be disciple centered. Lemke (2017) writes:

Disciple-centered leadership is broadly defined as the process of influencing an organization and its members to follow Christ by seeking to understand, develop, and capitalize on the passions, skills, and other assets that the members of the organizational community possesses. (p. 271)

God uses those who use their gifts for the betterment of others. A spiritual gift is what authentic disciple-centered leadership is. Burns (2017) writes, "To lead others to a place of greater emotional and spiritual maturity, it is imperative to invest time and energy in partnering with the Spirit in transformation" (p.2). When leaders focus on the spiritual and physical well-being of others before worrying about their personal lives, God uses their abilities to make a difference and impact the lives of others around them. Lemke (2017) states, "It implies that leaders and disciples will be mutually transformed as they engage in a dialogical relationship in which both parties recognize that they are unfinished beings in pursuit of becoming more Christ-like" (p. 281). Christian leadership and an increase in personal discipleship transformed a church and moved the believer into a position closer to Jesus Christ.

Church leadership must also understand the significance of their calling into Christian leadership and the need for called leaders. Patterson (2017) writes, "The history of this spiritual leadership process suggests that God will do what He has to do to provide spiritual leadership for his people but always on an inclusive, distributed basis" (p. 87). Not everyone can be a leader in the Church. Becoming an effective leader takes a strong will and stance in the Lord. One

problem the Church faces today is a lack of leaders developing for service in the ministry. A leader creates other leaders. Patterson (2017) writes, "If the model of Jesus was about developing leaders to engage in the expansion of the kingdom of God, then it stands to reason that the primary function of Christian leaders is the stewardship of developing leaders" (p. 85). Without teaching discipleship, believers cannot participate in trying to grow more like Christ. Saines (2015) writes, "Our church environment can too easily encourage shallow approaches to learning" (p. 302).

The difficulty in leading a church is a complex task that can result in a rise or fall in church attendance. How the church grows can be seen directly in how pastoral leadership is accepted. One theory about the connection between the decline in church attendance and the decline in Christian leadership is the complexity science theory. "Complexity science is concerned with complex systems and problems that are dynamic, unpredictable and multi-dimensional, consisting of a collection of interconnected relationships and parts" (MacDonald, 2012, p. 1). Ministry is multi-dimensional as leaders engage with church members' different personalities and concerns.

Nevertheless, the ministry must focus on one aspect: the relationship between the leaders and the members. This relationship centers on the presence of the Holy Spirit. Niemandt (2015) writes, "The church is the people of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. Everything that it is and does—its identity, mission, and ministry—is dependent upon this relationship" (p. 2).

Within this relationship lies a common bond between the leader and the member. This common bond is the love they have for Jesus Christ. The leader must show the member that they are continuing to grow closer to Christ. When the leader succeeds, the member will react in a

way that will cause them to strive to become closer to Christ. Niemandt (2015) writes, "It ignites and drives change, starting with the inner transformation of the church as well as the context wherein the church finds itself" (p. 3). Church attendance must begin with the leadership in the church. A ministry that does not handle these situations daily may not be as vital internally as they appear externally.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study addresses the lack of research information available to determine if a relationship exists between four selected pastoral leadership variables (church attendance emphasis, spiritual growth emphasis, strengths of the pastor, and weaknesses of the pastor) and the status of the church, as perceived by church congregants as declining, plateauing, or growing churches, during the previous four year period in congregations reporting 50 to 150 in average weekly attendance in Baptist congregations in Eastman, GA.

American churches today are losing attendees at an alarming rate. Tuggle (2022) wrote, "Over the past two decades, the number of Americans who do not identify with any religion has grown from 8% in 1998-2000 to 13% in 2008-2010 and 21% over the past three years" (kbttx.com). While some churches are still experiencing numerical growth, others are declining or plateauing. This decline in church attendance could result in a fall or failure in Christian leadership. The decline in church attendance and Christian leadership is a problem that has existed for some time and will continue until solutions to the problem present themselves.

Many smaller churches have experienced a decline due to the Coronavirus that captivated the world in the years 2020-2022. The pandemic has impacted smaller churches and contributed to a reduction in attendance. However, the church attendance decline existed before and will continue even as the pandemic ends. Since passing the height of the pandemic, churches have

reopened their doors to in-person worship services, but people are still not coming. Is this decline solely due to the Coronavirus, or are there other contributing factors?

Research is available on how to grow a church. Many church leaders have written about the successes of their particular churches. These "how-to" books have become best-sellers and have helped other church leaders to grow their churches. However, literature on this connection between church growth and leadership in smaller churches is limited at best. Therefore, this research attempted to fill the gap by examining critically essential factors that influence church attendance, the role of pastoral leadership, and the church's status as declining, plateauing, or growing.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this correlational study is to understand what relationship, if any, exists between select pastoral leadership variables, as rated by church congregants, and the status of the church as a declining, plateaued, or growing church during the previous four-year period for churches with 50 to 150 people in average weekly attendance.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

#### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided this study:

**RQ1.** To what degree, if any, do pastors of declining, plateaued, or growing churches address the concerns of church attendance on a regular basis?

**RQ2.** To what degree, if any, do pastors of declining, plateaued, or growing churches demonstrate concern about the spiritual growth of the congregants?

**RQ3.** What are the perceived strengths of the leadership in growing churches, plateaued churches, and declining churches?

**RQ4.** What are the perceived weaknesses of the leadership in growing churches, plateaued churches, and declining churches?

**RQ5.** What, if any, is the relationship between four select independent variables, including 1) concern for church attendance, 2) concern for spiritual growth of congregants, 3)

congregational perception of the leadership strengths of the pastor, and 4) congregational perception of the leadership weaknesses of the pastor and the dependent variable of the status of the church as declining, plateaued, or growing?

### **Research Hypotheses**

Data collected for RQs 1-4 were descriptive and did not require hypothesis testing. For RQ5, four null hypotheses are presented below. If any or all of the hypotheses are rejected, then a reasonable conclusion would be that at least some aspects of pastoral leadership correlate with the church's status as declining, plateaued, or growing and are potentially attributable to that status.

**H5<sub>1 null</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between a pastor's concern for attendance and the status of the church as declining, plateaued, or growing.

**H5<sub>2 null</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between a pastor's concern for spiritual growth and the church's status as declining, plateaued, or growing.

**H5<sub>3 null</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between the congregational perception of the leadership strengths of the pastor and the status of the church as declining, plateauing, or growing.

**H5<sub>4 null</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between the congregational perception of the leadership weaknesses of the pastor and the status of the church as declining, plateauing, or growing.

**H5<sub>5 null</sub>**: There is no relationship between the four independent variables, including 1) concern for church attendance, 2) concern for the spiritual growth of congregants, 3) the congregational perception of the leadership strengths of the pastor, and 4) the congregational perception of the leadership weakness of the pastor and the dependent variable of the status of the church as a declining, plateaued, or growing church?

### **Research Population**

The population for this study was the congregants of small community churches in Eastman, Georgia, whose worship attendance was between 50 and 150 weekly within the Dodge County Baptist Association (DCBA). This study focused on worship attendance for these churches to determine if in-person attendance numbers have been in decline, have plateaued, or

have grown over the last four years, as well as which churches have had the same lead pastor for the period studied.

This population selection was for multiple reasons. The first reason is that this researcher pastors a church in the DCBA. Filling in at many of the associations' churches, this researcher saw a decline in church attendance and Christian leadership within many of the association's churches over the past four years. The Dodge County Baptist Association oversees approximately 42 Baptist churches. The second reason is this researcher's genuine interest in the need for strong Christian leadership in these small community churches.

Within this population, the Baptist Association has experienced the ups and downs that ministry could bring over the past few years. Attendance numbers have gone up in some churches but down in other churches. Churches have closed their doors over this period. One church built a new sanctuary, and several churches have combined to worship. Fourteen churches fit into the scope of this research numerically. The associational missionary has been a leader for over 12 years and will be instrumental in helping identify churches for this study. With the length of service, the associational missionary has been able to help these churches in the past reflect on the church's leadership and attendance numbers. The longest-tenured pastor in the association has been in the senior pastor role for 24 years.

### **Assumptions and Delimitations**

#### **Research Assumptions**

There are certain assumptions that this researcher did not address in this research. The first assumption is that people do attend church services. The decline in worship attendance does not mean that people are not attending church but that fewer people are attending.

The second assumption is that the church's pastor accepted the call to lead the church. The assumption is that the church's pastor has received the calling to lead the church, and the church agrees with that calling.

The third assumption is that leaders can encourage people to attend worship services. Each leader, who is called by whom the church calls, understands their relationship with God and the church. Their role, it is assumed, is to take an active role in encouraging people to attend worship services.

The fourth assumption for research is that churches accurately report attendance numbers. Churches may be going off their membership numbers or have someone actively counting and reporting the correct number in attendance at each church service.

The assumptions are on this researcher's knowledge of leadership within the church structure of the churches participating in this research. The belief is that the churches in this study have extensively vetted their leaders before accepting to allow them to lead their congregations.

### **Delimitations of the Research Design**

This study was delimited to pastoral leadership in Baptist congregations in Eastman, Georgia, and selected leadership variables used to define pastoral leadership effectiveness. These variables biblically focused on pastoral duties and teachings.

This research only allowed active attendees of Baptist congregations in Eastman, Georgia, to participate. Such attendees do not have to be church members, but they have to be actively attending a service weekly. After examining the association's yearly report, participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the survey.

### Definition of Terms

1. *Attendance*: Being present at a place (Britannica, n.d.a).
2. *Bootstrapping*: "A statistical technique to estimate the variance of a parameter when standard assumptions about the shape of the data set are not met. For example, bootstrapping may be used to estimate the variance of scores that do not follow a normal distribution. In this procedure, a subset of values is taken from the data set, a quantity (e.g., the mean) is calculated, and the values are reinserted into the data; this sequence is repeated several times. From the resulting set of calculated values (e.g., the set of means), the summary value of interest is calculated (e.g., the standard deviation of the mean)."
3. *Christian*: An individual who has accepted the Lord Jesus Christ into their life and applies Jesus' teachings to their life.
4. *Connection*: The idea that a person, place, thing, or idea is linked together for some common purpose or goal.
5. *Declining*: Relating to the period during which something is deteriorating or nearing its end. (Merriam-Webster, n.d.a). For this research, churches that reported an average weekly attendance lower in year four than in year one were in decline.
6. *Growing*: Increasing in size or amount. (Merriam-Webster, n.d.b.). For this research, churches that reported more average weekly attendance in year four than in year one were considered growing.
7. *Leadership*: The ability of an individual or a group to influence and guide followers or other members of an organization (Pratt, 2017).
8. *Kendall's Tau*: "A nonparametric measure of the degree of association between two ordinal variables (i.e., rank-ordered data). For example, a researcher could calculate Kendall's Tau to assess how much of a relationship there is between the rankings of students' performance provided by two observers (e.g., a teacher and a teaching assistant)."
9. *Plateaued*: To reach a level, period, or condition of stability or maximum attainment. (Merriam-Webster, n.d.c). For this research, churches that reported an average weekly attendance the same in year four than year one were considered plateauing.
10. *Significance*: The quality of being significant; the quality of having notable worth or influence (Britannica, n.d.b).

11. *Underlying Cause*: A basis of some action that may not be necessarily manifested or obvious.
12. *Variation*: The act, process, or accident of varying conditions, character, or degree. (Dictionary.com, n.d.).

### **Significance of the Study**

Smaller churches are struggling to keep their doors open. Shirley (2008) writes, “Barna predicts that by 2025, the local church will be rendered irrelevant, as millions of born-again Christians sever their institutional and denominational ties in favor of 'alternative faith-based communities and ministries focusing on media, arts, and culture' (p. 207). Without effective leadership and the true calling in the pastor's ministry, the church will continue to struggle, and the biblical truths will not be evident in a believer's life. They neglect personal discipleship without the Holy Spirit leading the pastor and the church.

How can the church get back on track regarding strong, effective Christian leadership and attendance? This study attempted to find a solution to this problem. Lemke (2017) writes:

Since ministry leaders are called to an equipping ministry, it is essential to acknowledge that this equipping work involves intentional attention to the assets and work of the Spirit in the lives of all believers, not just the leader. (p. 270)

Ministry can be a difficult calling. It takes someone who is called to lead a church to perform this ministry well. While the intent of this research is not to evaluate the performance of the church's leadership or even evaluate the amount of worship attendance in a believer's life, it does aim to draw out the challenges that church leaders and their members are currently facing.

The research questions were created to help see the relationship between pastoral leadership and church attendance. Church attendance is vital to the overall health of the church and the individual. The spiritual growth that occurs in the individual's life greatly is benefited by being faithful in attending church services. The strength of the pastor allows the pastor to fully

understand what their strong points are in overseeing the growth of the church. The weakness of the pastor, if not worked on, could potentially hinder the growth of the church. A church could even start to decline if a weakness is discovered and no attempt is made to correct the problem.

These variables are put on spotlight to discover what the church and the pastor need to accomplish to ensure the church does not face a period of decline. There are opportunities that can benefit the overall success of the church, but a basic knowledge needs to be present on the relationship of pastoral leadership and church attendance. Within the study, these variables will be discussed at length. The data that was collected from the participants helped to show if any relationship exists between pastoral leadership and church attendance.

### **Summary of the Design**

This comparative-correlational research was used to analyze the connection between a church's pastoral leadership and the decline in church attendance during a four-year reporting period in Baptist congregations in Eastman, Georgia. The survey was created to examine four selected variables in pastoral leadership. The four variables are church attendance emphasis, spiritual growth emphasis, the pastor's strength, and the pastor's weakness. The participants who completed the survey accepted to complete this task.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Overview

While much literature on church attendance and leadership in the larger church setting is available, the currently available literature on church attendance typically neglects the small church setting. The literature review for this dissertation examined the theological framework of the study, the theoretical framework, related literature, the gap in the literature, and the profile of the current study that this researcher hoped would fill a hole in the literature regarding church attendance and biblical leadership.

### Theological Framework for the Study

The framework of the study begins with the theological importance of church attendance and biblical leadership. Church attendance and biblical leadership are vital to the overall success of the church. Church attendance is essential to begin the process of discipleship in a person's spiritual walk.

### Church Attendance

A great source on the importance of attending church is the writer of Hebrews. Hebrews 10:25 says, "...not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching" (*Christian Standard Bible*, 2017). Coming together in worship encourages those who may not believe in growing their faith and becoming disciples of Jesus Christ. The encouragement of those devoted to Christ demonstrates that Christ can change the lives of individuals. Yates (2012) wrote, "It is much easier to pass the blame on to outside influences that we have no control over than it is to accept our role in the decline of the church" (loc. 343). Many people cite the Covid-19 pandemic for not attending church services. According to Shellnut (2021), "With Covid-19 vaccines making way for looser recommendations around distancing and masking, many congregations in the US have

been able to get back to normal operations again" (p. 69). As such, churches have become more accessible, as most have restarted in-person meetings. "As Covid infection rates decline and vaccination rates increase, we can envision the pandemic ending" (Marty, 2021, p. 3).

Attending church services is a great starting point to becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ, which should be every believer's foundation in faith. Matthew 28:18-20, known as the Great Commission, is generally the starting place when examining discipleship. These verses carry the truth, instruction, and promise given to the disciples by Jesus. Smith (2014) writes, "The call to discipleship is one that every believer is to pursue within their walk with God" (p. 16). While understanding the importance of discipleship, many today do not view it as necessary in their walk with the Lord. Smith also states, "A true disciple of Christ will have an inward transformation that produces these Christ-like characteristics within their life" (p. 18). The New Testament shows the characteristics of Christ, so the reader would understand how to become a stronger disciple. Seifert (2013) writes, "The process of discipleship invites individuals and communities to be transformed" (p. 7). This transformation often begins in the church with the hearing and application of the Word of God.

Luke 9:23 says, "Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me'" (*New King James Version*, 2018). As Jesus showed His willingness to die for the sins of humanity, a disciple is called to humility and self-denial. Reid (2002) writes, "There is about eighty percent of American churches that are in decline and that of the other twenty percent of churches there is limited growth of new converts" (p. 20). This statement looked over the landscape of the church 20 years ago. Earls (2021) writes, "By September 2021, 98% of churches had returned to in-person worship services, according to Lifeway Research, yet the same study found that the average pastor says 73% of their church

members in person on Sunday morning" (Lifeway.com). This results in more than 1 in 4 worship attendees needing to be added to worship service attendance. Conder (2006) writes, "The institutional church continually loses influence in American culture; therefore, there is a need for individual followers of Jesus to help influence the culture themselves" (p. 46). The sad truth of the matter is that people often attend church when attending a service is only more valuable than doing something else (Olson, 2008).

As disciples, Christians are to model the teacher. Luke 6:40 warns believers about this. "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like the teacher" (*New King James Version*, 2018, Luke 6:40). The Apostle Paul taught this perfectly to the church in Corinth. In First Corinthians 11:1, Paul writes, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ" (*New King James Version*, 2018). While the disciples learned the commands of Jesus and attempted to live as Christ lived, believers are also expected to follow Christ to the fullest. First John 2:4-6 says:

He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, God's love is perfected in him. By this, we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him should also walk just as He walked. (*New King James Version*, 2018)

As Reedy (2019) wrote, "The instruction provided by Christ in Matthew 28 does not have an immediate ending point or limitation established" (p. 22). Carson (1984) wrote, "So long as there is an inhabited spot unreached or human being outside the pale of visible discipleship, so long will the missionary department of the Christian ministry abide in the church as a divine institution" (p. 134). As Christ left the church with the command of the Great Commission, each attendee should apply the words of Jesus to their daily lives. Matthew 5:13-16 instructs believers to be salt and light. This passage is powerful, as it was part of the Sermon on the Mount. It says:

You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, giving light to all in the house. Let your light shine before men so they may see your good works and glorify you Father in heaven. (*New King James Version*, 2018, Matthew 5:13-16)

The decision to attend church is based on the heart of the person. A pastor cannot make people attend church services. Olson (2008) says:

Some people attend every week, but even they must decide each week, consciously or not, that spending the amount of time and energy necessary to participate in a church is the most valuable thing they could be doing at that time. (p. 446)

If church leadership placed a greater emphasis on the importance of church attendance, the potential attendees might understand that commitment to the church is necessary to be a Christian. According to Jones, Murray, and Warren (2018), "Effective spiritual leadership creates a shared vision among organizational members, giving them a sense of purpose and importance" (p. 92). Pastoral leadership is crucial in making the church attendees feel part of God's plan for the church.

### **Biblical Leadership**

The person and work of Jesus Christ is a biblical place to begin a study on leadership. Throughout His ministry, Jesus demonstrated qualities that indicated He was the leader and teacher of the disciples. The disciples understood the importance of listening to Jesus and watching the works He was performing. Looking through the Gospels, readers can learn more about Jesus's leadership. Matthew 20:25-28 says:

But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. Furthermore, whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (*New King James Version*, 2018).

Jesus's leadership is the foundation upon which Christian leadership should be built. Lawrence (2018) writes, "Leadership is the act of influencing/serving others out of Christ's interests in their lives, so they accomplish God's purposes for and through them" (p.1). While it is possible to lead without Christ, Christian leaders should focus on the One who gives life and the knowledge to teach. The Gospel of Mark shares a story about Jesus's leadership and ability to change lives. Mark 4:35-41 says:

On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." When they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the ship, so it was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" Then He arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Whom can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!" (*New King James Version*, 2018)

Leaders are those men and women whom people listen to and learn from to grow stronger in Christ. Nevertheless, the level of Jesus's leadership is about more than just impacting a small group of disciples to change the world. It is a teaching on how Christians should focus their lives and their intentions. Luke 22 shares a story about humility that Jesus shares with His disciples. It is a story that shows how Christian leaders should serve with humility and respect toward one another. Luke 22:24-27 says:

There was also a dispute among them as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And He said to them, 'The kings of Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For whom is more significant, he who sits at the table or he who does? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves. (*New King James Version*, 2018)

Rosalita (2013) writes, "The concept of placing an individual or community under the spiritual care of a mature and qualified leader is one of the main themes in both the Old

Testament and the New Testament” (p. 15). Although Jesus is the example that all Christian leaders should imitate, other leaders in the Bible made their impact on the people as well. Several leaders will be examined for this research.

The first leader introduced in the New Testament is John the Baptist. Rosalita (2013) writes, "John the Baptist served as the link between the Old Testament spiritual ministry and the New Testament" (p. 26). John the Baptist showed humility when confronted by the Pharisees. He knew that he was not the Messiah, God's chosen One. John 1:23, John the Baptist said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord" (*New King James Version*, 2018). He was the New Testament leader that the Old Testament needed.

The second leader is the Apostle Peter. Peter's relationship with Jesus underwent several changes. Peter is an appropriate example of a biblical leader because he illustrated persistence; when life does not go the way one expects, Christian leaders must continue to lead as Jesus led. 1 Peter 1:13-16 says:

Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." (*New King James Version*, 2018)

The third leader is the Apostle John. John had a special relationship with Jesus, as he was the youngest of the disciples. A leader takes others under their wing and teaches them all they need to know. However, the Gospel of John shares a story that is only central in John—the reconciliation between Jesus and Peter in John 21. John also writes several critical verses in the New Testament, such as John 3:16 and 1 John 1:9, which says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (*New King James Version*, 2018).

The last leader in the New Testament that this paper will explore is the Apostle Paul. As Paul transformed his life from the persecutor Saul of Tarsus to the Apostle Paul, Paul exhibited many different traits of Christian leaders. He shows the readers, with his life and his writings, what leaders should be and how to be on the lookout for new leaders. Huffstatler (2014) writes, "If an elder is faithfully teaching the Word of God, he can rest assured that the Spirit will function as a witness with his teaching to yield spiritual fruit accordingly" (p. 194). Paul gives Titus, a protégé, the qualifications of an overseer. In Titus 1:5-9, Paul instructs Titus:

For this reason, I left you in Crete, that you should set the things that are lacking in order, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you – if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. For a bishop must be clear, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict. (*New King James Version*, 2018)

There are many aspects of leadership found throughout the Old Testament. As illustrated, many of these are crucial to a leader's success. There are six of Old Testament leadership that will be examined. These traits include love, humility, motivation, correction, integrity, and obedience.

The first aspect is love. Job demonstrated this for his heart and his family. In Job 1:4-5, Job writes:

And his sons would go and feast in their houses, each on his appointed day, and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job regularly did. (*New King James Version*, 2018)

Love is an essential aspect of being a Christian leader. Job's love for his children was highlighted in his obedience to offer burnt offerings, hoping that the offering would release his

children from wrongdoing during these feasts. After the tragic events in the early part of Job, Job worships God, as it says in Job 1:21, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord" (*New King James Version*, 2018). Christian leaders should show love to all they encounter.

The second aspect of leadership in the Old Testament is humility, and Moses demonstrates humility when God calls. Exodus 3:11 says, "But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?'" (*New King James Version*, 2018). Moses did not believe that he could do what God wanted him to do. However, he humbled himself and did as the Lord instructed (*New King James Version*, 2018, Exodus 4:10-13). Christian leaders must not lord over the people but should humble themselves. Being humbled allows the leader to reach more people for Christ.

The third aspect of leadership in the Old Testament is motivation. After Moses died, God put Joshua in charge of the Israelites. After 40 years in the wilderness, the Israelites were about to enter the Promised Land. As they were about to leave to enter the Promised Land, Joshua said:

By this, you shall know that the living God is among you and that He will come without fail to drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites. (*New King James Version*, 2018)

Joshua waited patiently for this moment and finally got to enter the land that had been promised years earlier. Yates (2012) wrote, "Success comes after a progression of making one good decision following a previous good decision following other good decisions" (loc. 1043). Christian leaders should be motivated to do the works of the Lord while continuing to wait for the Lord to work in their lives. Miracles happen when people are encouraged to love the Lord and wait for His goodness.

The fourth aspect of leadership present in the Old Testament is correction. Christian leaders must be willing to correct church members, those attending church services, and themselves. Kouzes and Posner (2017) wrote, "Leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow" (pg. 26). One Old Testament example of someone wanting to lead is King David. An adulterer and a murderer, David made many mistakes that took him away from the blessings that God was ready to give to him. In Psalm 139:1, David writes, "O Lord, You have searched me and known me" (*New King James Version*, 2018). Even though David made mistakes, he was willing to confess them to God. A Christian leader must be willing to admit when they have done wrong.

The fifth aspect of leadership is integrity. With everything that happened in Joseph's life, from being sold into slavery to reaching a high rank in Pharaoh's court, Joseph was blessed because he had the integrity to make the best out of a bad situation (*New King James Version*, 2018, Genesis 37:12-36). A Christian leader must lead out of goodness since those following them watch closely to see how they teach. Hybels (2009) writes, "Joseph was a strategic leader because he looked beyond the present and made provisions for the future return of his people to the promised land" (p. 144). When confronted by his brothers for help during the famine, Joseph could have easily had them killed. Nevertheless, Joseph's integrity would not allow that to happen. Instead, he shows grace to his brothers. Genesis 45:3-5 says:

Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near me." So, they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt." "But now, do not, therefore, be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life." (*New King James Version*, 2018)

The sixth and final aspect is obedience. Being 75 is likely a difficult age to begin a new journey, but this is what Abraham did (*New King James Version*, 2018, Genesis 12:4). Abraham

did so with a promise from the Lord. A Christian leader must be willing to do what the Lord commands. Genesis 12:1-3 is a powerful passage on the life and obedience of Abraham. It says:

The Lord said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and your father's house to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (*New King James Version*, 2018)

As this theological framework has shown, there is a biblical presence on personal discipleship and Christian leadership. While it can be challenging to see the importance of both, for the church to succeed, there must be a plan for both aspects of its spiritual growth and maturity. With so many small congregations in this research population, there is a need for Christian leaders to emphasize the importance of personal discipleship in the church.

### **Theoretical Framework for the Study**

Smaller congregations are struggling to gain enough traction to turn the tide from being small churches even to keep the doors open and becoming thriving congregations able to make a difference in the community at large. Reddy (2019) writes:

An examination of the literature on this subject suggests that spiritual formation in the life of a new believer, coupled with a desire to become a full-fledged disciple of Christ, propels an individual to be missional in their actions, thoughts, and lifestyle. (p. 56)  
Through this theoretical framework, both discipleship and leadership will be examined.

Three discipleship theories were examined regarding discipleship: missional discipleship theory, family discipleship theory, and transformational discipleship theory. Two leadership theories were examined: situational leadership theory and servant leadership theory.

### **Discipleship Theories**

The discipleship process in Christians is fundamental to growing in their walk with the Lord. Discipleship begins with a relationship with God and with the church. Church attendance provides an avenue to start the growth process. The attendee will see the importance of the

biblical mandate of becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ within the church context. There are several discipleship theories this research examined.

### ***Missional Discipleship Theory***

Gibson (2016) writes, "Different Christian scholars and preachers have used the concept of missional discipleship for different purposes, but the likelihood of common motivation that undergirds its usage cannot be ruled out" (p. 157). Missional discipleship is more in-depth than simply being a disciple of Jesus Christ. How would one define missional discipleship, and what does this theory look like in someone's walk with the Lord? Moore provided a helpful definition and two significant aspects of this theory. Moore (2018) writes:

Missional discipleship is a process of spiritual growth and discipline that focuses on helping individual disciples and churches discover what needs to die to be liberated for the new life God intends. It is about developing a pattern of life centered on dying and rising—a sustained engagement with walking the Way of the Cross. (p. 21)

Based on Moore's definition, two aspects of missional discipleship include dying and rising. These two aspects are crucial to the Apostle Paul's teaching in the book of Romans.

For if we have been united in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has *died* has been freed from sin. Now, if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also *live* with Him, now that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once and for all, but the life that He lives, He lives to God. (*New King James Version*, 2018, Romans 6:5-10)

God has called believers to "embody and express in their daily lives" (Reddy, year, p. 59). The problem is that the church is in decline with these missional disciples, who are willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of the Gospel. Without disciples being united in the task and taking it upon themselves to grow spiritually, church members are slowly leaving the church at an alarming rate. Miguez (2017) writes, "The church, in its reality and as a participant in the

work of God, finds its being and unity in the mission" (p. 12). Miguez also warns the church to question its praxis, "reviewing it in the light of the gospel, in its consequences for creation, for the sake of 'the least of these' through whom we serve Jesus and affirm our faith in the God of life" (p. 15).

### ***Family Discipleship***

Discipleship within the family context is vital for small churches' growth. Discipleship in the family is about growing into relationships with each other, as well as with Jesus. Harris (2021) writes, "Understanding why it is important for parent-child relationships to be perceived as positive and for parents to have confidence in disciplining their children, it is important to understand the biblical mandate upon parents to disciple their children" (p. 17). Disciplining children is vital for the spiritual growth of the entire family.

Godissart (2008) writes, "The Bible is the basic story necessary for living as the people of God and carrying out God's plan. Our actions and the unfolding personal story should be understood considering God's story" (p. 62). Throughout the Bible, "The entire redemption story is couched in the language of the family" (Harris, 2021, p. 15). From the very beginning, God emphasizes the family.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them with your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house, walk along the road, lie down, and get up. (*Christian Standard Bible*, 2017, Deut. 6:5-7)

Training and teaching the children was of utmost importance for the future leaders of the Old Testament people (*Christian Standard Bible*, 2017, Judges 2:10-11). Harris writes, "Christian parents are encouraged to guide their child's formation and ensure that the guidance is toward the likeness of Jesus" (p. 21). Training children is not something that happens overnight. It is a process, as "the Christian walk is a faith continuum" (Godissart, year, p. 60). Christian

parents hope their children will never depart and stay in what they have been taught. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Start a youth out on his way; even when he grows old, he will not depart from it" (*Christian Standard Bible*, 2017). Cherry (2016) writes, "The truth is that, given the right environment, incentive and encouragement, human beings will learn what they need to learn" (p. 194). Are Christian parents teaching their children how to know Jesus and love Him during their discipleship time together?

Philips wrote an excellent quote on what family discipleship truly is. Philips (2018) says:

Family discipleship is not about you, your children, or your home. It is about obeying God's word and fulfilling the Great Commission. If family discipleship influences persons in your home, then something is wrong. If our children and we are growing spiritually in our daily walk and understanding of the gospel, there should be a desire to share that good news with others beyond our homes. Family discipleship at home should lead to an overflow of the good news to people outside the house at work, school, play, community, and worldwide. (p. 73)

While family discipleship is vital to the success of these smaller congregations, the truth is that Christian parents need to put more emphasis on the spiritual growth of their children. McCauley (2015) writes, "There is so much more to discipline your children than just getting the right information about God into their heads" (p. 115). Smaller congregations especially feel the ramifications of this neglect. Harris (2008) writes, "It was also revealed that a majority of parents do not spend any time during a typical week having spiritual conversations with their children" (p. 27). Church attendance and the children growing in the Lord are vital to the family. As parents teach about the Lord, they ensure their children's eternal future will be in God's hands. Charles Spurgeon (1995), in one of his sermons about children, says,

Christian parents, with all my heart would I say to you, do not sin against the child by your ill example or by your negligence as to his salvation, but seek the Holy Spirit that to your offspring, you may fully discharge the solemn duties which providence and grace have thrown upon you. (p. 92)

Family discipleship is a quality in families that needs to be revived within the home. As Strobel (2013) writes about the works of Jonathan Edwards:

Every Christian family ought to be, as it were, a little church consecrated to Christ and wholly influenced and governed by his rules. Moreover, family education and order are some of the chiefs of the means of grace. If these are duly maintained, all the means of grace will be to prosper and be successful. (p. 24)

Hinton (2016) writes, "The Old and New Testaments present a clear pattern for parents to pass faith to their children" (p. 51). As the Bible's revelation unfolds, family discipleship is essential, where parents are vital to the process. As smaller congregations are struggling in this area, Hinton writes, "The church needs not to look beyond its children growing up in its own homes for an evaluation of its disciple-making effectiveness" (p. 51).

### ***Transformational Discipleship Theory***

Discipleship is genuinely about a transformation in a person's life. Flood (2016) writes, "Transformative learning begins when someone seeks new understanding sparked by an experience of something that did not make sense" (p. 62). A transformation begins when the person makes sense of all they are learning. The problem in smaller congregations is that there needs to be a sense of change in the members' lives. Van Fossen (2020) writes, "The problem is that the Church in North America has spent so much time trying to grow the church that we have forgotten what it means to make disciples" (p. 1). Van Fossen continues, "The local church has become more focused on budgets and buildings than on whether the members are living out the Great Commission of making disciples" (p. 1). When the church sees people growing spiritually, the words of the Apostle Paul ring true. Romans 12:1-2 says:

Therefore, brothers and sisters, because of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by renewing your mind so that you may discern God's good, pleasing, and perfect will. (*Christian Standard Bible*, 2017)

Paul only uses this word for transformation in one other place in his writings. Second Corinthians 3:18 says, "We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit" (*Christian Standard Bible*, 2017). According to Guzik and Phillips (2018), "For Paul, this transformation and renewing of our minds take place as we behold the face of God, spending time in His glory" (p.1 ). Flood writes, "It is important to note that behavior change is not a byproduct of transformative learning; it is an essential part of the process" (p. 63).

This change in a person's life often happens gradually and is slower in specific individuals. Poe (2020) writes, "One of the oldest debates of discipleship has to do with who is responsible for bringing about transformation in disciples: God or the individual" (p. 27). Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works so that no one can boast" (*Christian Standard Bible*, 2017). Disciples must acknowledge that the only way the discipleship process will take hold of an individual is to recognize that "the process of discipleship requires the disciple to take action to engage in wise and thoughtful practices, yet it is up to the Holy Spirit to bring about inner change" (Poe, year, p. 34).

The church must take an active role in the transformation process. Churches that sit idle and do nothing in this process will not see their church grow. Poe (2020) writes, "An important function of the church is to create, nurture and sustain the kinds of healthy, trusting relationships that provide the conditions for transformation to take place" (p. 47). Churches with no discipleship process will continue to struggle with the spiritual maturity of their members and will work to reach their neighborhoods with the mission that Jesus has left for the church to

fulfill. Hirsh (2006) questions the attractional church model and contends that telling people to come and see in church buildings is not enough; Hirsch states that leaders must rethink their understanding of the church to reclaim the biblical focus of the church as an organic movement outward into the world.

### **Summary of Discipleship Theories**

One common trait exists throughout these discipleship theories (missional, family, and transformational). Any transformation in a person's life will occur through the power of the Holy Spirit. Poe writes, "Discipleship is a partnership with the Holy Spirit in the intentional, communal and holistic experience of preparing for, and participating in, the reign of God here and now" (p. 24). How will these discipleship theories be successfully implemented within the church without strong Christian leadership guiding the way?

### **Discipleship of the Church**

Discipleship is essential to someone's walk and growth in Jesus Christ. The believer is not just to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior; they are to become disciples of Jesus and experience that changed life that so many before them have experienced. Unfortunately, churches are not experiencing a movement or revival of the importance of making disciples. Jacober (2011) writes:

We have been taught both formally and through expectations of the church (or parachurch or other Christian organizations) that it is better to throw a good party with many adolescents than to enter into ministry with one intentionally. (p. 9)

This is the belief in many churches in American society today. Churches have neglected the teaching of discipleship and become a place to socialize with other people.

Johnson (2020) writes, "The lack of priority on discipleship and meaningful relationships in our culture and churches has caused a cognitive disconnect regarding discipleship" (p. 46).

While church leaders can see this disconnect, they struggle to get the church to refocus on the basics that Jesus taught. Johnson says, "Christian discipleship is a process that continues to bring transformation to all aspects of the human experience" (p. 40). The disciple's life is then transformed into the likeness of Jesus, and they attempt to live as Jesus lived.

While there are churches in American society that are growing, Campbell (2020) makes a valid point by writing, "Not all church growth is healthy growth. Unhealthy growth attracts people from other churches by catering more to them and expecting less of them" (p. 33). This can be seen by people continuing to switch churches when they disagree with trivial points, or the fun has worn off. Campbell notes, "Sadly, few churches have developed an intentional strategy with a path that begins with non-believers and walks with them through the stages of discipleship" (p. 36). Accepting Christ is not the end for a new believer. Kim (2015) writes, "A disciple cannot stop at knowing Christ personally, but must participate in the corporate call to follow the Master in helping others know Him as well" (p. 28). This call to follow and the believer's acceptance means work is not complete in their life. If the church is to fulfill the Great Commission, all believers must participate in discipleship.

What changes in the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ? Kim (2015) writes, "A true follower of Christ cannot possibly refrain from wanting others to know Him, responding in loving obedience to the call of Jesus to make disciples—a life of increased holiness" (p. 24). This life that Jesus provides for His followers is to encourage believers to change their previous lifestyles and allow Jesus to change their hearts. With this change occurring in believers' lives, believers are not to look at the church as the primary place discipleship happens. Kim notes, "Discipleship refers to a lifestyle that goes beyond the content from lessons learned to knowing Christ Himself and leading others to know Him" (p. 25).

To begin a discipleship process, the church needs to be intentional in its vision for its spiritual growth. Within these smaller congregations, the church may lack imagination and knowledge on what a disciple is to do and how to make a disciple. Campbell (2020) writes, "Expose new Christians to the love of God and community, to great teaching, great relationships, and solid accountability, and over time, many will grow into quite different people than they were when they first came to Christ" (p. 36).

One downfall in many smaller congregations is the lack of young people within the church membership. Moser and Nel (2019) write, "The numbers of young people in the church have been consistently declining, and there does not appear to be a reversal of this shortly" (p. 2). This is occurring in more than just smaller congregations and communities. Moser and Nel further state, "North American youth ministry has long been characterized by a focus on entertainment and the pursuit of fun to attract non-Christian young people" (p. 2).

Spiritual disciplines play a significant role in the development of disciples. When people develop and incorporate these spiritual disciplines into their lives, they become more like Christ. Whitney (2014) writes, "Practitioners who utilize the spiritual disciplines consistently as a means to foster spiritual formation possess characteristics that serve to reflect God's image to the world" (p. 35). Does discipleship only happen inside the church, where many churches do not have a discipleship process? Mapstone (2019) writes, "The question harder to address is whether this transformation propels these apprentices outside the wall and into the world as reflections of the image of God" (p. 36). Mapstone also contends, "In response to God's love for and forgiveness for us, we are to respond with changed hearts directed towards service to God and the community around us" (p. 43).

## **Summary of Discipleship of the Church**

The church is where the discipleship process begins, but it cannot be the only place where life-changing discipleship takes place. Mapstone (year) writes, "Through lives that reflect a focus on God's purposing rather than our preferences, we can easily move into the mission field with love and hospitality that draws others to God" (p. 45). The community has such a significant role in the discipleship process of a believer and should be impacted by lives being changed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His call to make disciples. Mapstone says, "Our spiritual journey requires effort to grow deeper into Christlikeness, not as an earning of salvation, but as a byproduct of salvation which draws others to God" (p. 48). While discipleship must occur outside the church, leadership must also be demonstrated.

## **Leadership Theories**

Leadership is vital in any organization, but Christian leadership is essential in churches and the discipleship process in a person's life. Ogundivan (2013) writes, "Unless the church has a clear picture of who a leader is, it is not likely that it would be able to identify one whenever they appear, neither would the church unmistakably understand what a leader does" (p. 56). In this section of the research process, two leadership theories were examined: situational leadership theory and servant leadership theory.

### ***Situational Leadership Theory***

The Situational Leadership Theory is a leadership model created by Blanchard and Hersey in the late 1960s. SLT has encouraged corporate America and has transformed organizations into great companies. According to Cherry (2020), "Situational Leadership Theory is often referred to as the Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory, after its developers,

Hersey, author of *'The Situational Leader,'* and Blanchard, author of *'One-Minute Manager'*" (p.1).

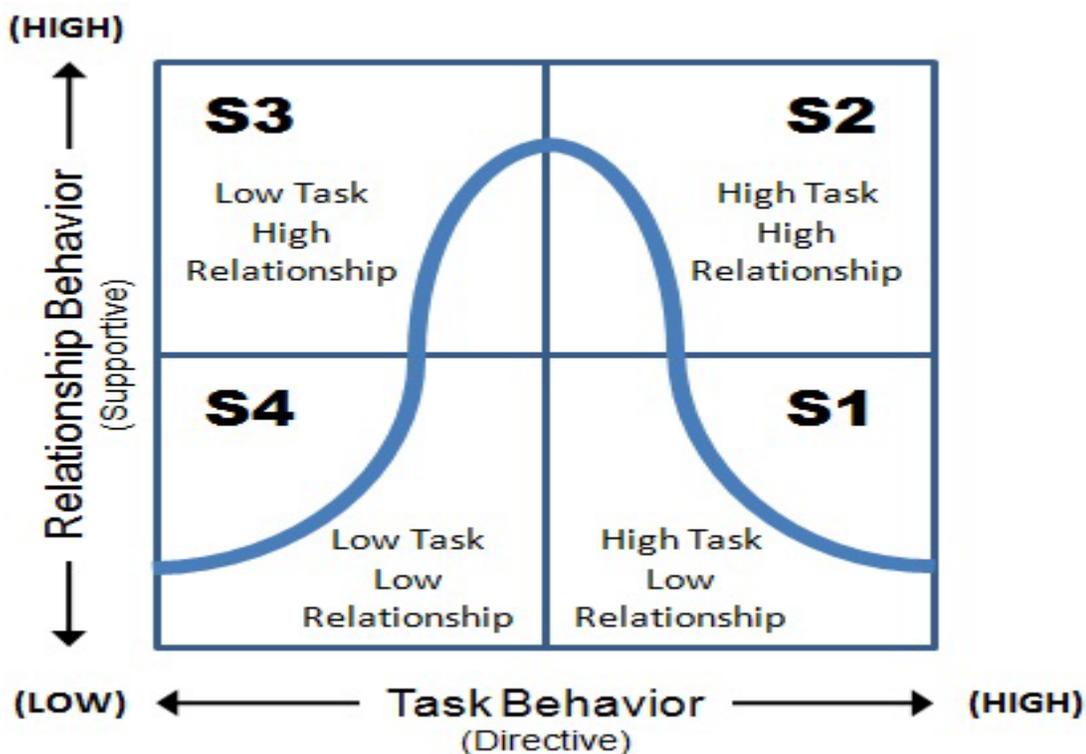
Blanchard and Hersey based their theory on two essential concepts: leadership and the follower. Their original concept consisted of four styles:

1. **Telling leaders = S1** (specific guidance and close supervision): These leaders make decisions and communicate them to others.
2. **Selling = S2** (explaining and persuading): These leaders may create the roles and objectives for others, but they are also open to suggestions and opinions.
3. **Participating = S3** (sharing and facilitating): These leaders leave decisions to their followers. Although they may participate in decision-making, the ultimate choice is left to employees.
4. **Delegating = S4** (letting others do it): These leaders are responsible for their teams but provide minimum guidance to workers or help solve problems. (stu.edu)

Figure 1 represents the SLT model that Blanchard and Hersey first developed. Within the two dimensions of the SLT, there are four leadership/follower interaction styles. According to Butler and Reese (1991), "The four styles are called 'S1' (high task, low relationship), 'S2' (high task, high relationship), 'S3' (low task, high relationship), and 'S4' (low task, low relationship)" (p. 37).

**Figure 1**

*Situational Leadership Theory Model*



*Note:* This graph was retrieved from <https://www.project-management-skills.com/situational-leadership-model.html>

According to Zigarmi and Roberts (2017), “The Situational Leadership Model has been one of the most long-standing, widely-recognized and popular leadership models” (p. 244). SLT was founded by Hersey and Blanchard and was first introduced as the “life cycle of leadership” (Thompson & Glaso, 2018, p. 574). After being introduced in their book, *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources*, SLT quickly became one of the

leadership theories many organizations were interested in utilizing (citation needed). As this movement began, Roberts (2012) writes, “Some leadership experts have chosen to use the term ‘personalized leadership’ rather than ‘situational leadership’ because ‘they want to keep their focus on leading people, not just handling situations’” (p. 52).

As a theory begins to take shape, one aspect that makes it successful is the willingness to research and test new ideas to help broaden the approach. SLT is no exception to this truth.

Blanchard tried to understand this theory's importance to undergo some changes. Cherry (2020) writes:

The Situational Leadership Model II (or SLMII model) was developed by Ken Blanchard and built on Blanchard and Hersey's original theory. According to the revised version of the idea, influential leaders must base their behavior on the developmental level of group members for specific tasks. (p. 2)

Based on Blanchard’s writing in 1997, here is an understanding of the SLMII, which advocates that the best managers will provide the amount and kind of direction and support that will benefit the developmental level of the employee.

**Enthusiastic Beginner (D1):** Already motivated, passionate, and excited about the opportunity to do something new, this person needs little support from a manager (p. 38).

**Disillusioned Learner (D2):** The initial excitement of the job has worn off, and some aspects of the job have proven more complex than initially anticipated (p. 38).

**Capable but Cautious Contributor (D3):** Having completed the task only once has yet to give the employee enough time to gain confidence in his or her ability (p. 38).

**Self-Reliant Achiever (D4):** At this stage of development, an employee has demonstrated competence and commitment in doing the job and has essentially become self-managed on the given task (p. 38).

Situational.com (2017) stated, "The SLT transcends cultural and generational differences and equips leaders around the globe with the skills necessary to drive behavior change and increase productivity" (p. 2). SLT can be adapted to one's leadership style in the secular world and for Christian leaders to use in the church context. Situational.com also stated, "Whether it is up, down, or across the organization, effective influence skills can enable leaders to positively influence the behavior of others, make strategic decisions, manage conflict, and affect change" (p. 8). Leaders can create change in the organization.

Communication is vital in any method of leadership. SLT is one theory that emphasizes communication, as it is the driving force behind how the leader interacts with those who are following. Brown and Baker (2001) believe that when SLT is put into practice, the only way this theory will be successful is through practical communication skills (p. 136). As the SLT is implemented in an organization, the leader understands the importance of how to handle their followers in any given situation that may come up.

Lynch (2015) writes, "The situational leader takes the follower through the developmental levels by diagnosing their performance, competence, and commitment, being flexible in leadership style to match the follower's developmental level" (p. 2). Leadership style is essential to obtaining solid Christian leadership in the church. One factor that all churches have in common is people with different personalities, different styles of learning, and different ways of being led. There are those in churches who excel at doing the work of the Lord without supervision, and some need to be led into doing the work of the Lord. Sims, Faraj, and Yun (2009) write, "The general idea is that one type of leadership will be effective in one situation, but a different type of leadership will be effective in another situation" (p. 149). The ability to

change is where practical, strong leadership can change the outcome of these smaller congregations.

There are two dimensions that the SLT focuses on; task behavior and relationship behavior. Brown and Barker (2001) write, "Task behavior is the amount of direction and information a leader provides to subordinates regarding a task. Relationship behavior is the amount of two-way or multi-way supporting and encouraging communication the leader provides subordinates" (p. 137). Northouse (2019) takes this one step further as he affirms that this theory must have both the task and the relationship applied appropriately in each situation (p. 95). While it can be difficult for a leader to obtain both behaviors, it is vital for the success of the SLT. Sutton (2004) writes, "Hersey and Blanchard believe it is possible to alter one's leadership style because they view it in terms of behaviors which they believe can be controlled, instead of an extension of one's personality which cannot be controlled" (p. 53). If it is possible to change one's leadership style, the church could have a direct reflection on creating a more decisive leader. Attendees can witness the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership of the church. Attendees then can encourage the necessary changes in one's leadership style. Leadership can be formed from nothing and created into something of substance and quality.

Sutton writes, "The SLT is based on the assumption that there is no singular successful leadership style, but that leaders need to have a variety of styles that can be adapted to the unique combinations of variables present in each situation" (p. 53). This leadership style can be beneficial if a pastor or Christian leader adapts this leadership theory to their life. The SLT has been taught, tested, and accepted as a leadership theory that continues to work today. Many leaders use their instincts to teach. With this, a leader's natural tendency should be to lead when situations come up that may have to alter their natural leadership skills.

There have been many who have added to this theory or have applied this theory to their organization. At times, some of these people have made great strides in adding or adapting this theory to their leadership. For this research, one example will be given. Goleman, the author of *Emotional Intelligence*, made great strides in using the SLT in his leadership. He defined six styles within the SLT model. These six styles highlight how leaders perform in their leadership roles. The six styles are:

1. **Coaching leaders:** Leaders who work on an individual's personal development and job-related skills.
2. **Pacesetter leaders:** Leaders who set very high expectations for their followers.
3. **Democratic leaders:** Leaders who give followers a vote in almost all decisions.
4. **Affiliative leaders:** Leaders who put employees first.
5. **Authoritative leaders:** Leaders who are very good at analyzing problems and identifying challenges.
6. **Coercive leaders:** Leaders who tell their subordinates what to do. (stu.edu)

The SLT is readily accessible for any leader to adapt to their leadership style. Situational leaders can provide the tools to influence those under their leadership and help cultivate an environment of change. SLT has given leaders the framework to engage and influence the behavior of those following.

### ***Servant Leadership Theory***

Servant leadership is a theory that enhances both the leader and the follower. As Greenleaf introduced the theory, he believed that leadership began with a servant's heart. He focused on helping the followers develop into their God-given potential by putting others first, resulting in effective achievement for the organization. Greenleaf believed it was the leader that could grow and mature in their role as the head of the organization, yet not help the

organization's growth. A servant leader's focus on leading the follower would improve the organization through their willingness to serve and the transformation of new servant leaders.

Greenleaf believed that the servant leader would positively impact a person's life by encouraging and showing each person to become a servant while focusing on others before self. This leadership theory is a system of leadership that continues to impact everyone involved. Greenleaf began this leadership theory in 1970, as no working theory existed.

Greenleaf (1991) defined this theory as “the natural feeling that one wants to serve first, then would aspire to lead” (p. 19). As a person desire to lead, their heart would be to serve first before leading. This leadership theory has expanded since its formation.

Spears (2004), former president of the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, summarized the theory as “a long-term, transformational approach to life and work – in essence, a way of being – that has the potential for creating positive change throughout our society” (p. 7). As Spears expanded Greenleaf’s theory, he identified characteristics of servant leaders, which focus on the appropriate use of servant leadership. These characteristics are:

1. *Listening*: Leaders have traditionally been valued for their communication and decision-making skills. While these are also essential skills for the servant-leader, they need to be reinforced by a deep commitment to listening intently to others. The servant-leader seeks to identify the will of a group and helps clarify that will.
2. *Empathy*: The servant-leader strives to understand and empathize with others. People need to be accepted and recognized for their special and unique spirits. One assumes the good intentions of coworkers and does not reject them as people, even if one finds it necessary to refuse to accept their behavior or performance.
3. *Healing*: One of the great strengths of servant-leadership is the potential for healing oneself and others. Many people have broken spirits and suffer from various emotional hurts. Although this is part of being human, servant-leaders recognize that they also have an opportunity to 'help make whole' those with whom they come in contact.
4. *Awareness*: General awareness, and especially self-awareness, strengthens the servant-leader. Awareness also aids one in understanding issues involving ethics and values. It lends itself to view most situations from a more integrated, holistic perspective.

5. *Persuasion*: Another characteristic of servant leadership is relying primarily on persuasion rather than positional authority in making organizational decisions. The servant-leader seeks to convince others rather than coerce compliance. The servant-leader is effective at building consensus within groups.
6. *Conceptualization*: Servant-leaders seek to nurture their abilities to ‘dream great dreams.’ The ability to look at a problem (or an organization) from a conceptualizing perspective means that one must think beyond day-to-day realities. Servant-leaders are called to seek a delicate balance between conceptual thinking and a day-to-day focused approach.
7. *Foresight*: Foresight is a characteristic that enables the servant-leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequences of a decision for the future. It is also deeply rooted in the intuitive mind.
8. *Stewardship*: Servant leadership, like stewardship, assumes, first and foremost, a commitment to serving the needs of others. It also emphasizes the use of openness and persuasion rather than control.
9. *Commitment to the growth of people*: Servant-leaders believe that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers. As a result, the servant-leader is deeply committed to the growth of each individual within the institution. The servant-leader recognizes the tremendous responsibility to do everything possible to nurture the growth of employees.
10. *Building community*: The servant-leader senses that much has been lost in recent human history due to the shift from local communities to large institutions as a primary shaper of human lives. This awareness causes the servant-leader to seek to identify some means for building community among those who work within a given institution. (p. 8-10).

Figure 2 identifies the Servant Leadership model. The ten leadership qualities that Spears identified as the Servant Leadership Theory can change the way a leader views how to impact the lives of the people following him.

**Figure 2***Servant Leadership Theory Model*

Note: This figure was retrieved from <https://www.etechgs.com/blog/servant-leadership-enhance-job-satisfaction-in-employees>

According to Heyler and Martin (2008), "Over the past several decades, the concept of servant leadership has emerged as a dynamic form of leadership associated with a positive impact on organizations" (p. 230). As leaders emerge, they tend to lead without applying some leadership theory to their leadership style. Smaller congregations struggling to obtain strong leaders seem not to understand the importance of seeking the correct type of leader for their church. Only some strong leaders will succeed in all situations.

Within this theory, "the servant leader is one who chooses to first serve and then as an outpouring of that desire comes an aspiration to lead others" (Heyler & Martin, year, p. 231).

Servant leadership has changed the way people lead. Leaders can see the importance of being servants first, just as Jesus was a servant. Dennis (2004) writes, "Servant leadership demonstrates love and commitment" (p. 13).

In these smaller congregations, it can be straightforward for the leader to feel responsible for meeting all the church's needs. The leader must be able to explain what needs to be done. Kouzes and Posner (2017) write, "The evidence is clear: to be the most effective, every leader must learn to find the voice that represents who he or she is" (p. 49). Kouzes and Posner's study shows that team members feel a stronger sense of team spirit once leaders find their voice. Unfortunately, in some churches, all ministry falls on the shoulders of the pastor. Not only will the leader be the pastor, but they will also be the primary disciple-maker and evangelist and complete all the church responsibilities. This is different from servant leadership theory. Heyler and Martin (2014) write, "The servant leader is focused on showing subordinates the rightness of their way of thinking and convincing, rather than coercing them, to that way of thinking" (p. 233). Dennis writes, "The servant leader's spiritual relationship with God then is presented in an outgrowth of joy and happiness in the workplace with others" (p. 14).

Servant leadership is critical in smaller congregations, as the leader "models truth in the way they coach, empower, and persuade" (Dennis, 2004, p. 31). The servant leader will lead by example, making a difference in people's lives. As servant leaders begin the process of teaching to be a servant, it will be necessary for the leader to show and teach how to correctly serve, with a servant's heart, not wanting any recognition but giving God all the glory.

### **Summary of Leadership Theories**

Leadership theories help develop leaders and their leadership styles. In smaller congregations, the church's leaders need to develop these leadership theories. While these

smaller congregations struggle to keep the doors open, the church's leadership can only take part of the blame. Bergeron (1992) writes, "If statistics are accurate, the church is losing the battle for the souls of the lost" (p. 68). Within this losing battle, Christian leadership needs to focus on how to lead a hurting congregation. Applying situational leadership and servant leadership theories to one's leadership can significantly impact these smaller congregations.

### **Leadership of the Church**

Leadership is just as crucial outside the church as it is inside it. Leaders are seen in the community, and their leadership is sought after in different ways. Bishop (2019) writes, "Leaders within the evangelical community are essential in preaching these ideologies and creating a framework for how members grow personally and help the evangelical community grow as well" (p. 45). While leaders are to focus their teaching on the spiritual growth of church members, the byproduct of the spiritual growth of these members is the impact such growth will have on the community. Are smaller churches making an impact on the community around them? Are the leaders in these churches the correct leaders for the church? These questions must be asked by both the leaders and church members of these congregations.

This disconnect could have happened suddenly, or it may have taken place over a more extended period. Yancey (2014) writes, "The pastor hoping to elevate the health and lifespan of a local church needs to recognize the necessity of energetically serving both the community and the church simultaneously" (p. 43). As a pastor begins to transform the church, the church needs to change the community around them. The fear of many leaders is starting to rely on the power of self and not the power of the Holy Spirit. Yancey puts it best: "If leadership empowerment springs from human sources alone and centers on human ingenuity, that empowerment and improved productivity will be short-lived. Therefore, church leaders in

challenging contexts best steward their work from a posture of experiential Spirit overflow” (p. 15). Lives can be significantly impacted when the church is involved in the community, and the community allows the church to make a difference in people’s lives.

One common fear is that the leader will focus too much on the community and begin to neglect the church. Yancey (year) writes, “Only serving the local community may produce a nice reputation for a local pastor but alienate the existing church family from the community-minded pastor” (p. 44). Conversely, Yancey writes:

Exclusively serving the local family of God reduces gospel impact and tends to reinforce an inward focus as if God exists for its preservation, not for reaching the people far from God and including them in the family of God. (p. 44)

Here lies the disconnect between the church and the community. If a pastor focuses on one more than the other, the other will feel neglected.

Learning to be a leader outside the church can be difficult for smaller church pastors. Within these smaller churches, the number of volunteers can be limited. In the scope of this research population, many of these smaller churches consist of older members who may be very limited in what they can do. While they may want to do the work, their health may hinder them from doing as they wish. Parrish (2009) writes, "Church membership demonstrates a level of commitment between the member of the church and also between the member and his or her faith" (p. 41). Unfortunately, in these smaller congregations, the addition of church members is few and far between joining the church. The pastor must develop a team around them to get out into the community and serve in the church. Parrish notes, "The effective leader knows how to get the team to work toward the desired result by setting standards, establishing a vision, and establishing direction" (p. 23).

Leadership development is crucial for these smaller congregations. In some, if not all, cases, the pastor does most of the work. Where are the volunteers willing to put forth any effort for the kingdom of God? Parrish writes, "Leadership development could be a key factor in assisting church leaders in creating environments conducive to members volunteering and working within the church" (p. 25). The work of the Lord is not confined to the church's walls. This is a significant problem in small churches. Schwadel (2005) writes, "Church participation can be measured through church attendance and the number of church organization membership. The activities and skills learned in the church environment through involvement in church participation can translate into non-church organizational involvement" (p. 161). When leaders are developed, this allows the pastor to focus on their primary objective: teaching the Word of God. This happened in Acts 6 and is the formation of what is now seen as the beginning of the deacon ministry (*Christian Standard Bible*, 2017, Acts 6:1-7). When a dispute broke out between the Hebrews and the Hellenists, the disciples understood the importance of creating a team around them. Acts 6:2-4 reads:

Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "We should not leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the world." (New King James Version, 2018)

Creating leaders other than the pastor gives the church more opportunities to make an impact outside of the church. As leadership is developed, this "allows church leaders to improve in any identifiable area that prevents church leaders from influencing the creation of motivating environments" (Parrish, year, p. 57). All Christian leaders and pastors should motivate the community to change their way of living for themselves and begin to reconcile and develop their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Leadership in the church will always begin with the pastor and his or her heart for people. There is much responsibility on the pastor's shoulders. Bell and Elkins (2004) write, "Being a leader carries a strong sense of responsibility because it requires the leader to act according to his or her values and morals" (p. 13). Bishop (year) further confirms, "The implementation of these foundational beliefs is further explored in the perception of leadership within the evangelical community" (p. 45). Church attendees want to see the personal growth and transformation in the pastor's life, other church members' lives, and those the church is attempting to reach in the community.

### **Summary of Leadership of the Church**

Leadership must not be confined to the walls of the local church. Leadership should be exhibited in the pastor's daily life and the church's leadership. While these small congregations experience difficulties reaching the community due to a lack of volunteers, pastors must live out what they preach in each church service. If they are church leaders, they must also be leaders in the community. Pope Zinsser (2017) writes, "Effectiveness refers to the leader's ability to lead the follower in all levels of the organization" (p. 25). The church's organization must go outside the church's walls and begin to impact the community by bringing people together in the name of Jesus Christ, the one true leader.

### **Yates' Theory of Church Decline**

#### ***Overview***

The theory driving this research comes from Yates' (2012) book, *Reaching the Summit: Avoiding and Reversing Decline in the Church*. An expert in his field, Yates asks two questions: 1) Why are so many churches in decline today? Moreover, 2) What causes the decline in churches? (Loc. 59). This section will examine Yates' theory.

### *Five Phases of Church Decline*

Yates understood the importance of having a robust and healthy church. Yates believes that many churches are in a state of denial regarding the perceptions of the church's status. Yates' wrote, "Decline is certainly not in the motives or objectives of any church" (Loc. 77). No church or pastor would want their church to decline in attendance numbers, but many churches face this reality. Yates gives the five phases of church decline that he has examined:

1. Loss of Vision
2. Lack of Purpose
3. Denial
4. Grasping for Survival
5. Relinquishment of Ministry (Loc. 175)

As the church begins to be in a state of decline, the majority of the time, the drop goes unnoticed at the beginning. Yates believes that a decrease is when the church has not added to its membership, attendance, or baptisms over one to ten years. Yates also believes these phases came over ten years, as a decline in the church is a gradual process.

As the first phase begins, the loss of vision seeps into the ministry. The decline begins when the concept of the church starts to deteriorate. Yates wrote, "Rarely is thought given to the possibility of impact from the organization's leadership or ministry" (Loc. 154). The thought that the pastor directly impacts the decline of the church is something many in the congregation would not think of or want to admit.

The decline can present itself in any organization over time. The church is not exempt from declining. Yates wrote, "As leaders champion the vision and celebrate even the most minor victories within the church, this will significantly counteract the decline of the church, even before people begin to recognize the church is declining" (Loc. 241). As pastors mature as church leaders, they can unwisely leap into more growth strategies that have succeeded in other

churches but, in turn, will neglect the passion that brought the initial achievement in the first place.

Yates wrote, "Unfortunately, we often see a denial of the truth of the church's situation and a refusal to conduct an open and honest assessment of the ministry's decline" (Loc. 353). Leaders who recognize the need for change will see the behavior patterns that will help determine strategic approaches to reverse any decline the church has experienced through sound decision-making. Yates also wrote, "It has been said that we are given the past to learn from, the present to live in, and the future to prepare for" (Loc. 670). It is when the pastor seeks – in humility, through prayer, fasting, wise counsel, and scriptural confirmation – God's vision for a local body of believers and then communicates that alone to the congregants.

Success in ministry is not just about increasing the number of attendees during church services. It is, according to Yates, "Standing stalwart in your beliefs and steadfast in your faith that will carry a man further than skill, ability, or fortune" (Loc. 1264). It is about standing steadfast in the purpose of the church, which Yates believes is:

1. Discipleship (leading people to live more Christlike, denying self)
2. Evangelism (outreach to bring people into a relationship with God)
3. Fellowship (fostering relationships built in total trust and giving)
4. Ministry (creating a lifestyle of caring for and meeting the needs of others)
5. Worship (adoration, praise, and giving back to God as He has blessed) (Loc. 1311)

Most churches in decline struggle in these areas. Leaders must understand the importance of each purpose and how to accurately teach them to the church. Yates believes in Collins's statement, "There is a tendency to discount or explain away negative data rather than presume that something is wrong with the company (organization)" (Loc. 347). Accepting the fact that something is wrong is not a negative belief, as many churches have reacted to the negative and turned it into a positive. As the church answers the big questions about its ministry, its focus will

be on how to make an impactful change in the church and the community. The big questions Yates believes the church must ask are: (1) What are the strengths of our church? (2) What are the local needs? (3) How can we utilize the strengths within our church to impact the community around our church for God? and (4) Can we adapt, utilizing our God-given strength base? (Loc. 914).

### **Challenges Facing Small Congregations**

Much literature has been written about the challenges that churches face in American society today. While many can see the challenges firsthand, this researcher is going into this study with an open mind. What does the literature say about this critical topic? Is there a way to correct the trend of losing church members and neglecting to reach the community? Fredrick (2016) writes, "While 'success' in pastoral leadership is primarily a subjective concept, specific areas of leadership are measurable and can be used to determine the quality of ministry and the level of pastoral accomplishment" (p. 1). What are some of the problems facing small congregations that have been researched and tested to be true regarding this topic?

Throughout the literature on this topic, many scholars have identified reasons for the decline in small churches. Smaller churches' listed struggles can be considered valid and accurate. Gilmore (2020) recorded eight characteristics of a dying church. Here is Gilmore's list:

1. The dying church values the process more than the outcome.
2. The dying church places greater importance "on their preferences over the needs of the unreached."
3. The dying church is "unable to pass leadership to the next generation."
4. The dying church pulls back from the community and looks less like them.
5. The dying church depends more on the program, and personalities replace relationships and evangelism.
6. The dying church grows resentment toward the community.

7. The dying church has the reality that it was a thriving church at some point in history.
8. The dying church "confuses caring for the building with caring for the church and community" (p. 21-34).

Each one of these characteristics can be seen clearly in many of the congregations in this study. There is a need to take an accurate account of the philosophy of the church and to see what areas can be changed to make the church successful in growing spiritually and numerically. Clinton (2016) quickly identifies the critical issue of dying churches. He writes that "dying churches do not primarily have an attendance problem, a giving problem, or a baptism problem. They have a discipleship problem" (p. 7). Discipleship is the key to turning around many of these churches. Without an intensive discipleship process, these churches will continue to decline and, unfortunately, may one day close their doors one final time. Campbell (2020) writes, "Intensive discipleship gives congregants the courage they need to seek the lost, the compassion to serve them, and the knowledge to speak words that bring them life" (p. 33). Johnson (2020) further confirms, "The goal of discipleship is to help people enter into a life-transforming relationship with the Savior that continually conforms them into the image of Christ" (p. 41).

The life of dying churches is hard to navigate. Often, members are in denial regarding the condition of the church. Gilmore (year) writes, "If pastors are going to lead churches to reverse this trend, it will take years of demanding work and commitment to revitalizing declining and dying churches" (p. 33). Reversing the course of the church will likely be difficult. Miller (2007) says, "Some churches die slow deaths without even realizing they are dying" (p. 52), and Reid (year) states that few people are aware of the dire condition of the church in America. While this is the case in many smaller churches, the sad state of the church is in dire need of beginning the process of changing its outcome. Reid (2014) further elaborates:

An examination of the church in America will show that the health and influence of the church are not what it once was. The health of the church in America has reached epidemic levels, and if nothing is done to promote healing, the church may reach inconsequential levels of influence. (p. 17)

However, the sad truth is, according to Lewis (2001), "The reason for this decline is that six out of ten Americans believe the church is irrelevant" (p. 32).

Many statements could be made about the struggles of smaller churches. According to Gilmore (year), "No churches are beyond turnaround provided the members are willing to put in the hard work and commitment needed to see declining churches once again experience growth" (p. 49). This gives many pastors and church members hope that things can change. While church leaders must find a strategy that will protect the interest of their remaining congregants (Jones, 2016), they must find ways of producing new leaders willing to take on ministry roles to help in the process. As mentioned earlier, this can be difficult in small churches. According to Rogo (2011), "Decline in church membership, the decrease in offerings, dying members, revocation of blue laws, failure to attract youth, and rise in mega-churches have all contributed to church closings" (p. 81). Failure to attract new leaders in the church is also a talking point on the death of churches.

Sprayberry (2010) writes:

Even though the church will continue to exist, local congregations can and do cease to exist for various reasons. Nevertheless, there is a big difference between the culture of a local church (language, acceptable behavior, thought patterns, traditions, musical style, etc.) and the church itself. (p. 32)

The culture around the church has impacted the church instead of the church making an impact on the culture. This is one sign that the church is irrelevant in the community where the church exists. There is no movement of the church getting involved in the community, and often, this is due to the church not wanting to leave its comfort zone to attract new attendees. Wood (2004)

writes, "It is predicted that the final blow for many churches will occur when the money runs out or when three-fourths of a generation who are institutional loyalists die off or both" (p. 38).

This is a sad reality for many churches in America. The number of churches closing their doors each year will shock many members. When thinking about their church, the fact is that many Christians do not see the dire need in their church. Rainer (2014) states, "Nearly 100,000 churches in America are showing signs [of serious enough] decline toward death" (p. 7). Rainer says that the most common characteristic of dying or deceased churches is their unwillingness to change.

### **Summary of Challenges Facing Small Churches**

Challenges happen in all parts of life. No one is exempt from experiencing challenges that can change or even destroy lives. Fredrick (year) writes, "Although conflict is a part of daily life, there are relational and organizational triggers that ignite it. Among them are poor communication, competing goals, unmet expectations, differing perspectives, theological differences, and organizational changes" (p. 25). The sad fact is that in most of these dying or smaller churches, there is no leadership capable of turning the tide away from having to close the doors. As the leadership mindset significantly influences the direction and effectiveness of the church (Frederick, 2016), dying churches will cease to exist when leaders fail to build stability (Jones, 2016).

### **Related Literature**

For this research, many different authors were examined to see if there was any gap in the literature that could be filled by this study. Although there were many articles and dissertations that have been written, there were few that combined leadership and church growth. This section

will highlight ten research studies that have been conducted and how it can impact this gap that exists on the topic.

The first study was completed by Scuderi (2010) entitled, *Servant Leadership and Transformational Leadership in Church Organizations*. The purpose for this research was to “examine the relative effectiveness of servant leadership and transformational leadership, seeking to provide empirical evidence of each model’s independence and unique contributions, as well as their shared contributions toward leader, organizational, and follower outcomes” (p. 3). The goal of the study was to “identify the use of servant and/or transformational leadership in 275 churches in a single Protestant Christian denomination in a single state via surveys administered to the church’s pastor and to knowledgeable followers within the organization” (p. 3). This study was relevant due to the Protestant denomination being used, as well as servant leadership being examined. Scuderi’s objections was not accomplished, as servant and transformational leadership was both “found to predict leader effectiveness, church health perceptions, trust in leader, trust in organization, follower satisfaction, affective commitment, normative commitment, follower faith maturity, and church in church size over time” (p. 168), but failed on both leadership theories to “predict follower continuance commitment and church health statistics” (p. 168).

The second study was completed by Jones (2020) entitled, *Youth Decline in Church Growth and Attendance*. The purpose for this research was to ‘investigate how the spiritual formation and depth of a church’s youth program can effectively add to the growth of the overall church’ (p. 16). The goal of the study was to “investigate if the overall decrease in the youth in today’s churches is partly due to lack of an official source of the church’s growth” (p. 16). This research was relevant as the researcher sought to see if one area of the church was responsible

for the decline or growth of the church. Jones' objectives was accomplished, as Jones' conclusions were "the overall decrease in the youth in today's church is due to lack of authoritative role of church's growth" (p. 125).

The third study was completed by Drummond (2020) entitled, *The Correlation between Pastors' Leadership Style, Their Organizational Change Commitment, and Their Organization's Readiness for Change*. The purpose for this research was to "determine whether a relationship exist between pastors' perceptions of transformational leadership, pastors' organizational change commitment, and their organization's readiness for change, controlling for age, gender, tenure, education, and geographical locations of lead pastors in SCBC churches" (p. 22). The goal of the study was to answer the three research questions concerning the pastor's perceptions of transformational leadership. This study was relevant as it focused on the pastor's leadership and the organization's readiness to change in SCBC churches. Drummond's objectives was accomplished by showing "a statistically positive relationship between SCBC lead pastors' perceptions of transformational leadership, the pastors' organizational change commitment, and their organizations' readiness for change" (p. 126).

The fourth study was completed by Gifford (2022) entitled, *Discipleship and Leadership: The Correlation between Discipleship and Servant, Transformational, and Shared Leadership in the Marketplace*. The purpose of this study was to "determine if a correlation exists between a marketplace Christian leader being involved in a discipleship relationship and exhibiting characteristics of servant leadership, transformational leadership, or shared leadership within the secular marketplace" (p. 23). The goal of this study was to see if marketplace Christian leaders were failing to "exemplify Jesus in their leadership" (p. 119). This study was relevant as it examined Christians in the Southeastern U.S. and the focus on leadership in the marketplace.

Gifford's objectives was half accomplished, as a "relationship between participating in a discipleship relationship and exhibiting characteristics of servant leadership" (p. 169) was evident; however, "there was insufficient information to determine a relationship between discipleship, transformational and shared leadership" (p. 169).

The fifth study was completed by Douglas (2019) entitled, *A Comparison of Resistance and Openness to Change in Church Leadership and Church Growth through the 200 Barrier*. The purpose of this study was to "compare resistance-to-change responses of pastors and governance authorities in small churches with scores of pastors and governance authorities in large churches" (p. 79). The goal of this study was to see if there was a "comparison of scores in the RTC scale of under 200 governance authorities and pastors, with over 200 governance authorities and pastors" (p. 79). This study was relevant as it examined churches under and over 200, and sought change within the church. Douglas' objectives was not accomplished as the study "may not accurately reflect the perspective of leadership on resistance to change overall" (p. 105).

The sixth study was completed by Hanson (2020) entitled, *A Quantitative Correlational Study of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Senior Pastor Leadership Style and Church Attendance*. The purpose of this study was to "examine the relationship of congregational growth as measured by average yearly attendance with varying senior pastor leadership styles and factors in the ELCA churches" (p. 7). The goal of this study was to "encourage researchers to study other outcomes and combinations of factors to improve nonprofit organizational outcomes" (p. 7). This study was relevant due to examining both leadership and church attendance growth. Hanson's objectives was not accomplished as this

study “found no significant relationship between four leadership styles (authentic, servant, transactional, and transformational) and church attendance” (p. 100).

The seventh study was completed by Flanagan (2021) entitled, *A Correlational Study of Emotional Competence and Christian Practices among Millennials*. The purpose of this study was to “determine the relationship, if any, between emotional competence and Christian practices for persons in the millennial generation who worship in Virginia’s Richmond metro area” (p. 32). The goal of this study was to “understand the emotional functioning levels of millennials and to understand about their Christian practices” (p. 32). This study is relevant because it reflects on the competence of church leaders and the leadership style they value. Flanagan’s objectives was accomplished because the “study results revealed positive correlations between emotional competence and three of the SDMs: (a) Growing with God, (b) Growing with others, and (c) Growing with the Word” (p. 118).

The eighth study was completed by Prickett (2016) entitled, *A Study of Relationships between Teacher Leadership, Student Trust, and Student Commitment to Ethical Goodness*. The purpose of this study was to “study the significance of teacher leadership behaviors and student trust of teachers in education classes” (p. 19). The goal of the study was to “examine the predictive relationship between student perceptions of teacher leadership practices with the level of student trust in faculty and student beliefs concerning ethical goodness” (p. 20). This study is relevant because it examines leadership/follower relationship in a certain environment to see if follower trust in the leadership is evident. Prickett’s objectives was accomplished because “it was determined that a student’s perception of a teacher’s leadership is a statistically significant predictor of the student’s commitment to ethical goodness” (p. 111).

The ninth study was completed by Jones (2016) entitled, *The Relationship between Administrative Leadership Behaviors and Teacher Retention in the American Association of Christian Schools*. The purpose of this study was to “discover if there is a relationship between the leader’s consideration on initiating structure behaviors and the retention of teachers in Christian education” (p. 15). The goal of the study was to obtain “improved understanding of specific factors that affect teacher retention” (p. 16). This study is relevant because it focused on the leadership behavior of teachers. Jones’ objectives was not accomplished because “the research does not agree on the exact reason between the principal’s leadership style and general leadership behaviors as the accelerating agent” (p. 72).

The tenth study was completed by Maiocco (2017) entitled, *A Quantitative Examination of the Relationship between Leadership and Organizational Commitment in Employees of Faith-Based Organizations*. The purpose of this study was to “test Bass and Avolio’s (1992) broad leadership theory types and Meyer and Allen’s (1993) theory of organizational commitment in employees of a faith-based organization” (p. 5). The goal of the study was to have a greater understanding between the relationship of leadership and organizational commitment. This study is relevant because it examined the organizational commitment and the leadership of the organization. Maiocco’s objectives was not accomplished because “ANOVA results indicated weak predictability between personal leadership style and employee organizational commitment” (p. 137).

These ten studies were relevant to this researcher’s study, as it helped to see where the gap was in the literature. While some of these studies were successful in the objectives of the researcher, there were some that failed in finding a solution to the research problem. In all, these

studies are a catalyst in the attempt to fill the gap in the literature involving church leadership and church attendance.

### **Rationale for the Study**

As a pastor of a minor, once a thriving church, this study is personal for this researcher. Pastoring a church with only six members is difficult to comprehend at times. Some pastors do not understand the importance of taking care of themselves. Gaultiere (n.d.) gives statistics that show pastors' lack of soul care and training.

- 53% of pastors do not feel seminary or Bible college adequately prepared them.
- 70% do not have someone they consider a close friend.
- 50% only meet regularly with an accountability person or group.
- 72% only study the Bible when preparing for sermons or lessons.
- 16% are "delighted" with their prayer life, 47% are "somewhat satisfied," and 37% are either "somewhat dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied,"
- 44% of pastors do not take a regular day off.
- 31% do not exercise, while 37% exercise at least three or four days a week as recommended.
- 90% say they need adequate training to meet the demands of the ministry.
- 85% have never taken a Sabbatical. (Gaultiere, n.d)

After researching many of these topics and examining the sources that have been utilized, one article by Rainer (2014a) tells the story of the potential decline in leadership in the church.

Rainer lists eight ministry struggles and how they impact the ministry leader. The eight ministry struggles are:

1. Criticism and conflict
2. Family problems
3. Stress
4. Depression
5. Burnout
6. Sexual problems
7. Financial problems
8. Time management

Rainer says:

Most pastors love their callings. Most pastors enjoy most of what they do in ministry. Most pastors would not change their role if they could. Still, many pastors have ongoing challenges and struggles. Furthermore, many would gladly receive help from church members, a word of encouragement from almost anyone, and the knowledge that others are praying for them. (p. 1).

After examining these eight ministry struggles, it can be helpful to relate each ministry struggle to a pastor's life. Rainer's research on these eight struggles can be seen in many pastors today, not just pastors from small churches. These eight struggles are relevant to this research, as many Christian leaders have experienced these struggles.

### **Criticism and Conflict**

Criticism can be brutal when coming from the people they are leading. When a loved one or a church member who has been under the leader's teaching for many years begins to criticize the leader, shock, and hurt are often the results. Conflict, as mentioned, will creep up in any leadership tenure. It is only a matter of when and how destructive the conflict will be.

Much of the criticism and conflict within the church involves the operations and decision-making of the church. Disagreements can divide the church, and soon problems will begin to impact the church. Controversy over the church's focus can separate members, with members picking sides. Birch (2016) writes,

When the Christ community began, American churches began to be dissolved by an ideological divide. On one side, the attractional or seeker-sensitive churches claimed their mission was to reach the unchurched and unchristian. On the other hand, discipleship-based churches maintained that their primary focus should be on existing Christians. In other words, the focus became either evangelism or discipleship (p. 110).

Pastoral leaders must examine and be aware that criticism and conflict will occur at some point in their ministry. Just in the research population of this research, four churches split and created new ministries. Out of the four, only one continues to exist, as those churches never recovered from the conflicts that arose in their congregations.

## Family Problems

Being a leader can make balancing the leadership of an organization and one's family difficult. Being a pastor can bring family problems that are sometimes out of the pastor's control. When conflict arises, the pastor may not have anyone they can trust enough to get advice. Also, the family is always in the spotlight. If a church member wants to bring the conflict to the pastor, they typically look at the family. They reason that if a pastor cannot control their family, how can they lead a church?

Hernandez (2014) writes, "Many leaders and pastors have real trouble in their families that gets ignored, relegated, or forgotten" (para. 2). Family is the beginning of a pastor's ministry. Pastors can be elevated by their families, but their families can devalue them. Gaultier (n.d.) gives the following statistics on the emotional health, family, and morality of pastoral leadership:

- 70% of pastors say they have lower self-esteem not than when they entered the ministry.
- 70% constantly fight depression.
- 50% feel discouraged that they would leave their church if they could but cannot find another job.
- 80% believe their pastoral ministry has negatively affected their families, and 33% said it was an outright hazard.
- 80% of ministry spouses feel left out and unappreciated in their church.
- 77% feel they do not have a good marriage.
- 41% display anger problems in marriage (reported by the spouse).
- 38% are divorced or divorced.
- 50% admit to using pornography, and 37% report inappropriate sexual behavior with someone in the church.
- 65% feel their family is in a glass house. (Gaultiere, n.d.)

Family life has such a high impact on pastoral leadership in ministry. Families are sometimes the rock and glue that hold the administration together, but unfortunately, families are the substance that destroys the leadership. Pastors must remain aware of the importance of family and have someone they can discuss things with, whether a spouse or a close friend.

## **Stress**

The life of a pastor can be very stressful. Not only does the pastor have their family to look after, to provide for and protect, but they also have the church to look after the day-to-day business. Church members lean on the pastor for many of their hardships, such as illness and the death of a loved one. However, the pastor also has the spiritual aspect of leading the church. Decisions are often theirs to make, and in smaller churches, the lack of additional leadership is evident.

There have been many studies conducted on the stress of leadership in ministry. While some studies indicate that pastors' stress levels are just about the same as a typical working job, pastoral leadership stress can impact the overall leadership of the church. Exantus (2012) writes,

According to a study conducted by Richard A. Murphy, 80% of pastors feel unqualified and discouraged in their role, 80% of seminary and Bible school graduates who enter the ministry will leave the church within the first five years, and 90% of pastors said their seminary or Bible school training did only a fair to poor job preparing them for ministry. (p. xiv)

Stress can come from all avenues in the life of the pastor. The focus of overseeing a church can add the weight of the world to the shoulders of the pastor. Leadership is affected by stress levels. The calling into pastoral leadership is one of the most important callings in a person's life, but it can be challenging. How a pastor handles and manages his or her stress level will significantly impact the church's day-to-day operations.

## **Depression**

The first three ministry struggles mentioned by Rainer (year) can often lead to depression. Church growth is often one of the biggest concerns of a church pastor. Townsend (2017) writes, "Pastors often define success and failure in worldly terms such as numeric gains that are tangible" (p. 58). What about pastors seeing the church's success based on its members' spiritual maturity? Pastors can become depressed quickly.

Foster (2019) writes, "Major depression or major depressive disorder is a diagnosable condition involving overwhelming sadness, low energy, lack of motivation, loss of appetite, sleep difficulties and loss of interest in things previously thought pleasurable" (para. 1).

Depression can be a silent killer of the excitement of leading a church. When Church attendance and giving are down, the pastor can become depressed. Pastors can quickly begin questioning their calling into the ministry or their calling to the true church. When this happens, the pastor can start looking at different avenues to try to relieve the depression in their life. They look to the church and their family for support, but many pastors refuse to talk to anyone about any personal conflicts happening in their own life. Pastors may feel they have no one to talk to and that their calling will be examined by those individuals that the pastor confines in. Pastors must be aware that depression can easily creep its way into the life of the leaders of the church.

### **Burnout**

The life of a pastor of a small church can be complicated and taxing. After some time in the role of pastor, the busyness of life and ministry will begin to take its toll. Burnout will quickly take place and sometimes drives the pastor to resign from their position.

As Witt (2011) writes, "Ministry drains us, sucks the life out of us, and the result is we are running on empty" (p. 37). Challenges will begin to take shape as pastors progress after their initial start. From illnesses to church members to creating a vision for the church, ministry work never ends for the pastoral leadership of the church. The sad news for pastoral leadership is that smaller congregations have few people who can take some potential stress off the pastor.

Gaultiere (n.d.) also stated that 90% of pastors feel fatigued and worn out weekly. Another statistic is that 80% of pastors will not be in ministry after ten years. Ministry work can be a blessing but can also drain the life and excitement out of a pastor.

## **Sexual Problems**

This topic is all over the media in American society today. One hears stories of pastors who have an extramarital affair that destroys their family and the church. Pornography is also a problem in the life of the pastor. Sexual frustrations can prevent a pastor from entirely leading the church.

Pastoral leadership creates the temptation, if allowed, of living a double life. Stumbo (2011) writes, "From small churches to large ministries, youth leaders to retired pastors, the sexual misconduct of Christian leaders is defaming the name of Christ and undermining their call at an alarming rate" (para. 2). It could be effortless to live those secret lives that church members and spouses are unaware of any wrongdoing. Long hours at the office, house calls, and counseling sessions are just a few opportunities given when the pastoral leadership is living in sin. It is understood in the Christian walk that sins committed to private will eventually come out into the light. When this happens, the pastor's ministry can be destroyed. Stumbo also writes, "The secret life of the leader comes to light and damages not only their career but the countless lives of others, whether of those in their congregations or those who were caught up in the wake of their sexual misconduct" (para. 3)

## **Financial Problems**

Pastors are not exempt from any of the problems that can affect the life of any other individual. Financial issues can prevent a pastor from leading the church. Pastors have purchased ministry items for the church with no reimbursement. Personal financial decisions can impact the life of pastors, their families, and the church.

Many pastors experience emotional and financial problems and are faced with economic problems in the church. These smaller congregations, having low attendance numbers, typically will have low amounts of giving to the church weekly. This can be one hardship the pastor must

go through. Some pastors may have financial problems in both personal and ministry life. Avery (2012) writes, "Some pastors struggle with financial burdens that few people in their congregation know about. These personal finance challenges often harm the pastor's church, and sadly, are leading many pastors to leave the ministry" (para. 1).

Money is a common topic in the Gospels. Jesus talks more about money than He does about Hell. Some of the passages include Matthew 6:21, Luke 12:15, and Luke 14:28. The one passage that warns pastoral leadership about not letting money impact their lives is Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money" (*Christian Standard Bible*, 2017). The heart of the pastor must be focused on God. Anything else will destroy one's ministry.

### **Time Management**

One's time management must align with the priorities in one's daily life. What leaders do is reflect on their preferences. Are pastors spending the necessary time with their families, so they do not feel pushed to the side? Are pastors spending enough quiet time with God each day? Are they preparing well enough for each week's sermons? Time management is crucial for the pastor.

Some pastors may not have ever been trained in time management. Yarnell (2021) writes, "Leading an organization as complex and evolving as a church requires enormous diligence. But more than that, it requires the ability to manage personal time, prioritize demands, and stay focused" (para. 2). Unfortunately, those who are not good at time management will deal with backed-up schedules, missed appointments, and neglected responsibilities. When this happens, the pastoral leadership will take the focus off of sermon prep and attempt to catch up on all the other duties he or she may have.

Many pastors deal with most, if not all, of these ministry struggles. A more seasoned pastor is not exempt from experiencing these struggles. The less seasoned pastor is at significant risk of ministry failure as they experience unanticipated obstacles (Dick, 2008). According to Dick (2008) in *Bursting the Bubble*:

Pastors in first appointments and assignments are often startled, frustrated, and disillusioned by the experience they encounter when they begin their ministry. Numerous clergy leaders come to church with a definite sense of calling and service. However, the reality of leading a congregation often buries that vision, and worldly demands pull them in entirely different directions. Going to committee meetings, overseeing finance campaigns, negotiating copier contracts, monitoring custodial duties, and mediating skirmishes between the organist and the choir director expand to completely eradicate the grandest plan for evangelizing the city and saving the world. Before long, the busyness of running the church displaces the business of being the church. (p. 51-52)

New ministry leaders can have a difficult time, especially in small churches. The pastor can sometimes feel alone on an island with no other church leaders. With no one to turn to for help, they bear much responsibility. Soon, more and more challenges will occur that will impact the pastor's leadership abilities. Epperly and Epperly (2008) write,

Today's pastors face unprecedented challenges in ministry. Whether just out of seminary, in mid-career, or looking toward the horizon of retirement after four decades of faithful ministry, most pastors work hard and seek to respond ably to congregant needs. Week after week, they preach the gospel with fidelity and care and often go straight from the pulpit to care for the infirm, the sick, and the dying. Nevertheless, many of today's best pastors are physically, emotionally, and spiritually near burnout. They still go about their tasks with grace and commitment and lead their congregations with integrity, but find themselves losing their focus and feeling fatigued as they race from one 'urgent' task to another, finding little time or support for creative discernment about what is most important in life and ministry. They do not know how to set and keep their health and well-being priorities. The fiery vision that brought them to church is often eclipsed while performing the day-to-day repetitive ministry tasks. (p. 2)

### **Summary of the Rationale for Study**

As seen in this portion of the study, pastors balance much more than the spiritual well-being of their church members. Pastors face extraordinary difficulties and struggles as this world attempts to destroy the church. Rotaru (2019) writes, "An effective ministry will continue after

the death of its leader through the disciples that were prepared to take the responsibility of leadership and continue to develop the ministry to yet another level" (p. 57). Unfortunately, disciples need to be made, and leaders often need help to take control of their ministry. Pastors must lean on those church attendees to help strengthen them so they can lead in the pastor's absence.

### **Gap in the Literature**

The gap in the literature is evident. Studies have been conducted on leadership, leadership behaviors and styles, organizational commitment, and organizational growth, but very few studies have been conducted on the relationship between pastoral leadership and church attendance. Mapstone (2019) writes, "This leads to the understanding that churches are often somewhat unprepared for ministry because they are disconnected with God's purposing that is essential for all internal and external ministry" (p. 35).

Therefore, it is essential to study all types of churches and leadership behaviors. Large churches get more publicity due to the size of the church and the amount of money they bring in, but the Spirit of God is equally relevant in smaller churches. Church attendance and strong Christian leadership are essential to begin to reverse the trends of the number of dying churches in America.

### **Profile of the Current Study**

This research study utilized a quantitative approach to gather responses from participants in Baptist congregations in Eastman, GA. The participants received an email containing a survey link, which the researcher created, to see if any relationship existed between selected pastoral leadership variables and church attendance. These four variables were the pastors' emphasis on church attendance, an emphasis on spiritual growth, the pastors' strengths, and the pastors'

weaknesses. Those churches who participated are the churches that reported an average weekly attendance number of 50 to 150 weekly over four years. At no time was the church's or participant's name ever mentioned in the research.

After the surveys were returned, a statistician examined the surveys for completeness and accuracy. One participant only recorded two of the 20 questions, so that survey was discarded. A total of 92 participants responded by answering all the questions on the survey. The statistician then analyzed the surveys by using the SPS system.

This research also utilized the theological and theoretical frameworks as a foundation upon which the survey was created. All research was intended to create an urgency in the pastors' leadership and the church's status as declining, plateauing, and growing. This research was built upon Yates' theory of church decline.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Overview**

This chapter summarizes the research methodologies for this comparative-correlational research study used to determine if a relationship exists between select pastoral leadership variables and the church's status as a declining, plateaued, or growing church. This synopsis will briefly restate the research problem, purpose statement, research questions, and rationale for the research methodology used in this study. Also included are a description of the population and sampling process, the instrumentation used, and the procedures involved in the analysis.

### **Research Design Synopsis**

This research is relevant to the church's success today and in the future. Growing churches may be seen as doing the right things. Plateauing churches can right the ship by examining why the church has stopped growing and address those issues. In contrast, declining churches losing their members may find this research the most helpful, as they have more work to do to get back on track. Within this research design synopsis, several critical components of the study will be addressed.

### **The Problem**

In the landscape of the church today, smaller congregations have been influenced by a perceived decline in Christian leadership, which may be contributing to the decline in church attendance. Towns (2013) postulates that churches decline when leaders forget the nature of their enemy and who they are trying to defeat. While many churches have experienced the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic over the past several years, the downward trend in church attendance began long before the pandemic hit the United States. "The meager attendance numbers that many church leaders often dismiss as medical (i.e., caused by COVID) may be a much deeper cultural and generational shift than we realize" (Nieuwhof, 2022, para. 2). When Christian

leadership fails, not just in the church but in the community as well, it is seen by many as the world impacting the church and not the church impacting the world. With many smaller churches having to close their doors due to declining attendance, it is possible that churches are not experiencing effective Christian leadership; thus, leadership failure could be a contributing factor to that decline.

Pastors are having difficulty leading their congregations to continue to do the work of the Lord here on earth. With government issues, the Covid pandemic, and the lost and dying world all influencing the church, pastors themselves have been living on the defense. According to Barna (2021), "With pastors' well-being on the line, and many on the brink of burnout, 38 percent indicate they have considered quitting full-time ministry within the past year" (para. 2). The Barna (2021) study also concluded, "Pastors, too, need to proactively guard their health and well-being, taking a holistic assessment of how they are doing" (para. 6).

It is this researcher's belief that many pastors and leaders have attempted to lead the church without properly seeking God's vision for the local body of believers, thus causing the church to struggle moving forward. Frazer (2017) believes that the primary reason churches decline and lose their sense of home and passion is a lack of visionary leadership that creates a leadership vacuum, resulting in the misalignment of resources that robs churches of their fruitful outcomes. While other pastors can listen to and empathize with the struggles of their fellow pastors, ultimately, the pastor must continue to recognize their calling of encouraging and equipping the saints. The truth is that "Leaders of a declining organization must understand that the organization is in decline and that their actions (or inactions) may have contributed to the cause of the decline" (Yates, 2012, p. 11). Yates' study examined four pastoral leadership variables to see if they were correlated with attendance trends. Likewise, this study sought to

determine whether a relationship exists between effective leadership, as defined by our variables of church attendance emphasis, spiritual growth emphasis, pastor's strength, pastor's weakness, and churches status as growing, plateaued, or declining as perceived by the participants.

One problem that some suggest is affecting the church today is the problem of decline in Christian leadership effectiveness. Regarding leadership, Fry and Slocum (2003) framed the concept as a leader's ability to understand their core values and communicate them to followers (p. 90). Many people believe the church is at fault for not emphasizing leadership, and some have placed the blame on the church's failure to see leaders struggling to address the issue of church attendance and other essential aspects of ministry.

Jones (2018) believes that authentic Christian leadership must embody the teachings of Jesus Christ and be guided by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. Huizing (2011) states that "throughout Christian history, it has been widely recognized that Scripture is one of the primary means of God revealing himself to humanity and as such is an important and necessary guide to understanding the world we live in" (p. 343). Although it is not the church's sole responsibility, it must take a proactive role in finding the right leaders to oversee the church and its responsibilities. The church's future depends on building strong Christian leaders capable of taking church leadership outcomes into the next phase of church history. Dever and Stassen (2015) found that the problem is evident within the church:

The challenge to the church growth movement has come from outside the evangelical world; criticism has also emerged from within. The most recent challenge from within has come from Ken Hemphill, now President of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary but formerly Director of the Center for Church Growth of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Hemphill insists that if all that is done in church growth is focused on methods, models, and marketing strategies, then only the symptoms are treated, not the illness that is robbing the Church of its vitality. He states, "As long as we continue to talk about symptoms, we will persist in thinking we can heal the sickness with another new program, method, or model." (p. 472)

The continual decline in worship attendance is heartbreaking to many leaders. This is because, as Rossi and Scappini (2014) state, "Church attendance is the most important and widely used measure to estimate the level of religious practice in a population" (p. 249). Pastors understand that leaders can encourage and invite people to attend church services but cannot make people obey. People must make that decision of their own volition. Further, pastors wonder, will the church regain its highest number of in-person attendees, or has American society experienced a new trend of online worship? As pastors have conversations on the successes and failures of their churches, a discussion is necessary to understand why churches decline, plateau, or grow, in attempts to learn from misstates.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this correlational study is to understand what relationship, if any, exists between select pastoral leadership variables as rated by church congregants and the status of the church as a declining, plateaued, or growing church during the previous four-year period for churches with 50 to 150 people in average weekly attendance.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

#### ***Research Questions***

The following research questions guided this study:

**RQ1.** To what degree, if any, do pastors of declining, plateaued, or growing churches address the concerns of church attendance regularly?

**RQ2.** To what degree, if any, do pastors of declining, plateaued, or growing churches demonstrate concern about the spiritual growth of the congregants?

**RQ3.** What are the perceived strengths of the leadership in growing churches, plateaued churches, and declining churches?

**RQ4.** What are the perceived weaknesses of the leadership in growing churches, plateaued churches, and declining churches?

**RQ5.** What, if any, is the relationship between four independent variables, including 1) concern for church attendance, 2) concern for the spiritual growth of congregants, 3) the congregational perception of the leadership strengths of the pastor, and 4) the congregational perception of the leadership weakness of the pastor and the dependent variable of the status of the church as a declining, plateaued, or growing church?

### ***Research Hypotheses***

Data collected for RQs 1-4 were descriptive and will not require hypothesis testing. The data for these RQs will be presented in tabular form distributed by the church declining, plateaued, or growing. For RQ5, four null hypotheses are proposed below. If any or all of the hypotheses are rejected, then a reasonable conclusion would be that at least some aspects of pastoral leadership correlate with the church's status as declining, plateaued, or growing and are potentially attributable to that status.

**H5<sub>1 null</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between a pastor's concern for attendance and the church's status as declining, plateaued, or growing.

**H5<sub>2 null</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between a pastor's concern for spiritual growth and the church's status as declining, plateaued, or growing.

**H5<sub>3 null</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the congregational perception of the leadership strengths of the pastor and the status of the church as declining, plateaued, or growing.

**H5<sub>4 null</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the congregational perception of the leadership weakness of the pastor and the status of the church as declining, plateaued, or growing.

**H5<sub>5 null</sub>:** There is no relationship between the four independent variables, including 1) concern for church attendance, 2) concern for the spiritual growth of congregants, 3) the congregational perception of the leadership strengths of the pastor, and 4) the congregational perception of the leadership weakness of the pastor and the dependent variable of the status of the church as a declining, plateaued, or growing church?

### **Research Design and Methodology**

This correlational design examined the relationship between pastoral leadership and church attendance to determine if pastoral leadership is a reliable predictor of church attendance.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2020), this method:

Quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures. (p. 23)

For this dissertation, a quantitative research methodology using the correlational study approach was implemented. Applying the comparative-correlational study approach is the best fit. "The correlational design is research in which investigators use the correlational statistic to describe and measure the degree or association (or relationship) between two or more variables or sets of scores" (Creswell & Creswell, 2020, p. 30).

The two selected variables examined included the perceptions of church attendance via declining, plateauing, and growing attendance and the perceptions of pastoral leadership, as defined by four sub-category variables of church attendance emphasis, spiritual growth emphasis, pastor's strength, and pastor's weakness. The researcher's goal was to see if there was a connection between the two variables and sub-variables. The participants categorized churches as declining, plateaued, or growing to compare the church attendance variable to the leadership variables. All variables were measured using a survey of congregant perceptions.

### **Population**

The population for this study was the congregants of small community churches in Eastman, Georgia, an area whose worship attendance was reported between 50 and 150 within the Baptist Association. The registered attendance number 50 to 150 was selected to highlight the middle of the association's church attendance. A large percentage of churches fell into this group of reporting numbers. It is estimated that the total population of congregants that collectively fit this category of churches ranges somewhere between 700 and 2100. The scope of this study focused on the reported worship attendance, not including reporting numbers for

Sunday School or small group classes, for these churches to determine if their worship attendance numbers have been in decline, have plateaued, or have grown over the previous four-year period, and who have had the same lead pastor in that position for the same period.

Definitions of declining, plateaued, and growing churches can be found in Chapter One in the terms section of this document. For this research, the church reports for the year 2018 through 2021 are found in Appendix F to label church numbers and attendance numbers. This graph represents the church number, the survey, and the number of reported attendances for each year.

This population was selected for multiple reasons. The first reason is this researcher pastors a church in the DCBA. After being a fill-in pastor at many of the churches in the association, this researcher has seen a decline in church attendance and Christian leadership within many of the associations' churches. The Dodge County Baptist Association oversees approximately 42 Baptist churches. Fourteen of the churches fit into the research population that was examined in this research study. The second reason is this researcher's genuine interest in the need for effective Christian leadership in small community churches.

Over the past few years, the DCBA has experienced significant increases and disheartening declines. New sanctuaries have been built, and several churches have combined to worship. Churches were on the verge of closing during this time frame. The associational missionary has been a leader for over 12 years and was instrumental in helping identify churches for this study. The longest-tenured pastor in the association has been in the senior pastor role for 24 years.

### **Sampling Procedures**

This researcher implemented a survey that details questions that use Likert-like items to gather the required data. By the email link, surveys were sent out to the congregants who

accepted the surveys. The survey focused on the sub-variables identified in the research questions above.

This process was conducted with the help of the Dodge County Baptist Association (DCBA). Through the pastor's input on the churches within the population scope, the survey was emailed to the church's pastors and lay leaders identified by the association leadership. Of the 39 churches in the Baptist Association, 18 churches reported fewer than 150 in church attendance yearly for the past four years. The yearly reports verified which churches should be included in the research study. Four churches reported fewer than 50 attendance for the same period and were eliminated from consideration in this study. For this research, 14 churches that consistently wrote between 50 and 150 people in church attendance over the past four years were represented in this survey. This means that the study's total possible population was between 700 and 2100 congregants.

Given the purpose of the study and the number of churches that fell within the scope of the study, a survey was sent to each participant that agreed to receive the survey. This totaled 210 surveys which were distributed to the members of the population. Ninety-two were completed creating a response rate of 43%. Whereas the survey had never been used before, and therefore insufficient data was available for proper power analysis, a necessary sample size of approximately 200 was estimated using G-Power, using an alpha of .05 (error rate), a beta (power level) of 0.80, and a minimum correlation of .20.

### **Limits of Generalization**

This research is limited to Baptist churches within the Dodge County Baptist Association, who reported the average weekly service attendance between 50-150 congregants, during the four-year span from 2019 to 2022. This study may be used if possible to be utilized for other

similar sized and situated Baptist churches in different regions and similar churches in other religious denominations. There was a contingency plan in place to include a second surrounding community of similar size and current church profile in the event that there was a limited response rate. For this research, 92 participants from congregants of the DCBA in Eastman, Georgia completed the survey, giving this research the goal of participation that was originally intended.

This research took place in churches with an average weekly service attendance between 50-150 congregants. A contingency plan was in place to survey loser reporting churches whose worship attendance was less if the churches who fit into this range declined to participate. All 14 original churches participated in the survey, so no smaller churches participated.

This research occurred in churches where the senior pastor has occupied the role during the four-year period. Each pastor has led the church throughout the Coronavirus pandemic. No pastor of the churches who participated refused to be part of the study.

This research was completed with no researcher bias included. The survey was completed by the participants who understood they would never be mentioned in the study. The churches who were involved are not mentioned in the study, neither is the pastor's name. They were made aware of this in the consent form. At no time did the researcher threaten or coerce a participant to complete the survey.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Research subjects were church attendees within smaller congregations in Eastman, Georgia (Dodge County), so no parental permission was needed to conduct the study. Those chosen who received the survey link understood, based on the participant email and consent form, that their answers would be completely confidential. The participant's name, nor the

church's name, was at no point revealed in the research. All surveys were completed voluntarily, with appropriate agreements and disclosures in writing. At the end of the process, all surveys were kept for three years, when the surveys were destroyed. The approved Informed Consent Form utilizing the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) is provided in Appendix C. All research used the IRB Application Checklist, and the submission of necessary documents is located in Appendices B, and C. IRB approval was secured before beginning the research process. All the consent forms were kept the same.

### **Data Collection Methods and Instruments**

This portion of the research provides a brief description of the data collection methods and instruments used to answer the research questions and why these methods and devices were used. This quantitative, correlational study contained several Likert-style items sent out to congregants via email in the research population. To protect participant privacy, all surveys were anonymous, and the respondents remained unknown to the researcher. Bias is an unavoidable occurrence when research surveys are distributed. Summers and Hammonds (1969) wrote, "By implementing effective survey design and ensuring questions are both well written and well-formatted, researchers can be more confident that respondents' answers are more accurate and autonomous" (p. 115). With the different types of bias that can occur, a survey was developed that attempted to limit the amount of potential bias by the participant in the survey.

### **Collection Methods**

This study utilized the survey method. In this case, the survey asked congregants questions to indicate responses designed to elicit the information needed to answer the research questions. Within these questions, congregants shared their thoughts on the effectiveness of the leadership within their church. These closed-ended, Likert-style questions allowed the

congregants to share their views with minimal limitations. Surveys were created using Qualtrics and distributed via an email containing the Qualtrics survey link.

Because the instrument used Likert-style responses, descriptive statistics for each question were computed. All correlations were assessed to determine if they differed statistically significantly from zero. This researcher partnered with the churches to distribute the surveys and report the findings to the participating churches upon completion of this study. When the timeframe to return the surveys ended, all returned survey data were examined using SPSS (version 28).

### **Instruments**

The survey was created to see if a relationship exists between pastoral leadership and church attendance. A copy of the survey appears in Appendix A. Each participant received an informed consent form (Appendix C). The survey consisted of 20 questions. These questions consisted of yes/no and multiple-choice answers. The researcher sought to determine if any relationship exists between congregants' perceptions of their church's status as declining, plateaued, or growing in church attendance and their perceptions of their pastoral leadership's strengths and weaknesses. This researcher believed that the vantage point of the congregants was an accurate indicator of the church's status and the leadership's effectiveness. This survey allowed participants to express their beliefs on the topic through opinion-style survey responses. To solve the problem of church attendance and pastoral leadership, this survey could be beneficial in the process.

The surveys were examined for completeness. A data scientist from Credible Consulting, LLC. handled all the survey responses and reviewed all the statistics for this research. One participant only answered two questions, so the survey was removed from consideration. The

questions included the pastor, the participant, and the church. The questions concerning the pastor dealt with his leadership, teaching, preaching, and overall effectiveness in preparing the church for the mission. Those questions were:

1. Does the pastor help you understand the mission of the church?
2. Does the pastor show the signs of the Fruit of the Spirit?
3. What is the strength of the pastor?
4. What is the weakness of the pastor?
5. What is the primary preaching philosophy of the pastor?
6. Does the pastor expect church attendees to be engaged during the worship service?
7. Does the pastor give an open invitation to respond at the end of his sermon?
8. Does your pastor emphasize spiritual growth?
9. Does your pastor seek advice from other leaders in the church?
10. Does your pastor emphasize church attendance?

The questions concerning the participant were created so they were expected to use their perception and active status in the church. Those questions were:

1. Are you a church member?
2. How often do you attend church services?
3. On a scale from 1 to 5, how likely are you to invite someone to church?
4. When considering the church, do you consider it growing, plateauing, or declining?

The questions regarding the church dealt with the participants' perception of the readiness of the church to reach new attendees. Those questions were:

1. On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate the atmosphere of the church?
2. On a scale from 1 to 5, do you leave church service feeling spiritually fed?
3. Do you think the church is spiritually ready for its mission?
4. Does the church have your best needs in mind?
5. What is the church's main strength in reaching new attendees?
6. What is the church's main weakness in getting new attendees?

### **Data Analysis**

This section discusses how the surveys were collected and analyzed. Additionally, it describes the statistical analyses that were conducted.

## Analysis Method

The survey was created and sent, along with the consent form and participant email, to those participants who agreed to be part of the research. All participants were anonymous throughout the study. The goal of the survey was to capture each participant's perceptions of several variables related to their church and pastor. Ninety-three surveys were returned from participants from 14 different churches. Returned surveys were checked for completeness. Out of all 93 responses received, one participant only responded to two questions. That survey was removed, leaving 92 sets of answers.

As this research wanted to find if a relationship existed between pastoral leadership and church attendance, it was necessary to find the correlation. According to Jmp Statistical Discovery (2023), Correlation is a “statistical measure that expresses the extent to which two variables are linearly related” (jmp.com). Correlation measures the strength, direction, and association between two independent variables. Fernando (2021) wrote, “A correlation coefficient of -1 describes a perfect negative, or inverse correlation. A correlation of +1 shows a perfect positive correlation, or a direct relationship” (Investopedia.com). The value of the correlations will be between -1 and +1. Correlation coefficient is denoted by  $r$ , and statistical significance will be the  $p$ -value. Several important aspects of correlation are:

1. The closer  $r$  is to zero, the weaker the linear relationship.
2. Positive  $r$  values indicate a positive correlation, where the values of both variables tend to increase together.
3. Negative  $r$  values indicate a negative correlation, where the values of one variable tend to increase when the values of the other variable decrease.
4. The  $p$ -value gives evident that can be meaningfully conclude the population correlation coefficient is likely different from zero. (jmp.com)

Laerd Statistics (2018), wrote, “Kendall’s rank correlation, specifically Kendall's Tau-b, is used to assess the relationship between two at least ordinal variables” (statistics.laerd.com). Kendall's correlation coefficient uses pairs of observations and determines the strength and direction of association based on the pattern of concordance (agreement) and discordance (disagreement) between the teams. Kendall's Tau is appropriate because the data for which it was used is naturally ordinal (e.g., never, rarely..., almost always) or coded ordinally, for example, with No/Yes, coded as 0/1, indicating no amount of a characteristic (e.g., church membership) versus some amount/all of the factor. Statistics How To (2023) wrote, “The Tau correlation coefficient returns a value of 0 to 1, where 0 is no relationship and 1 is a perfect relationship” (statisticshowto.com).

### **Validity and Reliability**

This researcher acknowledged the importance of accurately measuring the perceptions of congregants within the research population. This is important to further the research study, as it is almost impossible to counteract a congregant's personal bias. Warne (2018) discusses the intricate work of measuring a variable in social science research; it is a straightforward answer in physical science research.

Reliability in research refers to consistency across all areas of research and researchers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). Reliability is vital to the research study. The character was essential to gain an accurate result from the research findings. This survey consisted of selected pastoral leadership variables. A statistician verified all survey responses to ensure all surveys were completed and were reliable to use in the research.

## **Research Procedures**

The process of this quantitative, comparative-correlational study research was planned as follows:

- 1) Submit the topic to the University IRB for survey and research approval (Appendix L).
- 2) Work with the DCBA to highlight churches that qualify for the research.
- 3) Begin a working relationship to build trust with the leadership of the churches in the sample.
- 4) Work with leaders on survey distribution.
- 5) Receive completed surveys by the deadline.
- 6) Organize and analyze all returned surveys for data processing and statistical analysis.
- 7) Review the statistical data to answer the research questions.

After working with the DCBA to determine which churches match the research criteria, the researcher reached out to the pastor and leaders of each church. Upon initial contact, a working but confidential relationship was established to ensure no personal information of participants' names was used in the research. Anonymity is protected for all survey responses. These three factors determined the selection of participants:

- 1) Participants must be an active supporters of the church. This includes weekly attendance.
- 2) Participants must be active attendees for at least six months. This gives the participant a more reliable view of the activities of the church and its leadership.
- 3) Participants must not be family members of the pastor or leadership team. This should minimize some bias or personal influence on the survey.

## **Chapter Summary**

The purpose of this chapter was to explain the steps involved in the research methodology used for this study. The first section, the research design synopsis, describes the research problem, restates the research questions and the purpose statement, and describes the

design and methodology of this research. The second section stated the research population, sampling procedures, limits of generalization, and ethical considerations. The third part of this chapter noted the methods used to collect data, the instruments used, and how the data was analyzed.

## CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

### Overview

This chapter provides the results of the analyses of the data. It begins with a review of the research questions and the research hypotheses. Next, it reports general descriptive statistics and progresses to address how the survey data answers each of the research questions. Next, the results of the research hypothesis testing are recorded, and an evaluation of the research design is examined. Finally, a summary of the findings is provided.

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

**RQ1.** To what degree, if any, do pastors of declining, plateaued, or growing churches address the concerns of church attendance on a regular basis?

**RQ2.** To what degree, if any, do pastors of declining, plateaued, or growing churches demonstrate concern about the spiritual growth of the congregants?

**RQ3.** What are the perceived strengths of the leadership in growing churches, plateaued churches, and declining churches?

**RQ4.** What are the perceived weaknesses of the leadership in growing churches, plateaued churches, and declining churches?

**RQ5.** What, if any, is the relationship between four independent variables, including 1) concern for church attendance, 2) concern for the spiritual growth of congregants, 3) the congregational perception of the leadership strengths of the pastor, and 4) the congregational perception of the leadership weakness of the pastor and the dependent variable of the status of the church as a declining, plateaued, or growing church?

### Research Hypothesis

**H5<sub>1 null</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between a congregant's perceptions of their pastor's concern for attendance and the congregant's perception of the status of the church as declining, plateaued, or growing.

**H5<sub>2 null</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between a congregant's perceptions of their pastor's concern for spiritual growth and a congregant's perceptions of the status of their church as declining, plateaued, or growing.

**H5<sub>3</sub> null:** There is no significant relationship between the congregational perception of the leadership strengths of the pastor and perceptions of the status of the church as declining, plateaued, or growing.

**H5<sub>4</sub> null:** There is no significant relationship between the congregational perception of the leadership weakness of the pastor and perceptions of the status of the church as declining, plateaued, or growing.

**H5<sub>5</sub> null:** There is no relationship between the four independent variables, including 1) concern for church attendance, 2) concern for the spiritual growth of congregants, 3) the congregational perception of the leadership strengths of the pastor, and 4) the congregational perception of the leadership weakness of the pastor and the dependent variable of the status of the church as a declining, plateaued, or growing church?

### **Compilation Protocol and Measures**

The purpose of this correlational study is to understand what relationship, if any, exists between select pastoral leadership variables, as rated by church congregants, and the status of the church as a declining, plateaued, or growing church during the previous four-year period for churches with 50 to 150 people in average weekly attendance. This section of the research was completed after the IRB approval. After the approval was received, church pastors were notified by email and text message based on the research population of their average weekly worship attendance from 2018-2021. These reports were sent by the DCBA to the research for review. Churches who reported 50-150 in worship attendance all four years of this time period was invited to participate in a survey that consisted of 20 questions. A total of 14 churches were picked who fit the criteria. A total of 15 emails were sent to potential participants, totaling 210 survey links that were sent out. Only 92 qualified participants responded fully to the survey. One participant was disqualified due to answering only one question.

The survey data from Qualtrics was exported to a spreadsheet and imported into SPSS (version 28) for analysis, which was completed by the statistician. Different analyses were conducted for each research question, which will be discussed below. Reporting of results begins

with a general description of the participants/cases available for analyses, which is followed by descriptive statistics for each item in the order in which they appear, except for Item 19 (participant's perception of the church as declining, plateauing, or growing), which appears last.

In general, analyses began by screening the data to determine its suitability for study. The limited number of responses (92) prevented the ability to formally determine how well the survey instrument measured any particular construct. For example, there needs to be more data to conduct factor analysis. Instead, the validity of the survey scores was based on the expected correlations among the individual variables, which will be discussed below as necessary.

## **Data Analysis and Findings**

### **Participants/Cases**

In total, 93 congregants participated in the research; however, one participant only responded to the first two items and was removed from further analyses. Therefore, the total number of participants included in the research was 92. Congregants from 14 different churches participated. The number of congregants from each church appears in Table 1. (To ensure anonymity, the churches were numbered arbitrarily.) As can be seen in Table 1, the number of participants ranged from two to 14. Each survey participant received by email the survey link and consent form. Fifteen survey participants from each church received the email.

Based on the results received with each question, it was necessary to view the actual average weekly church attendance numbers that the DCBA reported. Working closely with the Baptist Association was a necessary benefit for this research. The yearly reports provided by the Baptist Association were beneficial, as they allowed the researcher to highlight which churches would be included in the research. Further, they were helpful to see the differentiation between the participants' perceptions versus the actual reporting from the churches.

To calculate the growth of the church, paddle.com (2023) wrote, “Take the current value and subtract that from the previous value” (paddle.com). This is how this research measured the church status as declining, plateauing, and growing. The examination of the annual reports received by the DCBA allowed this research to categorize the churches based on the reporting numbers given to the Association. The reports were examined over a four-year span. There was no percentage that was required for the church to be declared declining, plateauing, or growing. The overall consideration of these three statuses were taken by subtracting year one of the reports with year four of the reports.

**Table 1**

*Number of Participants from each Church and each Church’s Proportion of the Sample*

| Number | Church |       |
|--------|--------|-------|
|        | N      | %     |
| 1      | 6      | 6.5%  |
| 2      | 12     | 13.0% |
| 3      | 3      | 3.3%  |
| 4      | 5      | 5.4%  |
| 5      | 7      | 7.6%  |
| 6      | 14     | 15.2% |
| 7      | 9      | 9.8%  |
| 8      | 2      | 2.2%  |
| 9      | 10     | 10.9% |
| 10     | 5      | 5.4%  |
| 11     | 6      | 6.5%  |
| 12     | 4      | 4.3%  |
| 13     | 5      | 5.4%  |
| 14     | 4      | 4.3%  |

*Note.* Church numbers were assigned arbitrarily and therefore did not indicate size, location, etc.

### **Membership (Item 1)**

A large majority of participants (93%) said they were church members. The remainder (7%) said they were not church members. This study will categorize churches as growing, plateauing, and declining. Growing, plateauing, and declining are considered the status of the

church based on the perceived perceptions of the participants involved in the research. Based on the various answers the participants gave, it was necessary to revert to the yearly reports provided by the Baptist Association. Based on the factual information from the churches, these numbers were examined to validate the various responses of the participants.

### *Declining Churches*

There is a perception in the mind of the participants that is crucial to this study. People can at times see things differently, even when it is concerning the same context. Table 2 shows the breakdown of the survey results of those who believed their church was in decline.

**Table 2**

*Number and Proportion of Participants who Perceived their Church as Declining*

| Church | Declining | Proportion |
|--------|-----------|------------|
| 1      | 1         | 16.7%      |
| 3      | 1         | 33.3%      |
| 5      | 1         | 14.3%      |
| 6      | 2         | 14.3%      |
| 7      | 1         | 11.1%      |
| 9      | 1         | 10.0%      |
| 11     | 1         | 16.7%      |
| 13     | 1         | 20.0%      |
| 14     | 1         | 25.0%      |
| Total  | 10        | 9.2%       |

*Note.* "Declining" indicates the number of participants in the church who perceived it as declining. "Proportion" shows the proportion of participants from the identified church who perceived the church to fall. The total proportion (9.2%) who view their church as declining is based on the total number of participants (92).

Of the 92 participants, only 10 perceived their church as declining. Table 3 shows the breakdown of the actual weekly reporting attendance for the churches that reported a decline over the four years. After seeing the different perceptions of the participants, even in the same church, the decision was made to examine the participants' perceptions of the actual weekly reporting attendance from the Baptist Association. After all four years were explored, this table

was created to counteract the difference between what was responded to by the participants and the reporting the churches gave to the Association.

**Table 3**

*Actual Weekly Reporting Attendance of Churches from the Baptist Association that Reported Decline*

| <u>Dodge County Baptist Association's Yearly Reporting of Average Attendance</u> |             |             |             |             |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <u>Church</u>  | <u>2018</u> | <u>2019</u> | <u>2020</u> | <u>2021</u> |
| 1  | 141         | 100         | 146         | 100         |
| 3  | 142         | 133         | 139         | 133         |
| 5  | 59          | 51          | 58          | 50          |
| 6  | 111         | 116         | 112         | 116         |
| 7  | 85          | 85          | 95          | 85          |
| 9  | 150         | 150         | 150         | 125         |
| 11   | 126         | 110         | 123         | 110         |
| 13   | 101         | 110         | 102         | 91          |
| 14   | 55          | 50          | 55          | 51          |

*Note.* It is adapted from the yearly reporting on average weekly attendance from the Baptist Association's annual reports.

Based on Table 3, Churches 1, 3, 5, 9, 11, 13, and 14 declined over the four years.

Church 1 had the most significant decline in reporting weekly average attendance. Attendance for Church 1 was reported to be 141 in average weekly attendance in 2018. By 2021, they reported 100 attendance, showing a decline of 41 in attendance. Also, based on Table 3, Church 6 showed growth, and Church 7 is plateauing. Church 11 shows an average weekly decline of 16 attendees, and Church 9 shows an average weekly decrease of 25 attendees.

### ***Plateauing Churches***

There is also a perception of plateauing church attendance among survey participants.

Table 4 shows the breakdown of the participants' perceptions of plateauing churches.

**Table 4***Number and Proportion of Participants who Perceived their Church as Plateauing*

| Church | Plateauing | Proportion |
|--------|------------|------------|
| 2      | 3          | 25.0%      |
| 3      | 1          | 33.3%      |
| 4      | 3          | 60.0%      |
| 5      | 1          | 14.3%      |
| 6      | 4          | 28.6%      |
| 7      | 3          | 33.3%      |
| 10     | 2          | 40.0%      |
| 12     | 2          | 50.0%      |
| 13     | 1          | 20.0%      |
| 14     | 2          | 50.0%      |
| Total  | 22         | 23.9%      |

*Note.* “Plateauing” indicates the number of participants in the church who perceived it as plateauing. “Proportion” indicates the proportion of participants from the identified church who perceived the church to be plateaued. The total proportion (23.9%) who viewed their church as plateauing is based on the total number of participants (92).

Of the 92 participants, 22 participants perceived their church is plateauing in church attendance. The response for plateauing from Church 4 reached 60% of the answers. Church 12 and 15 responses reached 50% for plateauing.

**Table 5***Actual Reporting Weekly Attendance of Churches who Reported Plateauing*

| Church | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|
| 2      | 51   | 51   | 50   | 51   |
| 3      | 142  | 133  | 139  | 133  |
| 4      | 120  | 107  | 120  | 107  |
| 5      | 59   | 51   | 58   | 50   |
| 6      | 111  | 116  | 112  | 116  |
| 7      | 85   | 85   | 95   | 85   |
| 10     | 136  | 141  | 140  | 141  |
| 12     | 117  | 109  | 112  | 109  |
| 13     | 101  | 110  | 102  | 91   |
| 14     | 55   | 50   | 55   | 51   |

*Note.* Adapted from the yearly reporting on average weekly attendance from the Baptist Association's annual reports.

Based on Table 5, Church 2 and Church 7 reported the average weekly attendance had plateaued over the four years. These two churches reported the same number of attendance in 2018 and 2021. Church 2 was consistent through the four years, and Church 7 grew by 10 in year three. Out of the other churches, Church 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, and 14 reported declines, while Church 6 and 10 showed growth.

***Growing Churches***

Growing churches experience many benefits. As the church grows, more people participant in the functions of the church and there is a bigger pool of volunteers that will take on some responsibilities. There is the definite attraction of new attendees. There is the possibility of increasing programs that give people more opportunity to learn about Jesus Christ.

There are challenges faced by growing churches as well. The church may run out of space to hold the attendees. The staff and volunteers can become easily burned out with the added programs and events. There can be a disruptive change, as new personalities may clash

with the older members. Table 6 shows the breakdown of the reporting perception of growing churches.

**Table 6**

*Number and Proportion of Participants who Perceived their Church as Growing*

| Church | Growing | Proportion |
|--------|---------|------------|
| 1      | 5       | 83.3%      |
| 2      | 9       | 75.0%      |
| 3      | 1       | 33.3%      |
| 4      | 2       | 40.0%      |
| 5      | 5       | 71.4%      |
| 6      | 8       | 57.1%      |
| 7      | 5       | 55.6%      |
| 8      | 2       | 100.0%     |
| 9      | 9       | 90.0%      |
| 10     | 3       | 60.0%      |
| 11     | 5       | 83.3%      |
| 12     | 2       | 50.0%      |
| 13     | 3       | 60.0%      |
| 14     | 1       | 25.0%      |
| Total  | 60      | 65.2%      |

*Note.* "Growing" indicates the number of participants in the church who perceived it as growing. "Proportion" means the proportion of participants from the identified church who perceived the church to grow. The total proportion (65.2%) who view their church as growing is based on the total number of participants (92).

Of the 92 participants, 60 participants had the perception that their church was growing.

Churches 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, and 11 received more than 70% of their church's survey results as growing churches.

Perception of the participants involved in this study greatly impacted the survey results. Participants may be in denial and not want to see their church in a negative light. Church 8 is the only church, although only two participants were represented, whose participants believed their church is growing. In contrast, Church 6 received two responses for declining, four for plateauing, and eight replies for growing.

### Church Attendance (Item 2)

Participants indicated they attended church services from occasionally attending services to attending all church services, with half (50%) saying they attend all services at their church. 21% indicated they attend only Sunday services. 17% indicated they occasionally attend services, while 11% indicating they attend services on Sunday and Wednesday. One participant did not respond. Those figures are further broken down by church in Table 7.

**Table 7**

#### *Participants' Self-reported Service Attendance by Church*

| Church | How often do you attend church services? |       |             |       |                    |       |              |        |
|--------|--|-------|-------------|-------|--------------------|-------|--------------|--------|
|        | Occasionally                             |       | Only Sunday |       | Sunday & Wednesday |       | All Services |        |
|        | N  | %     | N           | %     | N                  | %     | N            | %      |
| 1      | 0  | 0.0%  | 1           | 16.7% | 1                  | 16.7% | 4            | 66.7%  |
| 2      | 2  | 16.7% | 7           | 58.3% | 1                  | 8.3%  | 2            | 16.7%  |
| 3      | 2  | 66.7% | 0           | 0.0%  | 0                  | 0.0%  | 1            | 33.3%  |
| 4      | 1  | 20.0% | 2           | 40.0% | 0                  | 0.0%  | 2            | 40.0%  |
| 5      | 2  | 28.6% | 0           | 0.0%  | 2                  | 28.6% | 3            | 42.9%  |
| 6      | 3  | 21.4% | 3           | 21.4% | 3                  | 21.4% | 5            | 35.7%  |
| 7      | 2  | 22.2% | 1           | 11.1% | 1                  | 11.1% | 5            | 55.6%  |
| 8      | 0  | 0.0%  | 0           | 0.0%  | 0                  | 0.0%  | 2            | 100.0% |
| 9      | 1  | 10.0% | 3           | 30.0% | 2                  | 20.0% | 4            | 40.0%  |
| 10     | 0  | 0.0%  | 1           | 25.0% | 0                  | 0.0%  | 3            | 75.0%  |
| 11     | 1  | 16.7% | 1           | 16.7% | 0                  | 0.0%  | 4            | 66.7%  |
| 12     | 0  | 0.0%  | 0           | 0.0%  | 0                  | 0.0%  | 4            | 100.0% |
| 13     | 2  | 40.0% | 0           | 0.0%  | 0                  | 0.0%  | 3            | 60.0%  |
| 14     | 0  | 0.0%  | 0           | 0.0%  | 0                  | 0.0%  | 4            | 100.0% |

*Note.* N = the number of participants.

### Church Atmosphere (Item 3)

Most participants (83%) rated the atmosphere of their church as *exciting* or *highly exciting*. A minority (11%) rated the atmosphere as having *no feeling*. A very small minority (5%) rated the atmosphere *somewhat depressing*, and only one (1%) rated it as *depressing*. Table 8 shows the breakdown by church.

**Table 8***Participants' perception of the atmosphere of the church*

| On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate the atmosphere of the church? |            |                        |            |          |                 |
|--|------------|------------------------|------------|----------|-----------------|
| Church   | Depressing | Somewhat<br>Depressing | No Feeling | Exciting | Highly Exciting |
| 1  | 0          | 0                      | 0          | 3        | 3               |
| 2  | 0          | 1                      | 3          | 6        | 2               |
| 3  | 0          | 1                      | 1          | 0        | 1               |
| 4  | 0          | 0                      | 0          | 5        | 0               |
| 5  | 0          | 1                      | 0          | 5        | 1               |
| 6  | 1          | 0                      | 3          | 8        | 2               |
| 7  | 0          | 1                      | 1          | 4        | 3               |
| 8  | 0          | 0                      | 0          | 1        | 1               |
| 9  | 0          | 1                      | 0          | 7        | 2               |
| 10   | 0          | 0                      | 0          | 4        | 1               |
| 11   | 0          | 1                      | 0          | 2        | 3               |
| 12   | 0          | 0                      | 0          | 2        | 2               |
| 13   | 0          | 0                      | 0          | 4        | 1               |
| 14   | 0          | 0                      | 0          | 3        | 0               |
| Total  | 1          | 6                      | 8          | 54       | 22              |

*Note.* This is the perception of the participants of the study.

**Spiritual Nurture (Item 4)**

Most participants (55%) reported consistently leaving their church service feeling spiritually fed. Almost a third (30%) often reported leaving their church service feeling spiritually fed. A small minority (9%) said they *sometimes* leave feeling spiritually fed. A small minority (4%) also said they *rarely* leave feeling spiritually fed. Only one participant (1%) reported *never* leaving spiritually fed. Table 9 shows the breakdown per church.

**Table 9***Participants' Perception on Being Spiritually Fed*

| On a scale from 1 to 5, do you leave church service feeling spiritually fed? |       |        |           |       |             |
|--|-------|--------|-----------|-------|-------------|
| Church   | Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Often | Most Always |
| 1  | 0     | 0      | 0         | 1     | 5           |
| 2  | 0     | 1      | 1         | 5     | 5           |
| 3  | 0     | 1      | 0         | 1     | 1           |
| 4  | 0     | 0      | 0         | 2     | 3           |
| 5  | 0     | 0      | 0         | 4     | 3           |
| 6  | 1     | 1      | 3         | 8     | 1           |
| 7  | 0     | 0      | 1         | 0     | 8           |
| 8  | 0     | 0      | 0         | 0     | 2           |
| 9  | 0     | 0      | 1         | 2     | 7           |
| 10   | 0     | 0      | 0         | 3     | 2           |
| 11   | 0     | 1      | 1         | 0     | 4           |
| 12   | 0     | 0      | 0         | 0     | 4           |
| 13   | 0     | 0      | 1         | 1     | 3           |
| 14   | 0     | 0      | 0         | 1     | 3           |
| Total  | 1     | 4      | 8         | 28    | 51          |

*Note.* This is the perception of the participants of the study.

**Church Readiness for Mission (Item 5)**

A large majority of participants (76%) indicated *yes*, their church was ready for its mission. A minority (23%) said their church was not prepared for its mission, and one participant (1%) did not respond. As can be seen in Table 10, except for Church 8 (for which there were only two participants), there was disagreement among participants from the same church.

**Table 10***Participants Perceptions of their Church's Readiness for Its Mission, by Church*

| Church | Do you feel the church is spiritually ready for its mission? |       |     |        |
|--------|--|-------|-----|--------|
|        | No   |       | Yes |        |
|        | N  | %     | N   | %      |
| 1      | 1  | 16.7% | 5   | 83.3%  |
| 2      | 1  | 8.3%  | 11  | 91.7%  |
| 3      | 2  | 66.7% | 1   | 33.3%  |
| 4      | 1  | 20.0% | 4   | 80.0%  |
| 5      | 1  | 14.3% | 6   | 85.7%  |
| 6      | 6  | 46.2% | 7   | 53.8%  |
| 7      | 2  | 22.2% | 7   | 77.8%  |
| 8      | 0  | 0.0%  | 2   | 100.0% |
| 9      | 1  | 10.0% | 9   | 90.0%  |
| 10     | 1  | 20.0% | 4   | 80.0%  |
| 11     | 1  | 16.7% | 5   | 83.3%  |
| 12     | 1  | 25.0% | 3   | 75.0%  |
| 13     | 2  | 40.0% | 3   | 60.0%  |
| 14     | 1  | 25.0% | 3   | 75.0%  |

*Note.* This is the perception of the participants of the study.

**Participants' Best Needs (Item 6)**

A vast majority of participants (91%) said *yes*, their church has their best needs in mind. A small minority (9%) said *no*, their church did not have their best needs in mind. There was general agreement among members of each church except for Church 6. For Church 6, four of the 14 participants (i.e., 29%) said their church did not have their best needs in mind. The breakdown is found in Appendix G.

**Pastoral Assistance in Understanding Church's Mission (Item 7)**

A large majority of participants (92%) said *yes*, their pastor helps them understand the church's mission. The remainder (8 %) said *no*. Frazer (2017) wrote, "When a church loses its biblical anchors, it sets itself adrift with no tangible authority for direction or the utilization of personnel and material resources." Helping the attendees understand the church's mission allows

them to further progress in reaching their community for Christ, as it gives them the importance of completing the mission for Christ. The breakdown is found in Appendix H.

### **Pastoral Signs of the Fruit of the Spirit (Item 8)**

A vast majority of participants (95%) said *yes*, their pastor shows the signs of the fruit of the spirit. The remainder (5%) said *no*, their pastor does not show signs of the fruit of the spirit.

The breakdown is found in Appendix I.

### **Pastoral Strengths and Weaknesses (Items 9 and 10)**

#### ***Pastoral Strengths (Item 9)***

Participants indicated their pastor's strength to be, in order of frequency, *discipleship* (38%), *ministry* (29%), *evangelism* (14%), *fellowship* (11%), and *other* (8%). Thus, 67% of the participants perceived their pastor's strength as discipleship or ministry. There were differences among participants in the same church, as seen in Table 11.

**Table 11**

#### ***Pastor's Strength, by Church***

| Church | In your opinion, what is the strength of the pastor? |        |            |       |            |       |          |       |       |       |
|--------|--|--------|------------|-------|------------|-------|----------|-------|-------|-------|
|        | Discipleship   |        | Evangelism |       | Fellowship |       | Ministry |       | Other |       |
|        | N  | %      | N          | %     | N          | %     | N        | %     | N     | %     |
| 1      | 2  | 33.3%  | 2          | 33.3% | 0          | 0.0%  | 2        | 33.3% | 0     | 0.0%  |
| 2      | 7  | 58.3%  | 0          | 0.0%  | 3          | 25.0% | 0        | 0.0%  | 2     | 16.7% |
| 3      | 0  | 0.0%   | 0          | 0.0%  | 2          | 66.7% | 1        | 33.3% | 0     | 0.0%  |
| 4      | 3  | 60.0%  | 0          | 0.0%  | 1          | 20.0% | 1        | 20.0% | 0     | 0.0%  |
| 5      | 1  | 14.3%  | 1          | 14.3% | 0          | 0.0%  | 5        | 71.4% | 0     | 0.0%  |
| 6      | 3  | 21.4%  | 2          | 14.3% | 3          | 21.4% | 4        | 28.6% | 2     | 14.3% |
| 7      | 3  | 33.3%  | 1          | 11.1% | 0          | 0.0%  | 4        | 44.4% | 1     | 11.1% |
| 8      | 2  | 100.0% | 0          | 0.0%  | 0          | 0.0%  | 0        | 0.0%  | 0     | 0.0%  |
| 9      | 3  | 30.0%  | 2          | 20.0% | 0          | 0.0%  | 4        | 40.0% | 1     | 10.0% |
| 10     | 2  | 40.0%  | 1          | 20.0% | 0          | 0.0%  | 2        | 40.0% | 0     | 0.0%  |
| 11     | 3  | 50.0%  | 1          | 16.7% | 0          | 0.0%  | 1        | 16.7% | 1     | 16.7% |
| 12     | 3  | 75.0%  | 1          | 25.0% | 0          | 0.0%  | 0        | 0.0%  | 0     | 0.0%  |
| 13     | 2  | 40.0%  | 0          | 0.0%  | 1          | 20.0% | 2        | 40.0% | 0     | 0.0%  |
| 14     | 1  | 25.0%  | 2          | 50.0% | 0          | 0.0%  | 1        | 25.0% | 0     | 0.0%  |

*Note.* This is the perception of the participants of the study.

### ***Pastoral Weaknesses (Item 10)***

Participants indicated their pastor's weakness to be, in order of frequency, *other* (37%), *fellowship* (23%), *evangelism* (15%), and *ministry* (9%). Six (7%) did not respond. Because *other* was not further defined, it is not known what the participants perceived their pastor's weakness to be. As with strengths, there was disagreement among members of the same churches, which can be seen in Table 12.

**Table 12**

#### *Pastor's Weakness, by Church*

| Church | In your opinion, what is the weakness of the pastor? |       |            |       |            |       |          |       |       |        |
|--------|--|-------|------------|-------|------------|-------|----------|-------|-------|--------|
|        | Discipleship   |       | Evangelism |       | Fellowship |       | Ministry |       | Other |        |
|        | N  | %     | N          | %     | N          | %     | N        | %     | N     | %      |
| 1      | 2  | 33.3% | 0          | 0.0%  | 0          | 0.0%  | 1        | 16.7% | 3     | 50.0%  |
| 2      | 2  | 16.7% | 3          | 25.0% | 3          | 25.0% | 1        | 8.3%  | 3     | 25.0%  |
| 3      | 1  | 33.3% | 0          | 0.0%  | 0          | 0.0%  | 1        | 33.3% | 1     | 33.3%  |
| 4      | 0  | 0.0%  | 0          | 0.0%  | 1          | 20.0% | 0        | 0.0%  | 4     | 80.0%  |
| 5      | 1  | 14.3% | 2          | 28.6% | 3          | 42.9% | 0        | 0.0%  | 1     | 14.3%  |
| 6      | 2  | 14.3% | 3          | 21.4% | 2          | 14.3% | 2        | 14.3% | 5     | 35.7%  |
| 7      | 0  | 0.0%  | 1          | 12.5% | 2          | 25.0% | 1        | 12.5% | 4     | 50.0%  |
| 8      | 0  | 0.0%  | 0          | 0.0%  | 0          | 0.0%  | 0        | 0.0%  | 2     | 100.0% |
| 9      | 0  | 0.0%  | 1          | 11.1% | 3          | 33.3% | 0        | 0.0%  | 5     | 55.6%  |
| 10     | 0  | 0.0%  | 1          | 33.3% | 1          | 33.3% | 0        | 0.0%  | 1     | 33.3%  |
| 11     | 0  | 0.0%  | 1          | 25.0% | 1          | 25.0% | 1        | 25.0% | 1     | 25.0%  |
| 12     | 0  | 0.0%  | 1          | 25.0% | 1          | 25.0% | 0        | 0.0%  | 2     | 50.0%  |
| 13     | 1  | 20.0% | 1          | 20.0% | 1          | 20.0% | 0        | 0.0%  | 2     | 40.0%  |
| 14     | 0  | 0.0%  | 0          | 0.0%  | 3          | 75.0% | 1        | 25.0% | 0     | 0.0%   |

*Note.* This is the perception of the participants of the study.

### **Pastor's Preaching Philosophy (Item 11)**

A slight majority of participants (53%) said their pastor's main preaching philosophy is *expository*. The remainder (47%) said it was *topical*. As with other survey items, there was difference in the perception among members of the same church, which can be seen in Table 13. Members were often evenly divided (for example, Church 2).

**Table 13***Pastor's Main Preaching Philosophy, by Church*

| Church | What is the main preaching philosophy of the pastor? |        |         |        |
|--------|--|--------|---------|--------|
|        | Expository   |        | Topical |        |
|        | N  | %      | N       | %      |
| 1      | 3  | 50.0%  | 3       | 50.0%  |
| 2      | 6  | 50.0%  | 6       | 50.0%  |
| 3      | 1  | 33.3%  | 2       | 66.7%  |
| 4      | 0  | 0.0%   | 5       | 100.0% |
| 5      | 4  | 57.1%  | 3       | 42.9%  |
| 6      | 6  | 42.9%  | 8       | 57.1%  |
| 7      | 3  | 33.3%  | 6       | 66.7%  |
| 8      | 1  | 50.0%  | 1       | 50.0%  |
| 9      | 7  | 70.0%  | 3       | 30.0%  |
| 10     | 5  | 100.0% | 0       | 0.0%   |
| 11     | 3  | 50.0%  | 3       | 50.0%  |
| 12     | 4  | 100.0% | 0       | 0.0%   |
| 13     | 3  | 60.0%  | 2       | 40.0%  |
| 14     | 3  | 75.0%  | 1       | 25.0%  |

*Note.* This is the perception of the participants of the study.

**Pastoral Expectations of Engagement (Item 12)**

Most participants (87%) said their pastor expected attendees to be engaged during the worship service. The remainder (13%) said *no*; the pastor did not expect attendees to be involved. As with other survey items, there was some disagreement among members of the same church, but majorities in all but one church (Church 14) agreed their pastor expected attendee engagement. In the case of the four participants from Church 14, the participants were equally divided. The breakdown is found in Appendix J.

**Pastoral Sermon Response Invitation (Item 13)**

Most participants (79%) said the pastor gives an open invitation to respond at the end of the sermon. The remainder (21%) said the pastor does not offer such an invitation. Again, there was disagreement among members of the same churches. However, in all but one church (Church 2), majorities agreed that their pastor gives an open invitation after the sermon. In the

case of the 12 participants from Church 2, seven (58%) said their pastor did not provide an invitation, and the remainder (42%) said the pastor did. The breakdown is found in Appendix K.

### **Church's Main Strengths and Weaknesses in Reaching New Attendees (Items 14 and 15)**

#### ***Church's Main Strength (Item 14)***

A plurality of participants (49%) said their church's main strength in reaching new attendees is *family*, followed by *commitment* (27%). Fewer (16%) indicated *leadership*, and fewer (8%) indicated *excitement*. Responses among participants from the same church varied somewhat from church to church, the details of which can be seen in Table 14.

**Table 14**

#### ***Church's Main Strength in Reaching New Attendees, by Church***

| Church | What is the church's main strength in reaching new attendees? |       |            |       |        |        |            |       |
|--------|---|-------|------------|-------|--------|--------|------------|-------|
|        | Commitment  |       | excitement |       | family |        | Leadership |       |
|        | N   | %     | N          | %     | N      | %      | N          | %     |
| 1      | 1   | 16.7% | 1          | 16.7% | 4      | 66.7%  | 0          | 0.0%  |
| 2      | 3   | 25.0% | 0          | 0.0%  | 8      | 66.7%  | 1          | 8.3%  |
| 3      | 0   | 0.0%  | 0          | 0.0%  | 3      | 100.0% | 0          | 0.0%  |
| 4      | 2   | 40.0% | 1          | 20.0% | 1      | 20.0%  | 1          | 20.0% |
| 5      | 2   | 28.6% | 0          | 0.0%  | 3      | 42.9%  | 2          | 28.6% |
| 6      | 3   | 21.4% | 1          | 7.1%  | 6      | 42.9%  | 4          | 28.6% |
| 7      | 2   | 22.2% | 0          | 0.0%  | 5      | 55.6%  | 2          | 22.2% |
| 8      | 0   | 0.0%  | 0          | 0.0%  | 2      | 100.0% | 0          | 0.0%  |
| 9      | 3   | 30.0% | 1          | 10.0% | 3      | 30.0%  | 3          | 30.0% |
| 10     | 2   | 40.0% | 1          | 20.0% | 1      | 20.0%  | 1          | 20.0% |
| 11     | 2   | 33.3% | 1          | 16.7% | 3      | 50.0%  | 0          | 0.0%  |
| 12     | 1   | 25.0% | 0          | 0.0%  | 3      | 75.0%  | 0          | 0.0%  |
| 13     | 1   | 20.0% | 1          | 20.0% | 2      | 40.0%  | 1          | 20.0% |
| 14     | 3   | 75.0% | 0          | 0.0%  | 1      | 25.0%  | 0          | 0.0%  |

*Note.* This is the perception of the participants of the study.

### **Church's Main Weakness (Item 15)**

A plurality of participants (41%) said their church's main weakness in reaching new attendees is *cliques*, followed by *new attendee distance* (28%). This correlation between this outcome will be addressed further in chapter 5. Fewer (16%) indicated *new attendee mission lack*, and fewer (7%) indicated *rare pastor intros*. Seven participants (8%) did not respond. Responses again varied by the church. Those breakdowns appear in Table 15.

**Table 15**

#### *Church's Main Weakness in Reaching New Attendees, by Church*

| Church | In your opinion, what is the church's main weakness in reaching new attendees? |        |                       |       |                           |       |                    |       |
|--------|--|--------|-----------------------|-------|---------------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|
|        | Cliques  |        | New Attendee Distance |       | New Attendee Mission Lack |       | Rare Pastor Intros |       |
|        | N  | %      | N                     | %     | N                         | %     | N                  | %     |
| 1      | 3  | 60.0%  | 2                     | 40.0% | 0                         | 0.0%  | 0                  | 0.0%  |
| 2      | 4  | 33.3%  | 4                     | 33.3% | 3                         | 25.0% | 1                  | 8.3%  |
| 3      | 2  | 66.7%  | 0                     | 0.0%  | 1                         | 33.3% | 0                  | 0.0%  |
| 4      | 4  | 80.0%  | 0                     | 0.0%  | 0                         | 0.0%  | 1                  | 20.0% |
| 5      | 4  | 57.1%  | 3                     | 42.9% | 0                         | 0.0%  | 0                  | 0.0%  |
| 6      | 7  | 50.0%  | 4                     | 28.6% | 2                         | 14.3% | 1                  | 7.1%  |
| 7      | 3  | 37.5%  | 4                     | 50.0% | 1                         | 12.5% | 0                  | 0.0%  |
| 8      | 2  | 100.0% | 0                     | 0.0%  | 0                         | 0.0%  | 0                  | 0.0%  |
| 9      | 3  | 37.5%  | 5                     | 62.5% | 0                         | 0.0%  | 0                  | 0.0%  |
| 10     | 1  | 25.0%  | 1                     | 25.0% | 1                         | 25.0% | 1                  | 25.0% |
| 11     | 2  | 40.0%  | 1                     | 20.0% | 2                         | 40.0% | 0                  | 0.0%  |
| 12     | 1  | 25.0%  | 1                     | 25.0% | 2                         | 50.0% | 0                  | 0.0%  |
| 13     | 2  | 50.0%  | 1                     | 25.0% | 1                         | 25.0% | 0                  | 0.0%  |
| 14     | 0  | 0.0%   | 0                     | 0.0%  | 2                         | 50.0% | 2                  | 50.0% |

*Note.* This is the perception of the participants of the study.

### **Participant Likelihood to Invite Someone to Church (Item 16)**

A plurality (45%) said they were *very likely* to invite someone to church, and another 25% said they were *somewhat likely* to do so. Twelve percent (12%) and 10% said they were either *somewhat unlikely* or *very unlikely* to invite someone to church. Fewer (9%) said they were *unsure*. Table 16 shows the breakdown by church.

**Table 16***Participant Likelihood to Invite Someone to Church*

| On a scale from 1 to 5, how likely are you to invite someone to church? |               |                   |        |                 |             |
|---|---------------|-------------------|--------|-----------------|-------------|
| Church  | Very Unlikely | Somewhat Unlikely | Unsure | Somewhat Likely | Very Likely |
| 1   | 2             | 0                 | 0      | 3               | 1           |
| 2   | 1             | 1                 | 2      | 4               | 4           |
| 3   | 0             | 1                 | 1      | 0               | 1           |
| 4   | 0             | 1                 | 0      | 1               | 3           |
| 5   | 1             | 1                 | 0      | 2               | 3           |
| 6   | 2             | 1                 | 2      | 3               | 6           |
| 7   | 0             | 1                 | 1      | 3               | 4           |
| 8   | 0             | 0                 | 0      | 1               | 1           |
| 9   | 1             | 3                 | 1      | 2               | 3           |
| 10  | 1             | 0                 | 0      | 0               | 4           |
| 11  | 1             | 1                 | 0      | 1               | 3           |
| 12  | 0             | 0                 | 0      | 1               | 3           |
| 13  | 0             | 0                 | 0      | 2               | 3           |
| 14  | 0             | 1                 | 1      | 0               | 2           |
| Total   | 9             | 11                | 8      | 23              | 38          |

*Note.* This is the perception of the participants of the study.

**Pastor's Emphasis on Spiritual Growth (Item 17)**

Most (88%) said their pastor *regularly* emphasizes spiritual growth. A minority (11%) said their pastor *occasionally* emphasizes spiritual growth, and one participant (1%) did not respond. No participants said their pastor *never* emphasizes spiritual growth. Thus, 100% of those who responded said their pastor occasionally or regularly emphasizes spiritual growth.

Table 17 breakdown the participants' responses.

**Table 17***Participants' Breakdown on Pastor's Emphasis on Spiritual Growth*

| Does your pastor put an emphasis on spiritual growth? |           |              |       |         |
|---|-----------|--------------|-------|---------|
| Church  | Regularly | Occasionally | Never | Missing |
| 1   | 6         | 0            | 0     | 0       |
| 2   | 11        | 1            | 0     | 0       |
| 3   | 1         | 2            | 0     | 0       |
| 4   | 5         | 0            | 0     | 0       |
| 5   | 7         | 0            | 0     | 0       |
| 6   | 9         | 4            | 0     | 1       |
| 7   | 8         | 1            | 0     | 0       |
| 8   | 2         | 0            | 0     | 0       |
| 9   | 9         | 1            | 0     | 0       |
| 10  | 4         | 1            | 0     | 0       |
| 11  | 6         | 0            | 0     | 0       |
| 12  | 4         | 0            | 0     | 0       |
| 13  | 5         | 0            | 0     | 0       |
| 14  | 4         | 0            | 0     | 0       |
| Total   | 81        | 10           | 0     | 1       |

*Note.* This is the perception of the participants of the study.

**Advice Seeking by Pastor (Item 18)**

A majority of participants (62%) said their pastor *regularly* seeks advice from other leaders in the church. A minority (25%) said their pastor *occasionally* seeks advice from other leaders in the church, and a smaller minority (10%) said their pastor *never* seeks such advice. Three participants (3%) did not respond. There was disagreement among members of the same churches, which might suggest some participants may not be aware of their pastor's seeking advice. Those breakdowns are provided in Table 18.

**Table 18***Pastor's Advice Seeking, by Church*

| Church | Does your pastor seek advice from other leaders in the church? |       |              |       |           |        |
|--------|--|-------|--------------|-------|-----------|--------|
|        | Never  |       | Occasionally |       | Regularly |        |
|        | N  | %     | N            | %     | N         | %      |
| 1      | 0  | 0.0%  | 2            | 33.3% | 4         | 66.7%  |
| 2      | 1  | 8.3%  | 1            | 8.3%  | 10        | 83.3%  |
| 3      | 1  | 33.3% | 1            | 33.3% | 1         | 33.3%  |
| 4      | 0  | 0.0%  | 1            | 20.0% | 4         | 80.0%  |
| 5      | 0  | 0.0%  | 1            | 14.3% | 6         | 85.7%  |
| 6      | 3  | 21.4% | 5            | 35.7% | 6         | 42.9%  |
| 7      | 2  | 25.0% | 2            | 25.0% | 4         | 50.0%  |
| 8      | 0  | 0.0%  | 0            | 0.0%  | 2         | 100.0% |
| 9      | 1  | 10.0% | 2            | 20.0% | 7         | 70.0%  |
| 10     | 0  | 0.0%  | 1            | 20.0% | 4         | 80.0%  |
| 11     | 1  | 20.0% | 1            | 20.0% | 3         | 60.0%  |
| 12     | 0  | 0.0%  | 1            | 25.0% | 3         | 75.0%  |
| 13     | 0  | 0.0%  | 2            | 50.0% | 2         | 50.0%  |
| 14     | 0  | 0.0%  | 3            | 75.0% | 1         | 25.0%  |

*Note.* This is the perception of the participants of the study.

**Pastor's Emphasis on Church Attendance (Item 20)**

Most participants (66%) said their pastor *regularly* emphasizes church attendance. A minority (24%) said their pastor *occasionally* emphasizes church attendance, and a smaller minority (10%) said their pastor *never* emphasizes attendance. Thus, a large majority (90%) said their pastor either regularly or occasionally emphasizes church attendance. Participant perceptions for this item were very different for some churches, with participants at Church 2, for example, with multiple participants indicating each option (*never, occasionally, or regularly*) for their pastor. A breakdown by churches appears in Table 19.

**Table 19***Pastor's Emphasis on Church Attendance, by Church*

| Church | Does your pastor emphasize church attendance? |       |              |       |           |        |
|--------|---|-------|--------------|-------|-----------|--------|
|        | Never   |       | Occasionally |       | Regularly |        |
|        | N   | %     | N            | %     | N         | %      |
| 1      | 0   | 0.0%  | 3            | 50.0% | 3         | 50.0%  |
| 2      | 4   | 33.3% | 3            | 25.0% | 5         | 41.7%  |
| 3      | 1   | 33.3% | 0            | 0.0%  | 2         | 66.7%  |
| 4      | 0   | 0.0%  | 0            | 0.0%  | 5         | 100.0% |
| 5      | 3   | 42.9% | 0            | 0.0%  | 4         | 57.1%  |
| 6      | 1   | 7.1%  | 7            | 50.0% | 6         | 42.9%  |
| 7      | 0   | 0.0%  | 4            | 44.4% | 5         | 55.6%  |
| 8      | 0   | 0.0%  | 0            | 0.0%  | 2         | 100.0% |
| 9      | 0   | 0.0%  | 1            | 10.0% | 9         | 90.0%  |
| 10     | 0   | 0.0%  | 1            | 20.0% | 4         | 80.0%  |
| 11     | 0   | 0.0%  | 2            | 33.3% | 4         | 66.7%  |
| 12     | 0   | 0.0%  | 0            | 0.0%  | 4         | 100.0% |
| 13     | 0   | 0.0%  | 1            | 20.0% | 4         | 80.0%  |
| 14     | 0   | 0.0%  | 0            | 0.0%  | 4         | 100.0% |

*Note.* This is the perception of the participants of the study.

**Participants Perceptions of Decline, Plateau, or Growth (Item 19)**

Overall, 65% of participants perceived their church to be growing. Only 11% perceived their church to be declining. When viewed at the church level, a concern was apparent: In some cases, congregants from the same church perceived their church's status differently. (See Table 20.) For example, for Church 1, five participants perceived the church as growing, and one perceived it as declining; for Church 14, one participant perceived it as declining, two perceived it as plateauing, and one perceived it as growing. Clearly, participants' perceptions cannot all align with reality; therefore, all results should be viewed with this in mind; that is, results indicate participants' perceptions, and there may be a bias toward perceptions of growth. After seeing the different perceptions, seeking the reports from the Baptist Association was needed to find out what churches were declining, plateauing, or growing.

**Table 20***Congregants' Perceptions of their Church as Declining, Growing, or Plateauing*

| Church | Congregants' Perceptions |            |         |
|--------|--------------------------|------------|---------|
|        | Declining                | Plateauing | Growing |
| 1      | 1                        | 0          | 5       |
| 2      | 0                        | 3          | 9       |
| 3      | 1                        | 1          | 1       |
| 4      | 0                        | 3          | 2       |
| 5      | 1                        | 1          | 5       |
| 6      | 2                        | 4          | 8       |
| 7      | 1                        | 3          | 5       |
| 8      | 0                        | 0          | 2       |
| 9      | 1                        | 0          | 9       |
| 10     | 0                        | 2          | 3       |
| 11     | 1                        | 0          | 5       |
| 12     | 0                        | 2          | 2       |
| 13     | 1                        | 1          | 3       |
| 14     | 1                        | 2          | 1       |
| Total  | 10                       | 22         | 60      |

*Note.* This is the perception of the participants of the study.

### **Correlations Among R.Q.s Generally**

Correlations among the quantitative variables, recoded as described in Chapter 3, appear in Table 21. The correlations in the table do not account for the unequal number of participants in each church and should be interpreted cautiously. Additionally, the mean scores by the church were used to recalculate the correlations among variable pairs. The sample was considered 14 churches (not 92 participants). The bolded figures in the table indicate statistically significant positive correlations when using the means and suggest greater confidence can be placed in the conclusion that there truly is a positive correlation between the variables.

**Table 21***Correlations (Kendall's Tau) Among Quantitative R.Q.s*

|      |  | Q1       | Q2          | Q3           | Q4            | Q5           | Q6           | Q7           | Q8           | Q12          | Q13           | Q16          | Q17          | Q18          | Q20          | Q19         | Q190 |    |
|------|--|----------|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|------|----|
| Q1   | Are you a church member?   | <i>r</i> | --          |              |               |              |              |              |              |              |               |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92          |              |               |              |              |              |              |              |               |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
| Q2   | How often do you attend church services?                                     | <i>r</i> | <b>.22*</b> | --           |               |              |              |              |              |              |               |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 91          | 91           |               |              |              |              |              |              |               |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
| Q3   | On a scaled from 1 to 5 how would you rate the atmosphere of the             | <i>r</i> | 0.16        | <b>.29**</b> | --            |              |              |              |              |              |               |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92          | 91           | 92            |              |              |              |              |              |               |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
| Q4   | On a scaled from 1 to 5 do you leave church service feeling spiritually fed? | <i>r</i> | 0.13        | <b>.41**</b> | <b>.41**</b>  | --           |              |              |              |              |               |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92          | 91           | 92            | 92           |              |              |              |              |               |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
| Q5   | Do you feel the church is spiritually ready for its mission?                 | <i>r</i> | -0.04       | 0.03         | <b>.37**</b>  | <b>.38**</b> | --           |              |              |              |               |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 91          | 90           | 91            | 91           | 91           |              |              |              |               |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
| Q6   | Does the church have your best needs in mind?                                | <i>r</i> | 0.07        | 0.08         | <b>.31**</b>  | <b>.32**</b> | <b>.43**</b> | --           |              |              |               |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92          | 91           | 92            | 92           | 91           | 92           |              |              |               |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
| Q7   | Does the pastor help you understand the mission of the church?               | <i>r</i> | 0.09        | <b>.20*</b>  | <b>.341**</b> | <b>.31**</b> | <b>.49**</b> | <b>.49**</b> | --           |              |               |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92          | 91           | 92            | 92           | 91           | 92           | 92           |              |               |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
| Q8   | Does the pastor show the signs of the Fruit of the Spirit?                   | <i>r</i> | -0.06       | 0.12         | <b>.25*</b>   | <b>.32**</b> | <b>.26*</b>  | <b>.27*</b>  | <b>.29**</b> | --           |               |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92          | 91           | 92            | 92           | 91           | 92           | 92           | 92           |               |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
| Q12  | Does the pastor expect church attendees to be engaged during the             | <i>r</i> | 0.16        | <b>.21*</b>  | <b>.27**</b>  | <b>.22*</b>  | 0.09         | <b>.22*</b>  | 0.13         | 0.05         | --            |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92          | 91           | 92            | 92           | 91           | 92           | 92           | 92           | 92            |              |              |              |              |             |      |    |
| Q13  | Does the pastor give an open invitation to respond at the end of the         | <i>r</i> | 0.08        | <b>.44**</b> | <b>.25*</b>   | <b>.23*</b>  | 0.06         | 0.13         | 0.16         | 0.11         | <b>.36**</b>  | --           |              |              |              |             |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92          | 91           | 92            | 92           | 91           | 92           | 92           | 92           | 92            | 92           |              |              |              |             |      |    |
| Q16  | On a scale from 1 to 5 how likely are you to invite someone to church?       | <i>r</i> | 0.08        | <b>.24**</b> | <b>.49**</b>  | <b>.38**</b> | <b>.28**</b> | <b>.28**</b> | <b>.21*</b>  | 0.17         | <b>.254**</b> | <b>.23*</b>  | --           |              |              |             |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92          | 91           | 92            | 92           | 91           | 92           | 92           | 92           | 92            | 92           | 92           |              |              |             |      |    |
| Q17  | Does your pastor put an emphasis on spiritual growth?                        | <i>r</i> | 0.19        | <b>.20*</b>  | <b>.29**</b>  | <b>.45**</b> | <b>.56**</b> | <b>.29**</b> | <b>.62**</b> | <b>.27*</b>  | 0.17          | 0.18         | 0.14         | --           |              |             |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 91          | 90           | 91            | 91           | 91           | 91           | 91           | 91           | 91            | 91           | 91           | 91           |              |             |      |    |
| Q18  | Does your pastor seek advice from other leaders in the church?               | <i>r</i> | -0.11       | -0.01        | <b>.35**</b>  | <b>.21*</b>  | <b>.46**</b> | <b>.40**</b> | <b>.43**</b> | <b>.24*</b>  | 0.20          | 0.10         | <b>.22*</b>  | <b>.43**</b> | --           |             |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 89          | 88           | 89            | 89           | 88           | 89           | 89           | 89           | 89            | 89           | 89           | 88           | 89           |             |      |    |
| Q20  | Does your pastor put an emphasis on church attendance?                       | <i>r</i> | 0.17        | <b>.41**</b> | <b>.29**</b>  | <b>.26**</b> | 0.15         | <b>.33**</b> | <b>.26*</b>  | <b>.25*</b>  | <b>.27**</b>  | <b>.42**</b> | <b>.24**</b> | <b>.20*</b>  | <b>.24*</b>  | --          |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92          | 91           | 92            | 92           | 91           | 92           | 92           | 92           | 92            | 92           | 92           | 91           | 89           | 92          |      |    |
| Q19  | When considering the church do you consider it to be G, P, or D?             | <i>r</i> | -0.18       | 0.00         | <b>.37**</b>  | <b>.24*</b>  | <b>.52**</b> | <b>.30**</b> | <b>.25*</b>  | <b>.27**</b> | <b>.28**</b>  | <b>.23*</b>  | <b>.31**</b> | <b>.25*</b>  | <b>.41**</b> | <b>.21*</b> | --   |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92          | 91           | 92            | 92           | 91           | 92           | 92           | 92           | 92            | 92           | 92           | 91           | 89           | 92          | 92   |    |
| Q190 | When considering the church do you consider it to be G, P, or D?             | <i>r</i> | -0.13       | -0.04        | -0.02         | 0.05         | 0.15         | 0.10         | 0.08         | 0.06         | 0.00          | -0.10        | 0.06         | 0.06         | 0.19         | -0.15       | 0.07 | -- |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92          | 91           | 92            | 92           | 91           | 92           | 92           | 92           | 92            | 92           | 92           | 91           | 89           | 92          | 92   | 92 |

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Note.* See Chapter 3 for details of how each variable was coded. Generally, lower numbers (codes) indicate lesser quantities or lower ordinal values (ranks), with Yes/No coded as 1/0, respectively. All correlations of .20 or greater are significant at, at least, the .05 level of significance. N for each pair of correlations ranges from 88 to 92. Bolded figures indicate significant correlations (at least, the .05 level) when the means for all participant scores within each church were used to determine correlations (in which case, N = 14). Confidence that a positive correlation exists between the bolded variables is therefore expected to be higher than when calculated using the individual participants without accounting for the correlations expected among those within the same churches.

## Research Questions

### *RQ1*

RQ1 asked, "To what degree if any, do pastors of declining, plateaued, or growing churches address the concerns of church attendance on a regular basis?" RQ1 can be answered partially with the information contained in Table 12. That is, the question asks about a possible association between two ordinal or rank-ordered data (Items 19 and 20), which were measured using Kendall's Tau (nonparametric correlation) statistic (APA, n.d.). There is likely a small but statistically significant positive correlation between participants' perceptions of their church as declining, plateauing, or growing and their perceptions of whether their pastor emphasizes church attendance,  $r_{\tau}(92) = .21, p = .03, BC_a 95\% CI [.002, .411]$ .

The results of this research question will be broken down into three categories: declining, plateauing, and growing. These three categories all had different perceptions, even within the same church.

### *Declining Churches*

Table 22 shows how the attendees perceive their pastor's emphasis on church attendance.

**Table 22**

*Frequency of Church Attendance Emphasis by Participants of Perceived Declining Churches*

| <u>Church</u> | <u>Regularly</u> | <u>Occasionally</u> | <u>Never</u> |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| 1             | 3                | 3                   | 0            |
| 3             | 5                | 3                   | 4            |
| 5             | 4                | 0                   | 3            |
| 6             | 6                | 7                   | 1            |
| 7             | 5                | 4                   | 0            |
| 9             | 9                | 1                   | 0            |
| 11            | 4                | 2                   | 0            |
| 13            | 4                | 1                   | 0            |
| 14            | 4                | 0                   | 0            |
| Total         | 44               | 21                  | 8            |

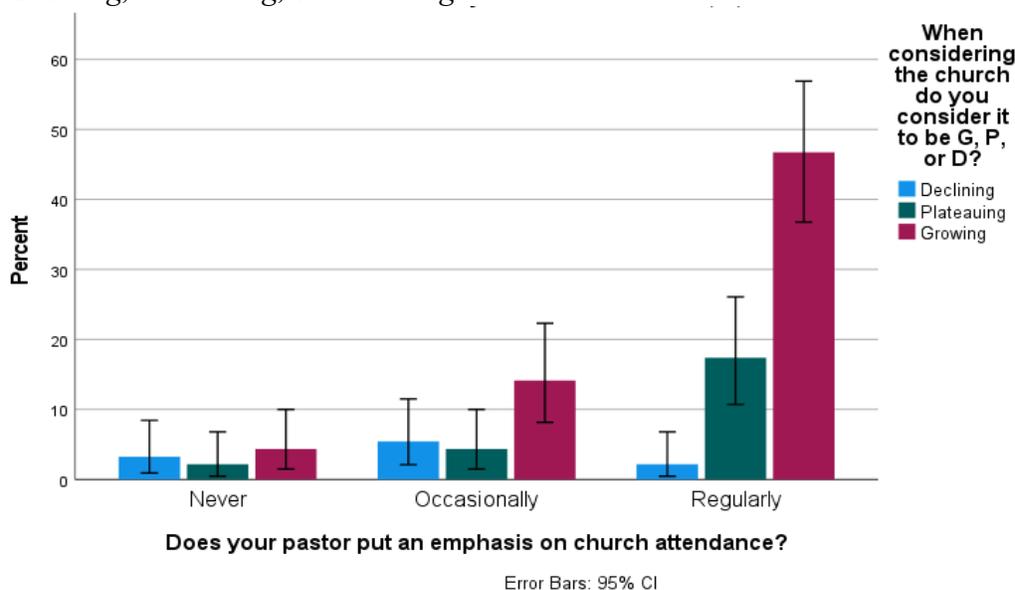
*Note.* This is the perception of the participants of the study.

Based on the data, four Church 3 participants believed their pastor never emphasizes church attendance. Although these four participants believed their pastor never emphasizes church attendance, five participants believe the pastor regularly emphasizes church attendance, and three participants believe the pastor occasionally emphasizes church attendance. Church 9 stands out, as nine of the ten participants believed the pastor put an emphasis on church attendance regularly. With the number of participants in this research study from Church 9, and with only one participant responding differently, Church 9 had a consensus about the pastor emphasizing church attendance.

Figure 1 shows the participants' perceptions of the pastor emphasizing church attendance, based on considering the church growing, plateauing, or declining? Figure 3 shows the participants' perceptions of the church's growing, plateauing, or declining based on the pastor's emphasis on church attendance.

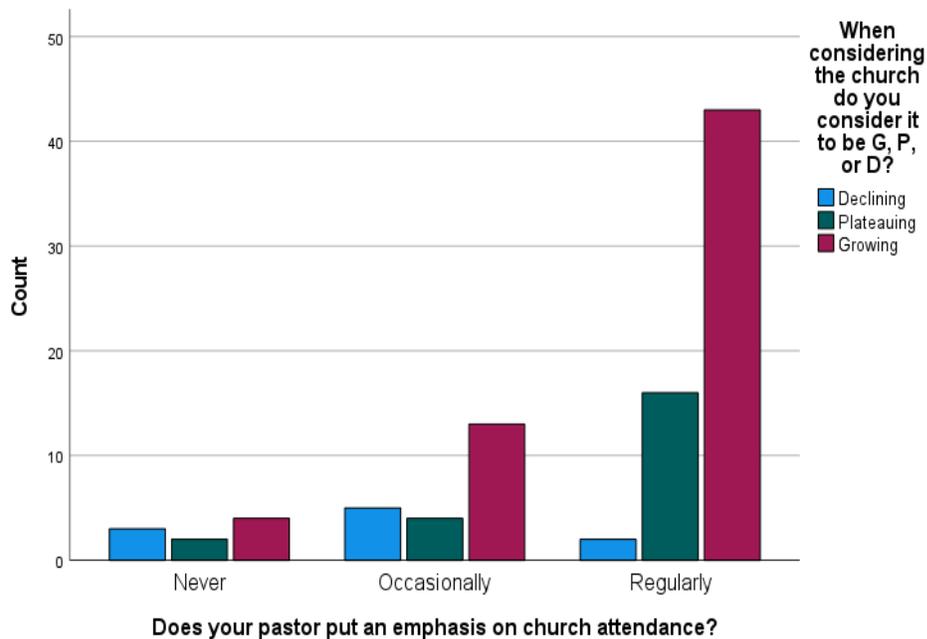
### Figure 3

*Does your pastor emphasize church attendance? When considering the church, do you consider it Growing, Plateauing, or Declining?*



**Figure 4**

*When considering the church, do you consider it to be Growing, Plateauing, or Declining? Does your pastor emphasize church attendance?*



### ***Plateauing Churches***

Table 23 shows the plateauing churches and their perception of their pastor emphasizing church attendance. As with the other questions, the participants' perceptions within the same church are vastly different. Church 4, 12, and 14 all had the same perception. All participants believed their pastor regularly put an emphasis on church attendance. Church 2, 5, and 6 all had responses of never emphasizing church attendance.

**Table 23**

*Frequency of Church Attendance Emphasis by Participants of Perceived Plateauing Churches*

| <u>Frequency of Church Attendance Emphasis</u> |           |              |       |
|--|-----------|--------------|-------|
| Church   | Regularly | Occasionally | Never |
| 2  | 5         | 3            | 4     |
| 3  | 2         | 1            | 0     |
| 4  | 5         | 0            | 0     |
| 5  | 4         | 0            | 3     |
| 6  | 6         | 7            | 1     |
| 7  | 5         | 4            | 0     |
| 10   | 4         | 1            | 0     |
| 12   | 4         | 0            | 0     |
| 13   | 4         | 1            | 0     |
| 14   | 4         | 0            | 0     |
| Total  | 43        | 17           | 8     |

*Note.* This is the perception of the participants of the study.

### ***Growing Churches***

Table 24 shows the growing churches and their perception of their pastor's emphasis on church attendance. Pastors of growing churches received different perceptions from the survey participants. All church participants believed that their church was growing. Churches 4, 8, 12, and 14 had all participants agree that their pastor regularly emphasized church attendance.

**Table 24**

*Frequency of Church Attendance Emphasis by Participants of Perceived Growing Churches*

Frequency of Church Attendance Emphasis

| Church | Regularly | Occasionally | Never |
|--------|-----------|--------------|-------|
| 1      | 3         | 3            | 0     |
| 2      | 5         | 3            | 4     |
| 3      | 2         | 0            | 1     |
| 4      | 5         | 0            | 0     |
| 5      | 4         | 0            | 3     |
| 6      | 6         | 7            | 1     |
| 7      | 5         | 4            | 0     |
| 8      | 2         | 0            | 0     |
| 9      | 9         | 1            | 0     |
| 10     | 4         | 1            | 0     |
| 11     | 4         | 2            | 0     |
| 12     | 4         | 0            | 0     |
| 13     | 4         | 1            | 0     |
| 14     | 4         | 0            | 0     |
| Total  | 61        | 22           | 9     |

*Note.* This is the perception of the participants of the study.

What churches, from the Association's reporting, were reporting growing, plateauing, or declining attendance numbers? Table 25 shows this comparison.

**Table 25**

*Actual Reporting Weekly Attendance of Churches*

| Church | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Change %    |
|--------|------|------|------|------|-------------|
| 1      | 141  | 100  | 146  | 100  | -29.1%      |
| 2      | 51   | 51   | 50   | 51   | 0.0%        |
| 3      | 142  | 133  | 139  | 133  | -6.3%       |
| 4      | 120  | 107  | 120  | 107  | -10.8%      |
| 5      | 59   | 51   | 58   | 50   | -15.3%      |
| 6      | 111  | 116  | 112  | 116  | <b>4.5%</b> |
| 7      | 85   | 85   | 95   | 85   | 0.0%        |
| 8      | 93   | 99   | 95   | 99   | <b>6.5%</b> |
| 9      | 150  | 150  | 150  | 125  | -16.7%      |
| 10     | 136  | 141  | 140  | 141  | <b>3.7%</b> |
| 11     | 126  | 110  | 123  | 110  | -12.7%      |
| 12     | 117  | 109  | 112  | 109  | -6.8%       |
| 13     | 101  | 110  | 102  | 91   | -9.9%       |
| 14     | 55   | 50   | 55   | 51   | -7.3%       |

*Note.* Adapted from the yearly reporting on average weekly attendance from the Baptist Association's yearly reports.

Based on the reporting numbers over the four years, only Churches 6, 8, and 10 showed an increase over the four years. Although churches may have increased attendance numbers through the years of reporting, these three churches were the only ones that reported an increase from 2018 to 2021. Most of the reporting numbers were consistent over the four years. For the churches reporting declining in average weekly attendance that was actually in decline, Churches 3, 5, 12, and 14 were showing a decline within ten attendees. Churches 1, 4, 9, 11, and 13 were in decline greater than 10. Church 1 had the most significant decline, losing 41 attendees over the four years.

## ***RQ2***

RQ2 asked, "To what degree, if any, do pastors of declining, plateaued, or growing churches demonstrate a concern about the spiritual growth of the congregants?" RQ2 can also be answered partially with the information contained in Table 17. The question also asks about a possible association between two ordinal or rank-ordered categories (Items 17 and 20). There is likely a slight positive correlation between Items 19 and 17,  $r_{\tau}(91) = .25$ ,  $p = .01$ ,  $BC_a$  95% CI [.03, .45].

Spiritual growth means becoming more like Jesus Christ. This growth can be emphasized in one's daily walk with Christ. This question has been broken down into declining, plateauing, and growing churches. Table 26 shows how declining church participants view their pastor's emphasis on spiritual growth.

**Table 26**

*Frequency of Spiritual Growth Emphasis by Participants of Perceived Declining Churches*

| Church | Participants Perceptions of Frequency of Pastor's Emphasis on Spiritual Growth |              |         |
|--------|--|--------------|---------|
|        | Regularly  | Occasionally | Missing |
| 1      | 6  | 0            | 0       |
| 3      | 1  | 2            | 0       |
| 5      | 7  | 0            | 0       |
| 6      | 9  | 4            | 1       |
| 7      | 8  | 1            | 0       |
| 9      | 9  | 1            | 0       |
| 11     | 6  | 0            | 0       |
| 13     | 5  | 0            | 0       |
| 14     | 4  | 0            | 0       |
| Total  | 55   | 8            | 1       |

*Note.* The declining church participation survey results on spiritual growth emphasis.

Churches 1, 5, 11, 13, and 14 stated that their pastor *regularly* emphasizes spiritual growth. Even as the perception is that the church is in decline, the perception is that the pastor is seeking spiritual growth among the attendees.

### ***Plateauing Churches***

Table 27 shows the plateauing church participants' perceptions of the emphasis on spiritual growth.

**Table 27***Frequency of Spiritual Growth Emphasis by Participants of Perceived Plateauing Churches*

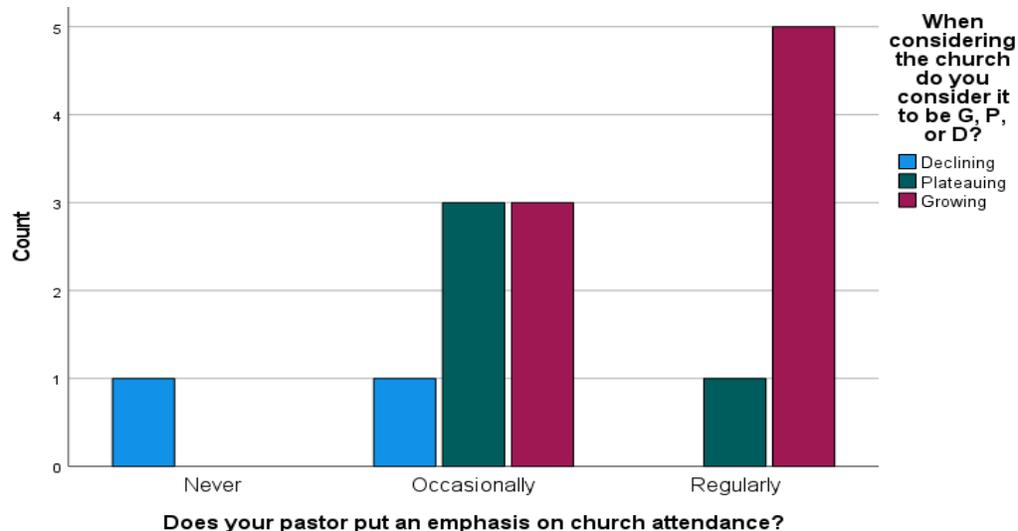
| Church | Participants' Perceptions of the Frequency of Pastor's<br><u>Emphasis on Spiritual Growth</u> |              |
|--------|---|--------------|
|        | Regularly   | Occasionally |
| 2      | 11  | 1            |
| 3      | 1   | 2            |
| 4      | 5   | 0            |
| 5      | 7   | 0            |
| 6      | 9   | 4            |
| 7      | 8   | 1            |
| 10     | 4   | 1            |
| 12     | 4   | 0            |
| 13     | 5   | 0            |
| 14     | 4   | 0            |
| Total  | 59  | 9            |

*Note.* The plateauing church participates in survey results on spiritual growth emphasis.

Out of ten churches, 58 responses came in for the pastor *regularly* emphasizing spiritual growth. Perception, once again, is critical in this survey. Some participants believe their church fit into all three categories in attendance. These participants believe that no matter the size and the church's status, their pastor has a heart for seeing people grow spiritually. Figure 5 gives a representation when considering the church Growing, Plateauing, or Declining? by does the pastor emphasizes spiritual growth?

**Figure 5**

*When considering the church, do you consider it to be Growing, Plateauing, or Declining? Does your pastor emphasize church attendance?*



### ***Growing Churches***

Participants from growing churches also perceive that their pastor emphasizes spiritual growth *regularly* and *occasionally*. None of these churches, no matter the category they are in, reported that their pastor *never* emphasizes church attendance. Table 28 shows these responses.

**Table 28**

*Frequency of Spiritual Growth Emphasis by Participants of Perceived Growing Churches*

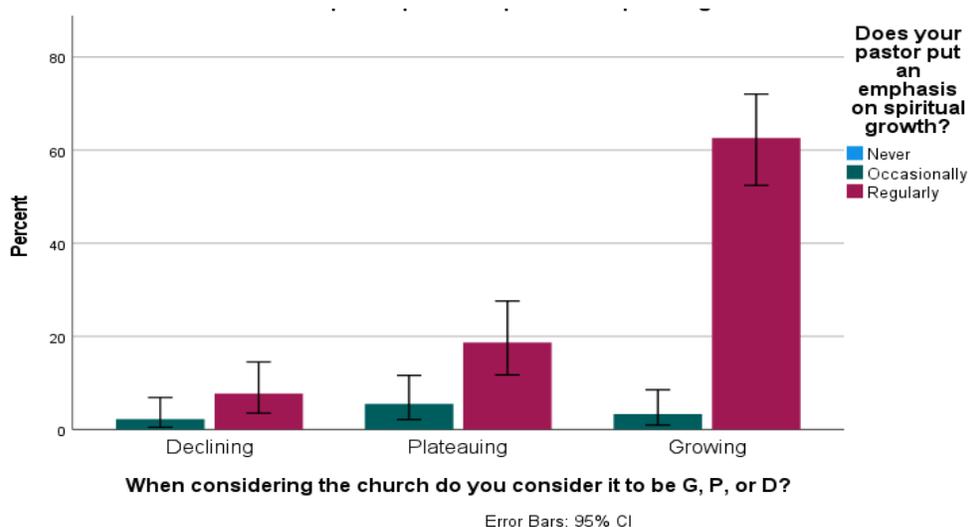
| Church | Regularly | Occasionally | Missing |
|--------|-----------|--------------|---------|
| 1      | 6         | 0            | 0       |
| 2      | 11        | 1            | 0       |
| 3      | 1         | 2            | 0       |
| 4      | 5         | 0            | 0       |
| 5      | 7         | 0            | 0       |
| 6      | 9         | 4            | 1       |
| 7      | 8         | 1            | 0       |
| 8      | 2         | 0            | 0       |
| 9      | 9         | 1            | 0       |
| 10     | 4         | 1            | 0       |
| 11     | 6         | 0            | 0       |
| 12     | 4         | 0            | 0       |
| 13     | 5         | 0            | 0       |
| 14     | 4         | 0            | 0       |
| Total  | 81        | 10           | 1       |

*Note.* Growing church participates survey results on spiritual growth emphasis.

Participants in Churches 1, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, and 14 responded that their pastor *regularly* emphasizes spiritual growth. Even if the perception is different involving the three groups of growing, plateauing, or declining churches, many believe there are times when the pastor emphasizes spiritual growth. Based on the survey results, Church 3 had more responses for *occasionally* than *regularly* and Church 6, although this church had the most participants, received more *occasional* responses than any other church. Figure 6 shows the graph relating to this research question.

**Figure 6**

*When considering the church, do you consider it to be growing, plateauing, or declining? Does your pastor emphasize spiritual growth?*



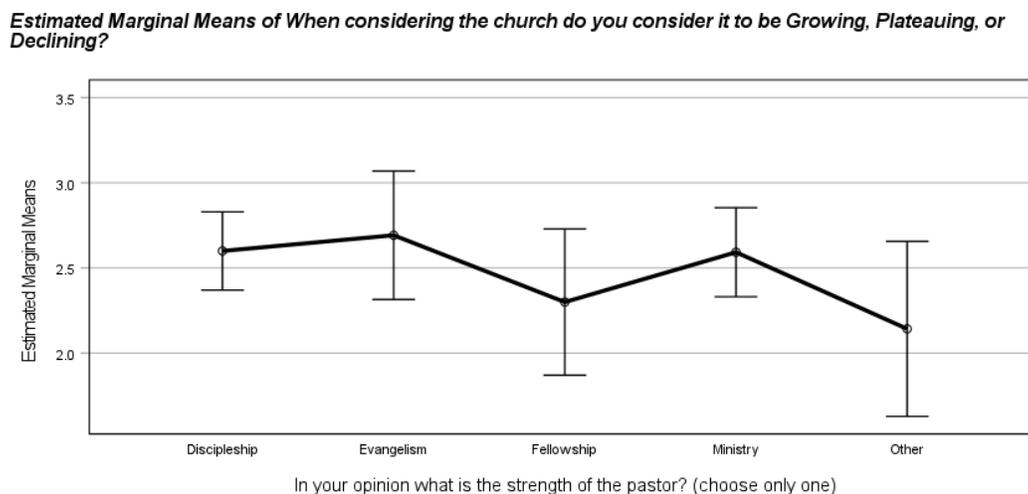
### **RQ3**

RQ3 asked, "What are the perceived strengths of the leadership in growing churches, plateaued churches, and declining churches?" Univariate analysis of variance showed no statistically significant differences between the means of any of the groups (i.e., grouped

according to the perceived strengths),  $F(4, 87) = 1.17, p = .331$ . The plot quickly sees the lack of difference in the groups in Figure 7.

### Figure 7

*The plot of Means of Participants' Perception of Church Growth or Decline, Grouped by Perceived Pastoral Strengths.*



Error bars: 95% CI

*Note.* Growing, Plateauing and Declining were coded as 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

### ***Declining Churches***

Table 29 shows the perceptions of the declining churches and their perceptions of pastors' strengths.

**Table 29***Perception of Participants of Declining Churches of Pastors' Strength*

| Church | Discipleship | Evangelism | Fellowship | Ministry | Other |
|--------|--------------|------------|------------|----------|-------|
| 1      | 2            | 2          | 0          | 2        | 0     |
| 3      | 0            | 0          | 2          | 1        | 0     |
| 5      | 1            | 1          | 0          | 5        | 0     |
| 6      | 3            | 2          | 3          | 4        | 2     |
| 7      | 3            | 1          | 0          | 4        | 2     |
| 9      | 3            | 2          | 0          | 4        | 1     |
| 11     | 3            | 1          | 0          | 1        | 1     |
| 13     | 2            | 0          | 1          | 2        | 0     |
| 14     | 1            | 2          | 0          | 1        | 0     |
| Total  | 15           | 11         | 6          | 24       | 6     |

*Note.* The declining church participation survey results on the pastor's strength.

Two areas received the most responses from the participants: discipleship and ministry. Discipleship can be seen by re-examining RQ2. Even perceived declining churches regularly emphasize the spiritual growth of the attendees. At times, pastors will adopt the philosophies of other pastors who have shown great success in ministry. Declining pastors, at times, will analyze what works in other ministries and attempt to fix things by applying what the growing pastors are doing.

***Plateauing Churches***

Plateauing church participants also have different perceptions concerning the pastor's strengths. Discipleship and ministry received the most responses, as Church 2 gave discipleship seven responses and Church 5 gave five responses for ministry. Table 30 gives the plateauing church's responses to the pastor's strengths.

**Table 30**

*Perception of Participants of Plateauing Churches on Pastor's Strength*

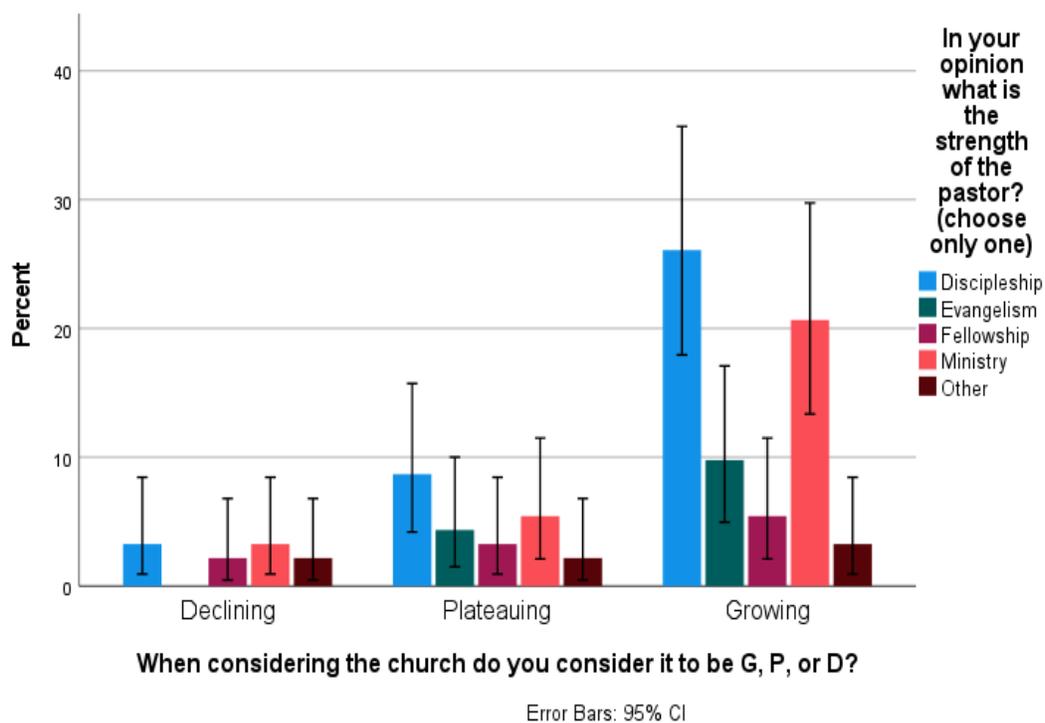
| Church | Discipleship | Evangelism | Fellowship | Ministry | Other |
|--------|--------------|------------|------------|----------|-------|
| 2      | 7            | 0          | 3          | 0        | 2     |
| 3      | 0            | 0          | 2          | 1        | 0     |
| 4      | 3            | 0          | 1          | 1        | 0     |
| 5      | 1            | 1          | 0          | 5        | 0     |
| 6      | 3            | 2          | 3          | 4        | 2     |
| 7      | 3            | 1          | 0          | 4        | 1     |
| 10     | 2            | 1          | 0          | 2        | 0     |
| 12     | 3            | 1          | 0          | 0        | 0     |
| 13     | 2            | 0          | 1          | 2        | 0     |
| 14     | 1            | 2          | 0          | 1        | 0     |
| Total  | 25           | 8          | 10         | 20       | 5     |

*Note.* The plateauing church participates in survey results on the pastor's strength.

Figures 8 and 9 detail the breakdown between the pastor's strengths and the church's status.

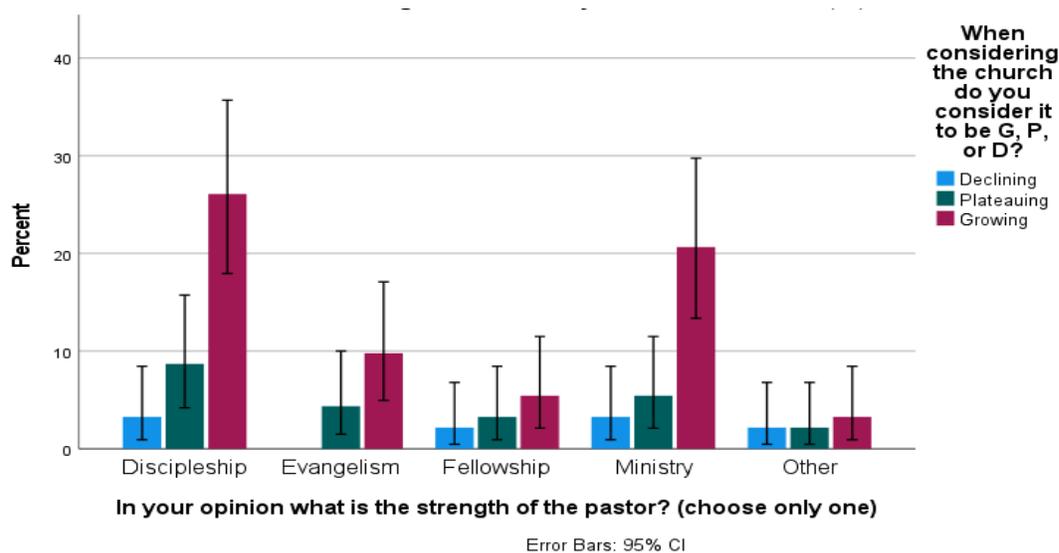
**Figure 8**

*When considering the church, do you consider it to be growing, plateauing, or declining? In your opinion, what is the pastor's strength?*



**Figure 9**

*In your opinion, what is the strength of the pastor? by When considering the church, do you consider it to be growing, plateauing, or declining?*



Perceptions of the perceived plateauing churches show that discipleship and ministry are the two strengths that received the most responses. In all three church states, these two strengths can help strengthen the individual who attends the church.

### ***Growing Churches***

Figure 9 shows that growing churches have the same strength of the pastor as plateauing and declining churches. Table 31 breaks down the strengths of the pastor by growing church participants.

**Table 31***Perception of Participants of Growing Churches on Pastor's Strength*

| Church | Discipleship | Evangelism | Fellowship | Ministry | Other |
|--------|--------------|------------|------------|----------|-------|
| 1      | 2            | 2          | 0          | 2        | 0     |
| 2      | 7            | 0          | 3          | 0        | 2     |
| 3      | 0            | 0          | 2          | 1        | 0     |
| 4      | 3            | 0          | 1          | 1        | 0     |
| 5      | 1            | 1          | 0          | 5        | 0     |
| 6      | 3            | 2          | 3          | 4        | 2     |
| 7      | 3            | 1          | 0          | 4        | 1     |
| 8      | 2            | 0          | 0          | 0        | 0     |
| 9      | 3            | 2          | 0          | 4        | 1     |
| 10     | 2            | 1          | 0          | 2        | 0     |
| 11     | 3            | 1          | 0          | 1        | 1     |
| 12     | 3            | 1          | 0          | 0        | 0     |
| 13     | 2            | 0          | 1          | 2        | 0     |
| 14     | 1            | 2          | 0          | 1        | 0     |
| Total  | 35           | 13         | 10         | 27       | 7     |

*Note.* Growing church participates survey results on pastor's strength.

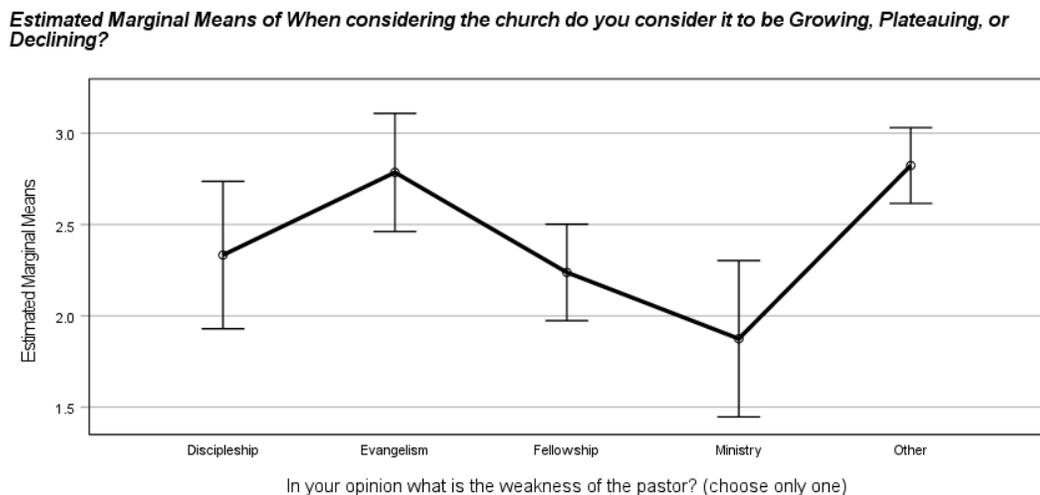
The pastor's strengths were discipleship and ministry in all three classifications of the church's status. The perception of the participants could be seen that no matter the status of the church, each church pastor's heart is that the attendees have a stronger personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

**RQ4**

RQ4 asked, "What are the perceived weaknesses of the leadership in growing churches, plateaued churches, and declining churches?" Univariate analysis of variance showed no statistically significant difference between the means of at least two groups (i.e., grouped according to the perceived strengths),  $F(4, 81) = 6.36, p = .001$ . Formal post hoc test results are not provided as the mean plots (Figure 10) clearly show the mean score for growing, plateauing, or declining is different among those who selected "other" as the pastor's main weakness and those who selected "fellowship" or "ministry" as well as those who selected "evangelism" and "ministry."

**Figure 10**

*The plot of Means of Participants' Perception of Church Growth or Decline, Grouped by Perceived Pastoral Weaknesses.*



Error bars: 95% CI

*Note.* Growing, Plateauing and Declining were coded as 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

### ***Declining Churches***

Of the participants who perceived their church was declining, they also had a perception of the weakness of their pastor. As the participants recognizes the pastor's weaknesses, it will be how the pastor handles those weaknesses that impacts the church significantly. Table 32 shows the breakdown of church responses to the pastor's weaknesses.

**Table 32**

*Perception of Participants of Declining Churches on Pastor's Weaknesses*

| Church | Discipleship | Evangelism | Fellowship | Ministry | Other |
|--------|--------------|------------|------------|----------|-------|
| 1      | 2            | 0          | 0          | 1        | 3     |
| 3      | 1            | 0          | 0          | 1        | 1     |
| 5      | 1            | 2          | 3          | 0        | 1     |
| 6      | 2            | 3          | 2          | 2        | 5     |
| 7      | 0            | 1          | 2          | 1        | 4     |
| 9      | 0            | 1          | 3          | 0        | 5     |
| 11     | 0            | 1          | 1          | 1        | 1     |
| 13     | 1            | 1          | 1          | 0        | 2     |
| 14     | 0            | 0          | 3          | 1        | 0     |
| Total  | 7            | 9          | 15         | 7        | 22    |

*Note.* The declining church participation survey results on the pastor's weakness.

*Discipleship* received seven responses. *Evangelism* received nine responses. *Fellowship* received 15 responses. *Ministry* received seven responses. *Others* received 22 responses. The option of *other* could become a focal point in furthering this research. Based on participants' perceiving discipleship and ministry as their pastor's strengths, it is not surprising that discipleship and ministry were not frequently identified as weaknesses.

### ***Plateauing Churches***

Pastors from perceived plateauing churches must understand the necessity of addressing their weaknesses before some weakness starts over-shadowing their strengths. If the weaknesses are not addressed, this can impact the church's ministry. Table 33 shows the breakdown of plateauing church responses to the pastor's weakness.

**Table 33**

*Perception of Participants of Plateauing Churches on Pastor's Weaknesses*

| Church | Discipleship | Evangelism | Fellowship | Ministry | Other |
|--------|--------------|------------|------------|----------|-------|
| 2      | 2            | 3          | 3          | 1        | 3     |
| 3      | 1            | 0          | 0          | 1        | 1     |
| 4      | 0            | 0          | 1          | 0        | 4     |
| 5      | 1            | 2          | 3          | 0        | 1     |
| 6      | 2            | 3          | 2          | 2        | 5     |
| 7      | 0            | 1          | 2          | 1        | 4     |
| 10     | 0            | 1          | 1          | 1        | 1     |
| 12     | 0            | 1          | 1          | 0        | 2     |
| 13     | 1            | 1          | 1          | 0        | 2     |
| 14     | 0            | 0          | 3          | 1        | 0     |
| Total  | 7            | 12         | 17         | 7        | 24    |

*Note.* The plateauing church participates in survey results on the pastor's weaknesses.

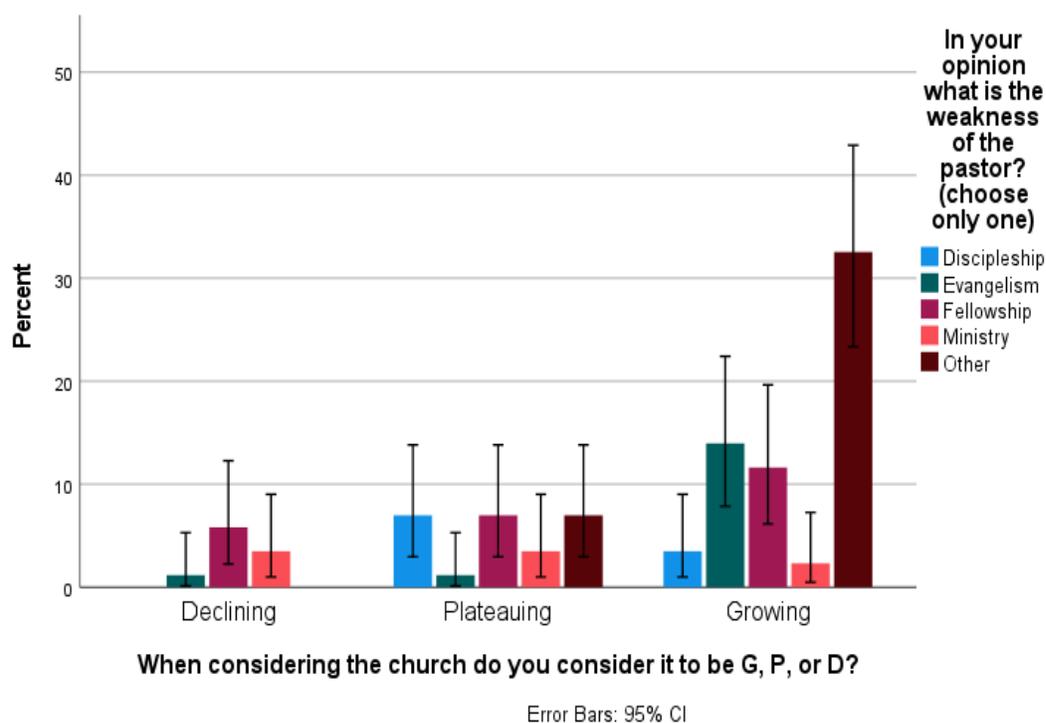
*Discipleship* received seven responses. *Evangelism* received 12 responses. *Fellowship* received 17 responses. *Ministry* received seven responses. *Others* received 24 responses.

Plateauing church pastors had the same result as their main weakness as declining church pastors did. More could be said about what *others* could mean, but the focus on plateauing churches

should be the high number of responses for *fellowship*. With 17 responses, plateauing church pastors may need to address the weakness of fellowship with the church by adding more times of fellowship. A bar graph depicting the pastor's weaknesses is shown in Figures 11 and 12.

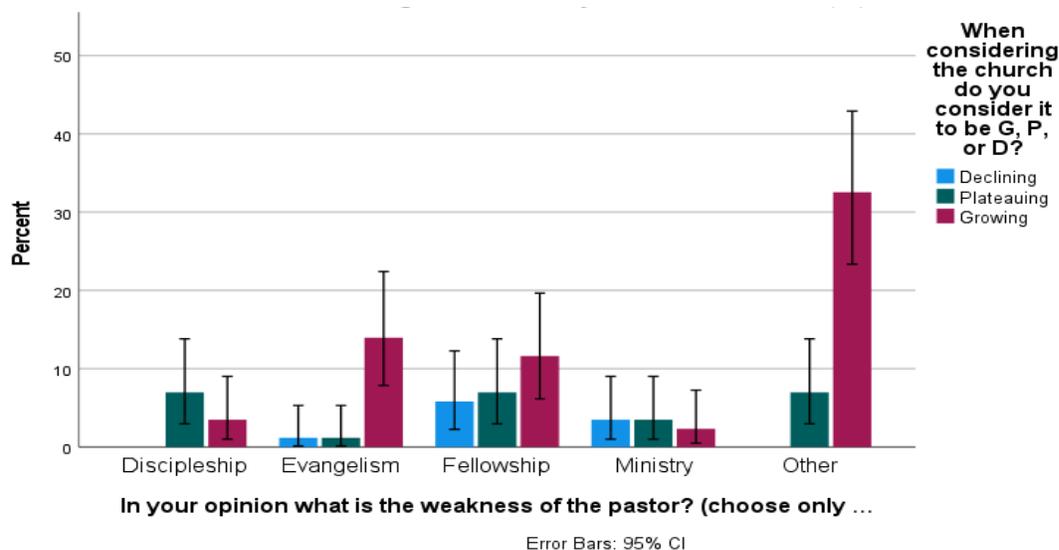
**Figure 11**

*When considering the church, do you consider it to be G., P., or D.? In your opinion, what is the weakness of the pastor?*



**Figure 12**

*In your opinion, what is the weakness of the pastor? by When considering the church, do you consider it to be Growing, Plateauing, or Declining.?*



### ***Growing Churches***

Growing church participants overwhelmingly chose *others* as their pastor's weakness. One surprising result is a large number of responses for *evangelism*. On an average of one per church, evangelism would help strengthen growing churches to prevent them from becoming plateauing churches. For the 14 who responded, what could the pastor do to help the church to understand the importance of evangelism? Table 34 shows the breakdown of pastors' weaknesses by perceived growing churches.

**Table 34***Perception of Participants of Growing Churches on Pastor's Weaknesses*

| Church | Discipleship | Evangelism | Fellowship | Ministry | Other |
|--------|--------------|------------|------------|----------|-------|
| 1      | 2            | 0          | 0          | 1        | 3     |
| 2      | 2            | 3          | 3          | 1        | 3     |
| 3      | 1            | 0          | 0          | 1        | 1     |
| 4      | 0            | 0          | 1          | 4        | 0     |
| 5      | 1            | 2          | 3          | 0        | 1     |
| 6      | 2            | 3          | 2          | 2        | 5     |
| 7      | 0            | 1          | 2          | 1        | 4     |
| 8      | 0            | 0          | 0          | 0        | 2     |
| 9      | 0            | 1          | 3          | 0        | 5     |
| 10     | 0            | 1          | 1          | 0        | 1     |
| 11     | 0            | 1          | 1          | 1        | 1     |
| 12     | 0            | 1          | 1          | 0        | 2     |
| 13     | 1            | 1          | 1          | 0        | 2     |
| 14     | 0            | 0          | 3          | 1        | 0     |
| Total  | 9            | 14         | 21         | 12       | 30    |

*Note.* Growing church participates survey results on pastor's weakness.

A participant in a growing church may view the church as having no weaknesses, especially when thinking about any weakness of the pastor. The church could be seen as growing in number, but could be lost spiritually. The pastor's weakness could overshadow any good that is happening in the ministry.

**RQ5**

RQ5 asked, "What, if any, is the relationship between four independent variables, including 1) concern for church attendance, 2) concern for the spiritual growth of congregants, 3) the congregational perception of the leadership strengths of the pastor, and 4) the congregational perception of the leadership weakness of the pastor and the dependent variable of the status of the church as a declining, plateaued, or growing church?" With so few participants having said their church was declining ( $N = 10$ ), ordinal regression was not an option, and instead, the declining and plateauing cases were combined to allow for logistic regression.

Specifically, the four variables were used to predict one of two classes: growing or plateauing/declining. It is important to note that two variables (pastoral strengths and

weaknesses) are categorical and therefore had to be coded as dummy variables, which, together, create a model with ten independent variables and only 85 cases. With so many variables and relatively few cases, power was expected to be low.

When all four variables were entered into the model, only Item 10 (perceived weakness of the pastor) was statistically significant ( $p = .006$ ). Classifications increased from 65% (i.e., by simply classifying all as growing) to 79% (considering the variables' effect).

**Table 35***RQ5: Logistic Regression Results*

| Step           | Variable  | B     | S.E. | Wald  | df | Sig.        | Exp(B) | 95% C.I. for EXP(B) |        |
|----------------|---|-------|------|-------|----|-------------|--------|---------------------|--------|
|                |   |       |      |       |    |             |        | Lower               | Upper  |
| 1 <sup>a</sup> | In your opinion, what is the strength of the pastor?        |       |      | 4.45  | 4  | .349        |        |                     |        |
|                | In your opinion, what is the strength of the pastor? (1)    | 1.16  | .98  | 1.40  | 1  | .236        | 3.18   | .47                 | 21.55  |
|                | In your opinion, what is the strength of the pastor? (2)    | -.74  | 1.00 | .54   | 1  | .462        | .48    | .07                 | 3.41   |
|                | In your opinion, what is the strength of the pastor? (3)    | .87   | .71  | 1.49  | 1  | .222        | 2.38   | .59                 | 9.62   |
|                | In your opinion, what is the strength of the pastor? (4)    | 1.83  | 1.36 | 1.80  | 1  | .180        | 6.21   | .43                 | 89.69  |
|                | <b>In your opinion, what is the weakness of the pastor?</b> |       |      | 14.34 | 4  | <b>.006</b> |        |                     |        |
|                | In your opinion, what is the weakness of the pastor? (1)    | 3.31  | 1.25 | 7.05  | 1  | <b>.008</b> | 27.35  | 2.38                | 314.36 |
|                | In your opinion, what is the weakness of the pastor? (2)    | .63   | .92  | .47   | 1  | .494        | 1.88   | .31                 | 11.35  |
|                | In your opinion, what is the weakness of the pastor? (3)    | -.68  | 1.36 | .25   | 1  | .616        | .51    | .04                 | 7.27   |
|                | In your opinion, what is the weakness of the pastor? (4)    | 2.34  | .96  | 5.88  | 1  | <b>.015</b> | 10.36  | 1.56                | 68.64  |
|                | Does your pastor put an emphasis on spiritual growth?       | 1.44  | 1.00 | 2.07  | 1  | .151        | 4.21   | .59                 | 29.96  |
|                | Does your pastor put an emphasis on church attendance?      | .24   | .49  | .23   | 1  | .629        | 1.27   | .49                 | 3.31   |
|                | Constant  | -4.34 | 2.26 | 3.69  | 1  | .055        | .01    |                     |        |

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: What is the pastor's strength? In your opinion, what is the weakness of the pastor? Does your pastor put an emphasis on spiritual growth? Does your pastor put an emphasis on church attendance?

For the weakness variable, 1, 2, 3, and 4 correspond to discipleship, evangelism, fellowship, and ministry. (The final category, other, is excluded as it is redundant, and its inclusion would preclude the software from calculating a regression equation.)

## Answering the Research Questions

### RQ1 and RQ2

RQ1 and RQ2 were analyzed using Kendall's Tau correlation statistic. Kendall's rank correlation, specifically Kendall's Tau-b, is used to assess the relationship between two at least ordinal variables. Kendall's correlation coefficient uses pairs of observations and determines the strength and direction of association based on the pattern of concordance (agreement) and discordance (disagreement) between the pairs. Kendall's Tau is appropriate because the data for which it was used is naturally ordinal (e.g., never, rarely..., almost always) or coded ordinally, for example, with No/Yes, coded as 0/1, indicating no amount of a characteristic (e.g., church membership) versus some amount/all of the characteristic.

### RQ3 and RQ4

RQ3 and RQ4 asked about leaders' strengths and weaknesses in declining, plateauing, and growing churches. (The categories of declining, plateauing, and growing were based on participant perceptions.) Although the dependent variable is at least ordinal (and coded as such. i.e., declining = 1, plateauing = 2, and growing = 3), it was assumed that, at least conceptually, the differences between the scores (codes) were equal given there were only three choices. (The codes are somewhat arbitrary and could have been set to -1, 0, and 1 as they were to calculate correlations.) Doing so also allowed for better visualization of the results and a more intuitive interpretation.

To determine if there were differences in the scores among the groups, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. ANOVA, a parametric approach, is proper when there are more than two groups. Laerd Statistics wrote, "The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to determine whether there are any statistically significant differences between the means of

two or more independent (unrelated) groups” (statistics.laerd.com). For both RQ3 and RQ4, there were five options from which to choose, so there were five groups and, therefore, five means to compare (for each R.Q.). Though they are not reported, a nonparametric approach (the Kruskal-Wallis H test/one-way ANOVA on ranks) was also conducted. Conclusions were the same, although the nonparametric approach, using exact *p*-values, showed even stronger (lower) *p*-values, meaning the parametric approach reported in Chapter 4 is more conservative than the perhaps more justified nonparametric approach. Because there is an insufficient number of cases to attempt to account for expected correlations in the data for participants in the same churches, it was decided to be more cautious in reporting results.

### **RQ5**

RQ5 was initially going to be analyzed using ordinal regression, but there were too few cases for which participants said their church was declining ( $N = 10$ ), so the declining and plateauing cases were combined to allow for logistic regression. Specifically, the four independent variables were used to predict one of two classes: growing or plateauing/declining. Logistic regression is appropriate when the dependent variable is dichotomous, and the independent variables are continuous or categorical.

### **Research Hypothesis Testing**

Data collected for R.Q.s 1-4 is descriptive and completed hypothesis testing. For RQ5, four null hypotheses are presented below. If any or all of the hypotheses are rejected, then a reasonable conclusion would be that at least some aspects of pastoral leadership correlate with the church's status as declining, plateaued, or growing and are potentially attributable to that status.

**H5<sub>1 null</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between a congregant's perceptions of their pastor's concern for attendance and the congregant's perception of the status of the church as declining, plateaued, or growing.

**H5<sub>1 null</sub>:** Rejected.

**H5<sub>2 null</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between a congregant's perceptions of their pastor's concern for spiritual growth and a congregant's perceptions of the status of their church as declining, plateaued, or growing.

**H5<sub>2 null</sub>:** Rejected.

**H5<sub>3 null</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the congregational perception of the leadership strengths of the pastor and perceptions of the status of the church as declining, plateaued, or growing.

**H5<sub>3 null</sub>:** Failed to Reject.

**H5<sub>4 null</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the congregational perception of the leadership weakness of the pastor and perceptions of the status of the church as declining, plateaued, or growing.

**H5<sub>4 null</sub>:** Rejected

**H5<sub>5 null</sub>:** There is no relationship between the four independent variables, including 1) concern for church attendance, 2) concern for the spiritual growth of congregants, 3) the congregational perception of the leadership strengths of the pastor, and 4) the congregational perception of the leadership weakness of the pastor and the dependent variable of the status of the church as a declining, plateaued, or growing church?

**H5<sub>5 null</sub>:** Rejected (with significant caveats).

More specifically, in the four IV model, only perceived weaknesses of the pastor (Item 10), when in the presence of the remaining three I.V.s, were significant. However, this was the only case with participants' perceptions of growing, plateauing, or declining, which are inconsistent with reality.

Even within the same church, participants saw and experienced things differently. Throughout this study, information has been given that rejects the hypotheses. It can, however, be perceived that pastoral leadership can influence church attendance.

### **Evaluation of Research Design**

This study was an anonymous survey distributed to churches that reported 50 to 150 in worship attendance over four years starting in 2018. The research's primary purpose was to better understand the relationship between pastoral leadership and church attendance. This experience included surveys and data collection to identify trends regarding pastoral leadership's strengths and weaknesses. This survey included an introductory email and consent form, which the participant did not have to return since the survey was anonymous, per the IRB. The survey included 20 questions, which took approximately 2 to 5 minutes to complete.

All surveys were completed online using Survey Editor. The survey covered questions concerning pastoral leadership, questions about the church, and whether the church is growing, plateauing, or declining. Many of these questions were perceptions of what the participants believed and saw first-hand. There is no researcher bias added to the research. At no time did the researcher try to influence any survey response from the participants. At no time did the researcher change any of the responses to prove any belief or thought. The researcher wanted the research data to speak for itself. A statistician handled all the statistical work, to ensure researcher bias was not included in the results. This researcher utilized the surveys to protect against any bias and influence that may swerve the quality of the research. With knowledge and experience with many of the churches and pastors included in this study, this researcher utilized the surveys to gain trust in the results so as not to taint any research data that was received.

There must be a reason why so few people in churches, reporting 50 to 150 people in worship attendance, would decide to do this research. Only a few people in the church may have seen this as an essential aspect of the church. They can see that the church's leadership may directly influence its health. The rest of the people who did not participate may not care about the

health of their church. People get into this routine and are accustomed to the conditions they are presented with.

There could be several other possibilities as to why so few church attendees participated in the survey. Si (2021) wrote, “Survey fatigue is when feed-back tools have garnered a general negative perception due to how excessively prevalent they are in everyday life” (queryz.com). With many survey links being sent to seek participation, the participants may not have thought the survey was important enough to use the time to complete the survey. There could have been a lack of transparency between the pastor’s requests for participation in the survey, or the researcher’s lack of transparency in the email and consent form.

Another possibility is the researcher asked the wrong questions. The goal of the researcher was to ask easy, yet simple questions. Si (2021) also wrote, “Keep in mind that asking irrelevant questions are a waste of time for both the researcher and the respondents” (quervz.com). Questions that gets to the point and seeks a feed-back requires participant involvement. The overall attractiveness of the survey may not have been there for the participants to complete.

There are a few more theories or possibilities of low participation. The first reason is the purpose does not seem legitimate. Nsfconsulting (2023) wrote, “Respondents can be reticent to divulge information they do not see as serving a legitimate purpose” (nsfconsulting.com). Understanding the legitimacy behind this research was important for the participants. At no time was the participants ever coerced into completing the survey.

The second reason was the information may have been too sensitive. Nsfconsulting (2023) wrote, “There can be an unwillingness for respondents to disclose sensitive information, because this may cause embarrassment or threaten their self-image” (nsfconsulting.com). This

survey was created to see if any relationship exists between the four selected pastoral leadership variables and church attendance. By answering the survey, participants would share their perceptions on the church and the pastor. Therefore, potential participants may have decided not to complete the survey due to not wanting to put a bad image on the church or the pastor.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter Four highlighted the study's findings by quantitatively collecting and analyzing the survey responses. Chapter Four offered a review of the research questions and the research hypothesis. This chapter gave the compilation protocols and measures, as well as the data analysis and findings. The survey response results are given in Chapter Four, using tables, as well as the research questions are answered, using tables and graphs.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

### Overview

This research was designed to determine if a relationship exists between pastoral leadership and the church as declining, plateauing, or growing. Chapter One presented the research concern, with an introduction to the problem, research purpose, and research questions. Chapter Two included a literature review, as the theological and theoretical framework was introduced. Chapter Three was the research methodology, which consisted of the research design synopsis, data collection methods, and data analysis. Chapter Four was the analysis of the findings, which consisted of the compilation protocol and measures and the data analysis. Chapter Five will give the research purpose, questions, conclusions, implications, applications, limitations, possibly needed research, and a study summary.

### Research Purpose

The purpose of this correlational study was to understand what relationship, if any exists between select pastoral leadership variables, as rated by church congregants, and the status of the church as a declining, plateaued, or growing church during the previous four-year period for churches with 50 to 150 people in average weekly attendance.

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

**RQ1.** To what degree, if any, do pastors of declining, plateaued, or growing churches address the concerns of church attendance on a regular basis?

**RQ2.** To what degree, if any, do pastors of declining, plateaued, or growing churches demonstrate a concern about the spiritual growth of the congregants?

**RQ3.** What are the perceived strengths of the leadership in growing churches, plateaued churches, and declining churches?

**RQ4.** What are the perceived weaknesses of the leadership in growing churches, plateaued churches, and declining churches?

**RQ5.** What, if any, is the relationship between four independent variables, including 1) concern for church attendance, 2) concern for the spiritual growth of congregants, 3) the congregational perception of the leadership strengths of the pastor, and 4) the congregational perception of the leadership weakness of the pastor and the dependent variable of the status of the church as a declining, plateaued, or growing church?

### **Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications**

This study was designed to examine if a relationship exists between pastoral leadership and church attendance trends. This research will allow pastors to understand if their leadership affects the number of attendees during their church services by identifying areas of concern given by the results of an anonymous survey. The data collected gave information based on the beliefs of church attendees. Research conclusions, research implications, and research applications will be given in detail based on the analysis findings.

#### **Research Conclusions**

Each participant had a unique interpretational view of the church and church leadership. Each participant identified areas of strengths and weaknesses in the church's leadership. These areas helped identify concerns and allowed this researcher to understand what may be happening in these churches. Furthermore, each participant highlighted the concerns of their church. Each highlight draws on the conclusion that, objectively speaking, a congregant can perceive a relationship between pastoral leadership and its effect on church attendance.

Church attendance is essential for the health of the church. When people attend, giving to the church increases, spiritual growth can happen, and there is a sense of good in someone's life that they worshipped the Lord. People can consciously decide to worship the Lord, but they will only give a portion of their life to attend church. Not giving one's life to the Lord is a trend defeating the church. In more significant churches, there can be a time when the people of the church do not even recognize that the person missed church, but in these smaller churches, if a person misses, it is often noticed by many members.

### ***Conclusions for Research Question #1***

**RQ1.** To what degree, if any, do pastors of declining, plateaued, or growing churches address the concerns of church attendance on a regular basis?

The participants were asked survey questions about attendance at the church. They were asked if they believed their church was growing, plateauing, or declining. One of the areas regarding this was the question, "Does your pastor emphasize church attendance?"

Churches that the participants believed were growing believed the pastor regularly emphasizes church attendance. 65% of the time, growing church pastors regularly emphasize church attendance, and the survey participants see this. The belief that a pastor can impact church attendance is evident in this response. According to this research, a growing church pastor emphasizes church attendance and helps the church understand its mission worldwide. According to this research, perceived growing church pastors emphasize church attendance (65%) and help the church understand its mission worldwide (92%). It also helps lead the congregation in engaging new attendees by having a perceived family atmosphere 49% of the time.

The participants in plateauing churches also said that their pastor regularly emphasizes church attendance 62% of the time. These pastors understand that their worship attendance numbers will be consistent each week. Putting church attendance in focus allows the church members to continually invite people to come and not allow them to become complacent with the same results. When plateauing pastors experience even the smallest growth, this can be a celebration for the church. Pastors are perceived in plateauing churches to help attendees understand the mission of the church 90% of the time and lead the church as a family atmosphere 49% of the time.

One difficult statistic comes from the declining churches. Although regularly received a significant amount of votes (64%), the option of 'never' received a significant percentage (8%) from the participants. There is a fear in this researcher's heart that declining churches will continue to do the same things they always do. When the same things are done, the same results will take place. Declining church pastors may not understand the importance of emphasizing church attendance. Perceived plateauing pastors help the attendees understand the church's mission (91%) and lead the church as a family atmosphere (47%) of the time.

Overall, this research question aimed to identify how much emphasis a pastor puts on church attendance. Based on this research, there is an apparent congruence perceived by church attendees regarding the trend toward growing and plateauing churches. When pastors of those churches emphasize church attendance, the church responds and seeks to move toward growth. Declining churches occasionally put church attendance in focus, but more often, this is not the case. This research supports the general belief that pastors do emphasize church attendance.

### ***Conclusions for Research Question #2***

**RQ2.** To what degree, if any, do pastors of declining, plateaued, or growing churches demonstrate a concern about the spiritual growth of the congregants?

The participants were asked several questions about the emphasis on spiritual growth. Again, growing, plateaued, and declining churches, as perceived by their members, were asked how often their pastor emphasizes the spiritual growth of the attendees. Several questions that helped in this were detailed in chapter four. This question should be the backbone of all pastoral ministries.

Growing church pastors put a high emphasis on spiritual growth. At 88% of the time, the respondents of perceived growing churches said their pastor regularly emphasizes spiritual growth. The attendee will understand more aspects of Christ and the church when growth occurs.

Their walk with Christ will become stronger. Their knowledge of the church's mission will be more substantial. The Christian walk will benefit by emphasizing spiritual growth in an individual's life. Christians must continue to grow daily. Growing church pastors understand the importance of this. They give an open invitation to respond to the message 79% of the time, and their primary preaching philosophy is expository preaching 53% of the time.

The data revealed that plateauing church pastors also regularly emphasize spiritual growth (86%). Although some pastors may feel that spiritual growth only occurs in churches that are growing numerically in attendance, spiritual growth does not consider the size of the church but the heart of the individual. These pastors give an open invitation 76% of the time, and their primary preaching philosophy is expository (51%), although topical received 49% of the responses.

Declining church pastors also emphasized spiritual growth (86%). They understand to avoid allowing the circumstances of seeing fewer people in each service to impact what they genuinely believe in the church. The heart of pastors should be to see the spiritual growth in Christ regardless of the number of attendees in the church. Perceived declining church pastors give an open invitation to respond 84% of the time, and their preaching philosophy is split 50% for expository and 50% for topical.

Overall, this research question aimed to identify how much attention and emphasis a pastor puts on spiritual growth. This research shows that pastors, whether leading growing, plateaued, or declining churches, are perceived by their congregants to emphasize spiritual growth. This research supports the widespread belief that pastors, no matter the circumstances, do emphasize spiritual growth, as perceived that growing church pastors emphasized spiritual growth 88% of the time, as well as 86% for both plateauing and declining church pastors.

### ***Conclusion to Research Question #3***

**RQ3.** What are the perceived strengths of the leadership in growing churches, plateaued churches, and declining churches?

The participants of the survey were asked a series of questions that would come to the point of highlighting the pastor's main strength. This question is a perception-type question based on the opinion of those participating in this survey. This question is to help the pastor continue highlighting their perceived strength based on the participants' vantage points.

Growing church pastors main strength is discipleship (38%). These pastors understand the importance of discipleship in the congregant's life. Discipleship can significantly impact the pastor, the church, and the community, as those growing in Christ strive to live like Christ. Growing church pastors emphasize attendee engagement during the worship service (87%) and show the Fruit of the Spirit 95% of the time.

Plateauing church pastors emphasized discipleship (37%), but the responses were much closer than the other four options. These pastors do emphasize discipleship but also evangelism (12%), fellowship (15%), and ministry (28%). They understand that the only way to grow their church is to go outside the church's walls and become closer by fellowship and visiting people. Many of these pastors have outreach programs in their churches. Plateauing church pastors emphasize attendee engagement during the worship service (94%) and show the Fruit of the Spirit 88% of the time.

Declining church pastors emphasize discipleship (28%) and ministry (38%). These churches are declining in the number of attendees, which is why it is surprising that the pastor does not put a greater emphasis on evangelism (17%). Evangelism received 11 responses from the participants. How does a church begin to grow in number? Get out in the community and tell people about Jesus and the church. Until declining church pastors begin to teach evangelism,

their churches may not grow. Declining church pastors expect church attendees to be engaged with the worship service (88%) and show the Fruit of the Spirit (92%) of the time.

Overall, the purpose of this research question was to identify the perceived strength of the pastor. Based on this research, discipleship (85%) is the overwhelming strength of pastors. This research supports the belief that discipleship is critical in growing churches.

#### ***Conclusions to Research Question #4***

**RQ4.** What are the perceived weaknesses of the leadership in growing churches, plateaued churches, and declining churches?

The participants of the survey were asked questions that would highlight the pastor's main weakness. This question is also a perception-type question by those participating. This question is to help pastors understand what their perceived weakness is. There are two ways to counteract this. The first is to get better at weaknesses by working and studying. The second is to hide the weakness by showing the strengths.

Growing church pastors' main strength was other (36%). Out of the other four choices, the participants may have needed to understand the other options or something else that needed to be addressed. As in any ministry, there will always be something that can be done better. These pastors will have a more difficult time determining what their weakness is. The atmosphere of these perceived growing churches as exciting (59%), and the cliques (41%) are the church's weakness in reaching new attendees.

Plateauing church pastors' main weakness was fellowship (25%) and other (35%). These pastors can see what they need to work on leading the church. Fellowship is one area of focus for these churches. Based on knowledge of some of these churches, this researcher can pinpoint the area of hospitality to new attendees. One survey question highlighted this as one of the

weaknesses of the church in reaching new attendees, in which cliques had the highest response at 41%. Also, the perception of the atmosphere of the church is exciting (60%).

Declining church pastors' main weakness is also fellowship (19%). People are leaving these churches for some reason. Often the pastor and the church members are unaware of any cause for this. Based on personal experiences, this researcher believes there is a significant need for more hospitality in these churches. People will often attend these declining churches, and no one will speak to them and welcome them to church. As the perceived participants rated their church on new attendee engagement, cliques (41%) received the highest response rate. The church atmosphere in these perceived declining churches is believed to be exciting (57%).

Overall, this question aimed to identify the pastor's main weakness. Based on this research, the weaknesses were fellowship and other options. This research supports the widespread belief that pastors must examine their fellowship and pray for their other perceived weaknesses.

### ***Conclusions for Research Question #5***

**RQ5.** What, if any, is the relationship between four independent variables, including 1) concern for church attendance, 2) concern for the spiritual growth of congregants, 3) the congregational perception of the leadership strengths of the pastor, and 4) the congregational perception of the leadership weakness of the pastor and the dependent variable of the status of the church as a declining, plateaued, or growing church?

This research question brings the other four questions into one to see if any relationship exists between the four independent variables. The four independent variables are a concern for church attendance, concern for spiritual growth, strengths of the pastor, and weaknesses. These four independent variables were then looked at with the dependent variable of the church's status as declining, plateauing, or growing churches. These four independent variables have been discussed. The dependent variable of the church's status will be highlighted for this conclusion based on the four independent variables.

Growing churches regularly emphasize attendance (65%) and spiritual growth (88%). Pastors of these churches have the strength of discipleship (38%) and the weakness of something other than the other four options (36%). One concern to worry pastors is that growing churches may not be healthy. Although their numbers are growing, the church may be just as spiritually dead as the next. By emphasizing spiritual growth and having the strength of discipleship, the pastors of this survey have made it their mission to continue to experience the growth in the ministry God has called them to.

Plateauing churches regularly emphasize attendance (62%) and spiritual growth (88%). Pastors of these churches put their strength in discipleship (38%) and weakness in others (35%). The percentage is the perception of the participants who participated in the survey. Some participants believe the pastor is strong in discipleship. They encourage people to grow spiritually, but they may still need the plan to disciple anyone. These church pastors can experience the ups and downs more often than the other two groups of pastors.

Declining church pastors regularly emphasize attendance (64%) and spiritual growth (86%). These pastors' perceived strength is discipleship (28%) and ministry (38%), and their weakness is fellowship (19%). A person can only give someone what they have. Fellowship is typically an aspect of naturally taught and received. In the church, fellowship is critical. Although church attendance is essential, these pastors put more emphasis on spiritual growth. These pastors may have accepted the conditions of decline but want to ensure their attendees continue to grow in Christ.

Overall, the purpose of research question five was to tie the first four questions together to see an overall view of the selected pastoral leadership variables. Based on this research, all pastors, no matter the church's status, are perceived by the survey participants to emphasize

church attendance and spiritual growth. The overall perception of the strengths of the pastors in all three statuses of the church is discipleship. The weakness of growing and plateauing pastors is the option of others, and the weakness of declining pastors is fellowship.

### **Research Implications**

The implications of the research analysis data will be highlighted. These implications will be highlighted to identify areas that should be examined by pastoral leadership. These leaders should be able to identify areas where they need to improve and focus on in their ministry.

Before looking over the research questions and the implications of the findings, several items in the survey might help the church today. The first significant implication involves the research question, "In your opinion, what is the church's main weakness in reaching new attendees?" The participants' perceptions, who would have first-hand knowledge of the church, indicated the responses of cliques within the church (41%) and new attendee distance (28%). There could be a correlation between the answers to this survey question. Attendees can notice quickly how the church membership is toward new attendees. God did not create the church to unite the people and bring them closer. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (*Christian Standard Bible*, 2017, 1 Corinthians 1:10). Wilson (2019) wrote, "Cliques drive away people more frequently than any other kind of problem. More issues come about in the imagination of others who are feeling the pressure from cliques more than actual pressure from any individual" (Loc. 233). For the church to overcome this weakness, Wilson suggested making everyone feel just as accepted as the people within the clique. The problem of cliques was one implication that came out of the survey.

The following implication was the perception that 23% of the participants did not believe their church was ready for the mission. The unknown mission of the church can be directly attributed to the failure of the leaders of the church. The church must understand what its duties are in the world today. If the church succeeds in reaching the world for Christ, it will take the entire body of Christ to ensure the Great Commission is fulfilled.

The following implication was the perception that 91% of the participants believed the church had their best interest in mind. This researcher added this question to the survey to see if the church's best interest was to reach people for Christ or the actual attendees that come to church. With 23% not believing the church was ready for the mission, this can be directly evident with 91%. This question was not an attempt to trick the participant but to examine where the church is focused in our society today. The researcher believes the church should love and care about the attendee, but the church cannot get caught up in attendees' life, as the church has significant responsibilities in the world.

The last implication outside of the research questions was the participants' perceptions of being different, even within the same church. The researcher does not believe that the only answer for this was denial on the participant's part. However, the participant needed a fulling understanding of the importance of the research. While many may have misunderstood each question, the misperceptions of the participants highly impacted this research study.

### ***Implications of Research Question #1***

The data from the 20-question survey implies that church attendance is vital to growing and plateauing churches, not declining churches. At no time was any participant asked why their pastor did not emphasize church attendance. Further research should be done solely on declining churches to identify why church attendance is more of a focal point within the church. The data

collected implies that growing churches put a large percentage of emphasis on church attendance. Leaders should examine the quality of time they spend addressing this issue.

### ***Implications of Research Question #2***

The data from the 20-question survey implies that spiritual growth is vital in all three groups of pastors. The data implies that spiritual growth is significant, even to declining church pastors. Spiritual growth is what makes the Christian stronger in the walk with Christ. The pastor should continue to spend time planning and preparing their messages.

There are other implications for this research question. Four areas of spiritual growth can be seen within the congregant's life. The first is joining a small group class. Small group classes are personal and a great opportunity to grow in Christ. The second is the number of baptisms within the church. As the life of a congregant change, one of the first opportunities to show the life change is in the area of baptism. The third way is the increase in church membership. Church membership is essential, but faithful church membership is slowly drifting away in the church today. The last is in the area of spiritual growth. The Apostle Paul wrote, "I gave you milk to drink, not solid food since you were not yet ready for it. In fact, you are still not ready" (*Christian Standard Bible*, 2017, 1 Corinthians 3:2). As the pastor continues to emphasize spiritual growth, the church will greatly benefit from the faithfulness in the love of the pastor.

### ***Implications of Research Question #3***

The data from the survey implies that discipleship is the main strength of all pastors. Further research should be done to examine what discipleship processes these pastors have in place. To grow spiritually, pastors must understand the importance of discipleship.

There are some focus areas for the pastor and his strength of discipleship. One area is to focus on the strength of discipleship in his ministry. Creating discipleship classes or developing new discipleship strategies would significantly impact the church. Another area is to create new

leaders in the church. As the pastor discipled his congregants, he should be looking for new leaders and volunteers to take on duties in the church. Another area is to become more impactful in the community. When the church is full of life-giving disciples, there could be a significant change in the community where the church is located. All these implications are centered on the strength of discipleship.

#### ***Implications of Research Question #4***

The data from the survey implies that something other than the four options is the pastors' weakness. Pastors need to examine their ministry and their leadership to see what this weakness could be. Also, the fellowship needed to be improved. Further research should be done to examine what processes are in place for fellowship.

Fellowship is vital in the church. As the church grows closer to the Lord, it should also grow closer together, whether, in small group classes or programs the church has in place. Fellowship helps in this area of concern. Many pastors have the weakness of fellowship. The pastor needs to work with other leaders, who may be vital in fellowship, to help alleviate some of the pastor's struggles. Many of these churches that participated have a fellowship ministry.

#### **Research Applications**

The applications of this research will be highlighted based on the need for pastoral leadership. This study analyzes potential relationships between selected pastoral leadership variables and church attendance. If the participants who completed the survey were truthful with their answers, then this research was done with no bias by the participants or the researcher. The analysis will speak for itself. Pastoral leadership can apply this research by drawing from the conclusions and implications found in this research study. This research only highlighted a small sample size, fourteen churches, and a small number of participants, ninety-two. Pastors should

take this data as an indicator of their job leading their churches. Any gaps in the research should bring further research to advance the pastors' leadership abilities.

Constant learning in pastoral leadership growth plays a crucial role in the success and longevity of ministry. This constant learning allows pastors to grow in leading the church and the congregants. When a pastor applies any teachings to his leadership, this can impact the church and the community.

The first step is to apply this research and its findings to the pastor's ministerial abilities. The findings within this research affirm that the role of the pastor is vital to the congregation. The pastor is responsible for continuing to emphasize church attendance and spiritual growth. Although church attendance may fluctuate weekly, people will grow spiritually and closer to the Lord by doing these two things.

The second step is to continue to work on the strengths and weaknesses. This survey gave the participants their perceptions of the pastor's leadership qualities. As discipleship was responded to considerably in all three statuses of the church, extending the pastor's strengths will help lessen the focal point of the pastor's weakness. Growing in discipleship is one of the biggest takeaways from this research.

This research aimed to give the pastor of the churches who participated a view from their congregants' perceptions of the church. Not all questions were directed toward the pastor, as some were directed to highlight the church itself. As technology (live streaming) has changed how people view church services in-person, applying this research using these variables will help the pastor with his leadership abilities and help grow the church he is called to shepherd.

### **Research Limitations**

The study applied certain limitations to research the relationship between pastoral leadership and church attendance to provide an accurate conclusion. The first limitation was that this study was performed only in Baptist congregations in Eastman, Georgia. The research did not include any other denomination or city. The second limitation was that this study was to contain anonymous surveys conducted by church attendees in these churches. At no time were any names or church names given. They were not to be part of the church's leadership and were not to be relatives of the leadership, especially the pastor, to avoid any bias on their part. The third limitation was that the study was conducted to help evaluate the pastor, not to devalue the pastor. This research is to help in their leading. Finally, the fourth limitation was to conduct this research in churches that reported 50 to 150 in worship attendance over four years. More prominent churches, as well as small churches, were not allowed to participate in the research.

### **Further Research**

This research was to understand whether any relationship existed between pastoral leadership and church attendance. One research opportunity is to open up the research to all churches, regardless of denomination or size. The addition of more churches could help gain a better understanding of the results of the survey. Allowing more participants would be beneficial, as more voices would be heard within the study.

Another research opportunity is to open up the time frame of reporting worship numbers from four to six years. There could have been answers on if the church was growing, plateauing, or declining that the participant did not go before the coronavirus pandemic and only looked at the present. Opening up to a larger time frame would give the participants a more extended observation period.

More focus and attention can be put on the number of participants who participated in the survey. Each church within the study was able to participate, with only 92 total participants who agreed to complete the survey. Continuing the research by making it available to more churches could help and benefit the research.

Another research opportunity would be to change the survey questions to go along with the research questions better. Some of the questions did not relate to the research questions. Making the questions more aligned with the research needs would benefit the pastor and the church more.

Lastly, this research only surveyed church attendees. The possibility could be opened to provide the survey to non-church attendees. Although those may not be well-informed about the dealings with the church, a second survey could be created for them to find out why they do not attend church. Then those answers could be more beneficial to the outcome of the research by finding solutions to the problem facing many churches today.

In the post-Covid church, further research needs to be done to add those who are attending church from their home. The church must redefine how they report their average weekly attendance. Some churches may have a check-in system that allows the church to know who is watching the service from their home. Technology has given the church the opportunity to reach more people by adding different ways of viewing church services.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this correlational study was to understand what relationship, if any, exists between select pastoral leadership variables, as rated by church congregants, and the status of the church as a declining, plateaued, or growing church during the previous four-year

period for churches with 50 to 150 people in average weekly attendance. This study first discussed the problem in many churches today by addressing the research questions that would be the cornerstone of this study. A theological and theoretical framework was created, along with the related literature and the theory driving this research, to address any gaps in the literature that possibly existed.

Chapter 3 addressed the research itself, as the research design synopsis, the population, sampling procedures, limits of generalization, data collection methods and instruments, data analysis, and research procedures were all addressed. After receiving approval from the IRB, a survey was created to catalyze the research. This survey was sent to potential Baptist church participants who reported an average weekly attendance of 50-150 over four years. Of the possible participants, 92 completed the survey. Chapter 4 consisted of the analysis of findings, which included the compilation protocol and measures, data analysis and findings, examining the data to address the research questions, and answering the research questions. A statistician helped with the statistics and data analysis for Chapter 4. Chapter 5 consisted of the research purpose, questions, conclusions, implications, applications, limitations, possibly needed research, and a study summary.

This research was done to create a sense of urgency in the pastor's ministry to evaluate his church leadership. The research was by no means an attempt to downgrade his leadership but to help visualize the pastor's areas that may need to be addressed. The findings in the research data, if applied to the church's leadership, can provide a glimpse of hope for the pastor as he corrects and prevents the current downfall of church attendance.

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**APPENDICES****APPENDIX A****CHURCH LEADERSHIP SURVEY**

Please select the correct answer.

1. Are you a church member?
  - Yes
  - No
  
2. How often do you attend church services?
  - I attend every church service.
  - I attend only Sunday morning church services.
  - I attend only Wednesday night church services.
  - I attend Sunday morning and Wednesday night church services.
  - I occasionally attend church services.
  - I am new to the church.
  
3. On a scale from 1 to 5, how would you rate the atmosphere of the church?
  - 5 Highly exciting
  - 4 Exciting
  - 3 No feeling
  - 2 Depressing
  - 1 Somewhat depressing
  
4. On a scale from 1 to 5, do you leave church service feeling spiritually fed?
  - 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.
  - 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart.
  - 3 Sometimes. I feel the sermons are not relevant to me.
  - 2 Rarely. I feel disconnected with the sermons.
  - 1 Never. I do not feel anything from the church service.
  
5. Do you feel the church is spiritually ready for its mission?
  - Yes
  - No
  
6. Does the church have my best needs in mind?
  - Yes
  - No
  
7. Does the pastor help you understand the mission of the church?
  - Yes
  - No

8. Does the pastor show the signs of the Fruit of the Spirit?
  - Yes
  - No
  
9. What is the strength of the pastor? (choose only one)
  - Discipleship
  - Evangelism
  - Fellowship
  - Ministry
  
10. What is the weakness of the pastor? (choose only one)
  - Discipleship
  - Evangelism
  - Fellowship
  - Ministry
  
11. What is the main preaching philosophy of the pastor?
  - Expository
  - Topical
  
12. Does the pastor expect church attendees to be engaged during the worship service?
  - Yes
  - No
  
13. Does the pastor give an open invitation to respond at the end of his sermon?
  - Yes
  - No
  
14. What is the church's main strength in reaching new attendees? (Choose the best answer)
  - The leadership of the church
  - The commitment of the church members
  - The excitement during the worship services
  - The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors
  
15. What is the church's main weakness in reaching new attendees? (Choose the best answer)
  - The cliques that separate the church
  - The church members are too distant to new attendees
  - The pastor rarely introduces himself to new attendees
  - The church's mission is not in reaching new attendees

16. On a scale from one to five, how likely are you to invite someone to church?
- 1 Very unlikely
  - 2 Somewhat likely
  - 3 Unsure
  - 4 Somewhat likely
  - 5 Very likely
17. Does your pastor put an emphasis on spiritual growth?
- Regularly
  - Occasionally
  - Never
18. Does your pastor seek advice from other leaders in the church?
- Regularly
  - Occasionally
  - Never
19. When considering the church, do you consider it:
- Growing
  - Plateauing
  - Declining
20. Does your pastor put an emphasis on church attendance?
- Regularly
  - Occasionally
  - Never

**APPENDIX B**

Dear Eligible Participant:

As a graduate student at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to see if there is any potential relationship between pastoral leadership and church attendance, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and must have actively attended church services over the last six months. Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete an online survey about the church. It should take approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete the procedure listed. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

To participate, please click here: <https://take.supersurvey.com/QB4JWJX9A>

A consent document is attached to this email. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Because participation is anonymous, you do not need to sign and return the consent document.

Sincerely,

Michael Carruthers  
Graduate Student at Liberty University

## APPENDIX C

### Consent

**Title of the Project:** Analyzing the Potential Relationship between Pastoral Leadership and Church Attendance in Baptist Congregations in Eastman, Georgia

**Principal Investigator:** Michael Carruthers, Graduate Student at Liberty University

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

You are invited to participate in a research study. Participants must be 18 years of age or older. You must be an active attendee of church services within the past six months. You cannot be related to the pastor or anyone on the leadership team. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

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

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

The purpose of the study is to understand what relationship, if any, exists between select pastoral leadership variables, as rated by church congregants, and the status of the church as declining, plateaued, or growing church during the previous four-year period for churches with 50 to 150 people in average weekly attendance.

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

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

1. Complete an anonymous online survey. This should take approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete.

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

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

Benefits to society include helping other churches see the need of correcting potential issues and increased knowledge on the topic.

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

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

#### How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. At no time in the research will the participants' name or the name of the church will be published. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher and statistician will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous.

- 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.

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

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

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

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

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

The researcher conducting this study is Michael Carruthers. You may ask any questions you have now. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Gary Bredfeldt.

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

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

*Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.*

### **Your Consent**

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You can print a copy of the document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

## APPENDIX D

*Correlations (Kendall's tau) Among Variables*

|      |  | Q1       | Q2    | Q3    | Q4     | Q5    | Q6    | Q7    | Q8    | Q12   | Q13    | Q16   | Q17   | Q18   | Q20   | Q19   | Q190 |    |
|------|--|----------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|----|
| Q1   | Are you a church member?   | <i>r</i> | --    |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92    |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
| Q2   | How often do you attend church services?                                     | <i>r</i> | .22*  | --    |        |       |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 91    | 91    |        |       |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
| Q3   | On a scaled from 1 to 5 how would you rate the atmosphere of the             | <i>r</i> | 0.16  | .29** | --     |       |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92    | 91    | 92     |       |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
| Q4   | On a scaled from 1 to 5 do you leave church service feeling spiritually fed? | <i>r</i> | 0.13  | .41** | .41**  | --    |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92    | 91    | 92     | 92    |       |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
| Q5   | Do you feel the church is spiritually ready for its mission?                 | <i>r</i> | -0.04 | 0.03  | .37**  | .38** | --    |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 91    | 90    | 91     | 91    | 91    |       |       |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
| Q6   | Does the church have your best needs in mind?                                | <i>r</i> | 0.07  | 0.08  | .31**  | .32** | .43** | --    |       |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92    | 91    | 92     | 92    | 91    | 92    |       |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
| Q7   | Does the pastor help you understand the mission of the church?               | <i>r</i> | 0.09  | .20*  | .341** | .31** | .49** | .49** | --    |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92    | 91    | 92     | 92    | 91    | 92    | 92    |       |        |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
| Q8   | Does the pastor show the signs of the Fruit of the Spirit?                   | <i>r</i> | -0.06 | 0.12  | .25*   | .32** | .26*  | .27*  | .29** | --    |        |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92    | 91    | 92     | 92    | 91    | 92    | 92    | 92    |        |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
| Q12  | Does the pastor expect church attendees to be engaged during the             | <i>r</i> | 0.16  | .21*  | .27**  | .22*  | 0.09  | .22*  | 0.13  | 0.05  | --     |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92    | 91    | 92     | 92    | 91    | 92    | 92    | 92    | 92     |       |       |       |       |       |      |    |
| Q13  | Does the pastor give an open invitation to respond at the end of the         | <i>r</i> | 0.08  | .44** | .25*   | .23*  | 0.06  | 0.13  | 0.16  | 0.11  | .36**  | --    |       |       |       |       |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92    | 91    | 92     | 92    | 91    | 92    | 92    | 92    | 92     | 92    |       |       |       |       |      |    |
| Q16  | On a scale from 1 to 5 how likely are you to invite someone to church?       | <i>r</i> | 0.08  | .24** | .49**  | .38** | .28** | .28** | .21*  | 0.17  | .254** | .23*  | --    |       |       |       |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92    | 91    | 92     | 92    | 91    | 92    | 92    | 92    | 92     | 92    | 92    |       |       |       |      |    |
| Q17  | Does your pastor put an emphasis on spiritual growth?                        | <i>r</i> | 0.19  | .20*  | .29**  | .45** | .56** | .29** | .62** | .27*  | 0.17   | 0.18  | 0.14  | --    |       |       |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 91    | 90    | 91     | 91    | 91    | 91    | 91    | 91    | 91     | 91    | 91    | 91    |       |       |      |    |
| Q18  | Does your pastor seek advice from other leaders in the church?               | <i>r</i> | -0.11 | -0.01 | .35**  | .21*  | .46** | .40** | .43** | .24*  | 0.20   | 0.10  | .22*  | .43** | --    |       |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 89    | 88    | 89     | 89    | 88    | 89    | 89    | 89    | 89     | 89    | 89    | 88    | 89    |       |      |    |
| Q20  | Does your pastor put an emphasis on church attendance?                       | <i>r</i> | 0.17  | .41** | .29**  | .26** | 0.15  | .33** | .26*  | .25*  | .27**  | .42** | .24** | .20*  | .24*  | --    |      |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92    | 91    | 92     | 92    | 91    | 92    | 92    | 92    | 92     | 92    | 92    | 91    | 89    | 92    |      |    |
| Q19  | When considering the church do you consider it to be G, P, or D?             | <i>r</i> | -0.18 | 0.00  | .37**  | .24*  | .52** | .30** | .25*  | .27** | .28**  | .23*  | .31** | .25*  | .41** | .21*  | --   |    |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92    | 91    | 92     | 92    | 91    | 92    | 92    | 92    | 92     | 92    | 92    | 91    | 89    | 92    | 92   |    |
| Q190 | When considering the church do you consider it to be G, P, or D?             | <i>r</i> | -0.13 | -0.04 | -0.02  | 0.05  | 0.15  | 0.10  | 0.08  | 0.06  | 0.00   | -0.10 | 0.06  | 0.06  | 0.19  | -0.15 | 0.07 | -- |
|      |  | <i>N</i> | 92    | 91    | 92     | 92    | 91    | 92    | 92    | 92    | 92     | 92    | 92    | 91    | 89    | 92    | 92   | 92 |

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## APPENDIX E

## Church Leadership Survey Answers

| <b>Response</b> | <b>Are you a church member?</b> | <b>How often do you attend church services?</b>              |  |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|--|--|
|                 | <b>Answer</b>                   | <b>Answer</b>  |  |
| 63190           | Yes                             | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 181334          | Yes                             | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 322034          | Yes                             | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 338353          | Yes                             | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 341241          | Yes                             | I attend Sunday morning and Wednesday night church services. |  |
| 341692          | Yes                             | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 341783          | Yes                             | I attend Sunday morning and Wednesday night church services. |  |
| 342065          | Yes                             | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 342127          | Yes                             | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 342170          | Yes                             | I occasionally attend church serves.                         |  |
| 342208          | Yes                             | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 342257          | Yes                             | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 342265          | No                              | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 342289          | Yes                             | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 342294          | Yes                             | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 342313          | No                              | I occasionally attend church serves.                         |  |
| 342330          | Yes                             | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 342338          | Yes                             | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 342341          | Yes                             | I occasionally attend church serves.                         |  |
| 342347          | Yes                             | I occasionally attend church serves.                         |  |
| 342361          | Yes                             | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 342371          | Yes                             | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 342388          | Yes                             | I occasionally attend church serves.                         |  |
| 342392          | Yes                             | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 342427          | Yes                             | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 342440          | Yes                             | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 342442          | Yes                             | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 342444          | Yes                             | I attend Sunday morning and Wednesday night church services. |  |
| 342458          | Yes                             | I attend Sunday morning and Wednesday night church services. |  |
| 342476          | Yes                             | I occasionally attend church serves.                         |  |

|        |     |  |  |
|--------|-----|--|--|
| 342491 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 342509 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 342550 | Yes | I occasionally attend church serves.                         |  |
| 342641 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 342682 | Yes | I occasionally attend church serves.                         |  |
| 342683 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 342684 | Yes | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 342703 | Yes | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 342740 | Yes | I attend Sunday morning and Wednesday night church services. |  |
| 342786 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 342826 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 342829 | Yes | I attend Sunday morning and Wednesday night church services. |  |
| 342890 | Yes | I attend Sunday morning and Wednesday night church services. |  |
| 342931 | Yes | I occasionally attend church serves.                         |  |
| 344059 | Yes | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 344197 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 344415 | Yes | I occasionally attend church serves.                         |  |
| 345350 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 346307 | Yes | I occasionally attend church serves.                         |  |
| 346474 | Yes | I attend Sunday morning and Wednesday night church services. |  |
| 346583 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 346725 | No  | I occasionally attend church serves.                         |  |
| 346977 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 348230 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 348402 | Yes | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 350456 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 350638 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 350655 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 351398 | Yes | I occasionally attend church serves.                         |  |
| 351500 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 351602 | Yes | I attend Sunday morning and Wednesday night church services. |  |
| 351658 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 351862 | Yes | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 351891 | Yes | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 352330 | No  | I attend all available church services.                      |  |

|        |     |  |  |
|--------|-----|--|--|
| 352408 | Yes | I attend Sunday morning and Wednesday night church services. |  |
| 352431 | Yes | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 352445 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 352488 | Yes |  |  |
| 352563 | No  | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 352568 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 352571 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 352682 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 353374 | Yes | I occasionally attend church serves.                         |  |
| 353610 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 353681 | Yes | I attend only Sunday morning church services.                |  |
| 353824 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 353890 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 353984 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 354580 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 354584 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 355787 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 356032 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 357828 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 358492 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 366241 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 366593 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 366823 | No  | I occasionally attend church serves.                         |  |
| 367274 | Yes | I occasionally attend church serves.                         |  |
| 367342 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 367345 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 371989 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |
| 374940 | Yes | I attend all available church services.                      |  |

| Response | On a scaled from 1 to 5, how would you rate the atmosphere of the church? |  | On a scaled from 1 to 5, do you leave church service feeling spiritually fed? |  |
|----------|---|--|---|--|
|          | Answer  |  | Answer  |  |
| 63190    | 4 Exciting  |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                                       |  |
| 181334   | 5 Highly exciting   |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                                       |  |

|        |                       |  |   |  |
|--------|-----------------------|--|---|--|
| 322034 | 4 Exciting            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 338353 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 341241 | 5 Highly exciting     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 341692 | 5 Highly exciting     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 341783 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 342065 | 5 Highly exciting     |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342127 | 4 Exciting            |  | 3 Sometimes. I feel the sermons are not relevant to me.   |  |
| 342170 | 3 No feeling          |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 342208 | 2 Somewhat depressing |  | 2 Rarely. I feel disconnected with the sermons.           |  |
| 342257 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 342265 | 4 Exciting            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342289 | 5 Highly exciting     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 342294 | 4 Exciting            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342313 | 3 No feeling          |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 342330 | 4 Exciting            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342338 | 3 No feeling          |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342341 | 3 No feeling          |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342347 | 2 Somewhat depressing |  | 2 Rarely. I feel disconnected with the sermons.           |  |
| 342361 | 5 Highly exciting     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 342371 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 342388 | 4 Exciting            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342392 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 342427 | 4 Exciting            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |

|        |                       |  |   |  |
|--------|-----------------------|--|---|--|
| 342440 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 342442 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 342444 | 2 Somewhat depressing |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342458 | 5 Highly exciting     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 342476 | 4 Exciting            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342491 | 4 Exciting            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342509 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 342550 | 4 Exciting            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342641 | 3 No feeling          |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342682 | 3 No feeling          |  | 3 Sometimes. I feel the sermons are not relevant to me.   |  |
| 342683 | 5 Highly exciting     |  | 3 Sometimes. I feel the sermons are not relevant to me.   |  |
| 342684 | 4 Exciting            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342703 | 4 Exciting            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342740 | 5 Highly exciting     |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342786 | 4 Exciting            |  | 1. Never. I do not feel anything from the church service. |  |
| 342826 | 4 Exciting            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342829 | 3 No feeling          |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342890 | 4 Exciting            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 342931 | 4 Exciting            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 344059 | 4 Exciting            |  | 3 Sometimes. I feel the sermons are not relevant to me.   |  |
| 344197 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 344415 | 1 Depressing          |  | 2 Rarely. I feel disconnected with the sermons.           |  |
| 345350 | 3 No feeling          |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |

|        |                       |  |   |  |
|--------|-----------------------|--|---|--|
| 346307 | 5 Highly exciting     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 346474 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 346583 | 5 Highly exciting     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 346725 | 2 Somewhat depressing |  | 3 Sometimes. I feel the sermons are not relevant to me.   |  |
| 346977 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 348230 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 348402 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 350456 | 5 Highly exciting     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 350638 | 5 Highly exciting     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 350655 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 351398 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 351500 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 351602 | 4 Exciting            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 351658 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 351862 | 3 No feeling          |  | 3 Sometimes. I feel the sermons are not relevant to me.   |  |
| 351891 | 5 Highly exciting     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 352330 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 352408 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 352431 | 4 Exciting            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 352445 | 5 Highly exciting     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 352488 | 4 Exciting            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 352563 | 4 Exciting            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 352568 | 5 Highly exciting     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |

|          |                                       |  |   |  |
|----------|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| 352571   | 4 Exciting                            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 352682   | 4 Exciting                            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 353374   | 4 Exciting                            |  | 3 Sometimes. I feel the sermons are not relevant to me.   |  |
| 353610   |                                       |  |   |  |
| 353681   | 5 Highly exciting                     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 353824   | 5 Highly exciting                     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 353890   | 4 Exciting                            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 353984   | 5 Highly exciting                     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 354580   | 3 No feeling                          |  | 2 Rarely. I feel disconnected with the sermons.           |  |
| 354584   | 5 Highly exciting                     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 355787   | 5 Highly exciting                     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 356032   | 4 Exciting                            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 357828   | 4 Exciting                            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 358492   | 5 Highly exciting                     |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 366241   | 4 Exciting                            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 366593   | 4 Exciting                            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 366823   | 4 Exciting                            |  | 3 Sometimes. I feel the sermons are not relevant to me.   |  |
| 367274   | 4 Exciting                            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 367342   | 4 Exciting                            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 367345   | 4 Exciting                            |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| 371989   | 4 Exciting                            |  | 4 Often. I know the pastor has my best interest at heart. |  |
| 374940   | 2 Somewhat depressing                 |  | 5 Yes. The sermons fill me spiritually.                   |  |
| Response | Do you feel the church is spiritually |  | Does the church have your best needs in mind?             |  |

|        | ready for its mission? |       |        |       |
|--------|------------------------|-------|--------|-------|
|        | Answer                 | Score | Answer | Score |
| 63190  | Yes                    | 0     | No     | 0     |
| 181334 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 322034 | No                     | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 338353 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 341241 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 341692 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 341783 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342065 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342127 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342170 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342208 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342257 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342265 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342289 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342294 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342313 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342330 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342338 | No                     | 0     | No     | 0     |
| 342341 | No                     | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342347 | No                     | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342361 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342371 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342388 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342392 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342427 | No                     | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342440 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342442 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342444 | No                     | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342458 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342476 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342491 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342509 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342550 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342641 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342682 | No                     | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342683 | No                     | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342684 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342703 | No                     | 0     | No     | 0     |
| 342740 | Yes                    | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342786 | No                     | 0     | No     | 0     |
| 342826 | No                     | 0     | Yes    | 0     |
| 342829 | No                     | 0     | No     | 0     |

|        |     |   |     |   |
|--------|-----|---|-----|---|
| 342890 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 342931 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 344059 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 344197 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 344415 |     | 0 | No  | 0 |
| 345350 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 346307 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 346474 | No  | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 346583 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 346725 | No  | 0 | No  | 0 |
| 346977 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 348230 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 348402 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 350456 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 350638 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 350655 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 351398 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 351500 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 351602 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 351658 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 351862 | No  | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 351891 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 352330 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 352408 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 352431 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 352445 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 352488 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 352563 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 352568 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 352571 | No  | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 352682 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 353374 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 353610 |     | 0 |     | 0 |
| 353681 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 353824 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 353890 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 353984 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 354580 | No  | 0 | No  | 0 |
| 354584 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 355787 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 356032 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 357828 | No  | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 358492 | No  | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 366241 | No  | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 366593 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |

|        |     |   |     |   |
|--------|-----|---|-----|---|
| 366823 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 367274 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 367342 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 367345 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 371989 | Yes | 0 | Yes | 0 |
| 374940 | No  | 0 | Yes | 0 |

| Response | Does the pastor help you understand the mission of the church? |  | Does the pastor show the signs of the Fruit of the Spirit? |  |
|----------|--|--|--|--|
|          | Answer   |  | Answer   |  |
| 63190    | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 181334   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 322034   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 338353   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 341241   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 341692   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 341783   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342065   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342127   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342170   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342208   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342257   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342265   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342289   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342294   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342313   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342330   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342338   | No   |  | Yes  |  |
| 342341   | No   |  | Yes  |  |
| 342347   | No   |  | No   |  |
| 342361   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342371   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342388   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342392   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342427   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342440   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342442   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342444   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342458   | Yes  |  | Yes  |  |
| 342476   | Yes  |  | No   |  |

|        |     |  |     |  |
|--------|-----|--|-----|--|
| 342491 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 342509 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 342550 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 342641 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 342682 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 342683 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 342684 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 342703 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 342740 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 342786 | No  |  | Yes |  |
| 342826 | Yes |  | No  |  |
| 342829 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 342890 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 342931 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 344059 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 344197 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 344415 | No  |  | No  |  |
| 345350 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 346307 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 346474 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 346583 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 346725 | No  |  | Yes |  |
| 346977 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 348230 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 348402 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 350456 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 350638 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 350655 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 351398 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 351500 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 351602 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 351658 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 351862 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 351891 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 352330 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 352408 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 352431 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 352445 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 352488 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 352563 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 352568 | Yes |  | Yes |  |

|        |     |  |     |  |
|--------|-----|--|-----|--|
| 352571 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 352682 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 353374 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 353610 |     |  |     |  |
| 353681 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 353824 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 353890 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 353984 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 354580 | Yes |  | No  |  |
| 354584 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 355787 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 356032 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 357828 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 358492 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 366241 | No  |  | Yes |  |
| 366593 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 366823 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 367274 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 367342 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 367345 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 371989 | Yes |  | Yes |  |
| 374940 | Yes |  | Yes |  |

| <b>Response</b> | <b>In your opinion, what is the strength of the pastor? (choose only one)</b> |  | <b>In your opinion, what is the weakness of the pastor? (choose only one)</b> |  |
|-----------------|---|--|---|--|
|                 | <b>Answer</b>   |  | <b>Answer</b>   |  |
| 63190           | Discipleship  |  | Ministry  |  |
| 181334          | Evangelism  |  | Discipleship  |  |
| 322034          | Ministry  |  | Discipleship  |  |
| 338353          | Discipleship  |  | Other   |  |
| 341241          | Ministry  |  | Other   |  |
| 341692          | Evangelism  |  | Other   |  |
| 341783          | Discipleship  |  | Other   |  |
| 342065          | Discipleship  |  | Discipleship  |  |
| 342127          | Discipleship  |  | Fellowship  |  |
| 342170          | Discipleship  |  | Other   |  |
| 342208          | Fellowship  |  | Discipleship  |  |
| 342257          | Discipleship  |  | Other   |  |
| 342265          | Discipleship  |  | Evangelism  |  |
| 342289          | Fellowship  |  | Evangelism  |  |

|        |              |  |              |  |
|--------|--------------|--|--------------|--|
| 342294 | Other        |  | Ministry     |  |
| 342313 | Discipleship |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 342330 | Fellowship   |  | Evangelism   |  |
| 342338 | Other        |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 342341 | Fellowship   |  | Discipleship |  |
| 342347 | Fellowship   |  | Ministry     |  |
| 342361 | Ministry     |  | Other        |  |
| 342371 | Ministry     |  | Other        |  |
| 342388 | Discipleship |  | Other        |  |
| 342392 | Fellowship   |  | Other        |  |
| 342427 | Discipleship |  | Other        |  |
| 342440 | Discipleship |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 342442 | Ministry     |  | Evangelism   |  |
| 342444 | Discipleship |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 342458 | Ministry     |  | Evangelism   |  |
| 342476 | Ministry     |  | Discipleship |  |
| 342491 | Ministry     |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 342509 | Evangelism   |  | Other        |  |
| 342550 | Ministry     |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 342641 | Ministry     |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 342682 | Fellowship   |  | Evangelism   |  |
| 342683 | Evangelism   |  | Discipleship |  |
| 342684 | Discipleship |  | Other        |  |
| 342703 | Fellowship   |  | Evangelism   |  |
| 342740 | Discipleship |  | Evangelism   |  |
| 342786 | Evangelism   |  | Ministry     |  |
| 342826 | Other        |  | Ministry     |  |
| 342829 | Ministry     |  | Discipleship |  |
| 342890 | Discipleship |  | Other        |  |
| 342931 | Fellowship   |  | Other        |  |
| 344059 | Ministry     |  | Other        |  |
| 344197 | Ministry     |  | Other        |  |
| 344415 | Other        |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 345350 | Evangelism   |  | Other        |  |
| 346307 | Ministry     |  | Evangelism   |  |
| 346474 | Ministry     |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 346583 | Discipleship |  | Other        |  |
| 346725 | Other        |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 346977 | Discipleship |  | Ministry     |  |
| 348230 | Discipleship |  | Other        |  |
| 348402 | Ministry     |  |              |  |

|        |              |  |              |  |
|--------|--------------|--|--------------|--|
| 350456 | Ministry     |  | Other        |  |
| 350638 | Discipleship |  | Other        |  |
| 350655 | Discipleship |  | Other        |  |
| 351398 | Ministry     |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 351500 | Ministry     |  | Other        |  |
| 351602 | Evangelism   |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 351658 | Other        |  | Other        |  |
| 351862 | Ministry     |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 351891 | Evangelism   |  | Evangelism   |  |
| 352330 | Discipleship |  | Other        |  |
| 352408 | Discipleship |  |              |  |
| 352431 | Ministry     |  | Other        |  |
| 352445 | Discipleship |  | Other        |  |
| 352488 | Evangelism   |  |              |  |
| 352563 | Ministry     |  | Evangelism   |  |
| 352568 | Discipleship |  |              |  |
| 352571 | Discipleship |  | Other        |  |
| 352682 | Ministry     |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 353374 | Discipleship |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 353610 |              |  |              |  |
| 353681 | Ministry     |  |              |  |
| 353824 | Discipleship |  |              |  |
| 353890 | Discipleship |  | Evangelism   |  |
| 353984 | Evangelism   |  | Other        |  |
| 354580 | Other        |  | Ministry     |  |
| 354584 | Evangelism   |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 355787 | Discipleship |  | Other        |  |
| 356032 | Discipleship |  | Evangelism   |  |
| 357828 | Discipleship |  | Other        |  |
| 358492 | Discipleship |  | Evangelism   |  |
| 366241 | Discipleship |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 366593 | Ministry     |  | Discipleship |  |
| 366823 | Fellowship   |  | Other        |  |
| 367274 | Ministry     |  | Other        |  |
| 367342 | Ministry     |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 367345 | Evangelism   |  | Ministry     |  |
| 371989 | Discipleship |  | Fellowship   |  |
| 374940 | Evangelism   |  | Fellowship   |  |

| Response | What is the main preaching philosophy of the pastor? |  | Does the pastor expect |  |
|----------|--|--|------------------------|--|
|----------|--|--|------------------------|--|

|        |  |  | <b>church attendees to be engaged during the worship service?</b> |  |
|--------|--|--|---|--|
|        | <b>Answer</b>  |  | <b>Answer</b>   |  |
| 63190  | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes   |  |
| 181334 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes   |  |
| 322034 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes   |  |
| 338353 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes   |  |
| 341241 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | No  |  |
| 341692 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes   |  |
| 341783 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes   |  |
| 342065 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes   |  |
| 342127 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes   |  |
| 342170 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes   |  |
| 342208 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | No  |  |
| 342257 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes   |  |
| 342265 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes   |  |
| 342289 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes   |  |
| 342294 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes   |  |
| 342313 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | No  |  |
| 342330 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes   |  |
| 342338 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | No  |  |
| 342341 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes   |  |
| 342347 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes   |  |

|        |  |  |     |  |
|--------|--|--|-----|--|
| 342361 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 342371 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | No  |  |
| 342388 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 342392 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 342427 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 342440 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 342442 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 342444 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 342458 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 342476 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 342491 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 342509 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 342550 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | No  |  |
| 342641 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 342682 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 342683 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 342684 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 342703 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 342740 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 342786 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 342826 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 342829 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 342890 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |

|        |  |  |     |  |
|--------|--|--|-----|--|
| 342931 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 344059 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 344197 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 344415 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 345350 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 346307 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 346474 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 346583 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 346725 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | No  |  |
| 346977 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 348230 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 348402 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 350456 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 350638 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 350655 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 351398 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 351500 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 351602 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 351658 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 351862 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | No  |  |
| 351891 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 352330 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 352408 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |

|        |  |  |     |  |
|--------|--|--|-----|--|
| 352431 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 352445 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 352488 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 352563 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 352568 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 352571 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 352682 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 353374 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | No  |  |
| 353610 |  |  |     |  |
| 353681 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 353824 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 353890 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 353984 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 354580 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | No  |  |
| 354584 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 355787 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 356032 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 357828 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 358492 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 366241 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 366593 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 366823 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |
| 367274 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians)                        |  | Yes |  |
| 367342 | Topical (Does studies such as Leaders of the Our Faith, the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) |  | Yes |  |

|        |   |  |     |  |
|--------|---|--|-----|--|
| 367345 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians) |  | No  |  |
| 371989 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians) |  | No  |  |
| 374940 | Expository (Goes verse by verse through a book, i.e. Galatians) |  | Yes |  |

| Response | Does the pastor give an open invitation to respond at the end of the sermon? |  | In your opinion, what is the church's main strength in reaching new attendees? (Choose the best answer) |  |
|----------|--|--|---|--|
|          | Answer   |  | Answer  |  |
| 63190    | Yes  |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors   |  |
| 181334   | Yes  |  | The excitement during the worship services  |  |
| 322034   | Yes  |  | The commitment of the church members  |  |
| 338353   | Yes  |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors   |  |
| 341241   | Yes  |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors   |  |
| 341692   | No   |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors   |  |
| 341783   | Yes  |  | The commitment of the church members  |  |
| 342065   | Yes  |  | The commitment of the church members  |  |
| 342127   | Yes  |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors   |  |
| 342170   | Yes  |  | The leadership of the church  |  |
| 342208   | No   |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors   |  |
| 342257   | No   |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors   |  |
| 342265   | No   |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors   |  |
| 342289   | Yes  |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors   |  |
| 342294   | No   |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors   |  |
| 342313   | No   |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors   |  |
| 342330   | No   |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors   |  |

|        |     |  |   |  |
|--------|-----|--|---|--|
| 342338 | No  |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 342341 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 342347 | No  |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 342361 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 342371 | No  |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 342388 | Yes |  | The excitement during the worship services            |  |
| 342392 | No  |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 342427 | Yes |  | The leadership of the church                          |  |
| 342440 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 342442 | Yes |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 342444 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 342458 | No  |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 342476 | Yes |  | The leadership of the church                          |  |
| 342491 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 342509 | Yes |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 342550 | No  |  | The leadership of the church                          |  |
| 342641 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 342682 | No  |  | The leadership of the church                          |  |
| 342683 | Yes |  | The excitement during the worship services            |  |
| 342684 | Yes |  | The leadership of the church                          |  |
| 342703 | No  |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 342740 | Yes |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 342786 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 342826 | Yes |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 342829 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 342890 | Yes |  | The leadership of the church                          |  |

|        |     |  |   |  |
|--------|-----|--|---|--|
| 342931 | Yes |  | The leadership of the church                          |  |
| 344059 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 344197 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 344415 | No  |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 345350 | Yes |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 346307 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 346474 | Yes |  | The leadership of the church                          |  |
| 346583 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 346725 | Yes |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 346977 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 348230 | Yes |  | The leadership of the church                          |  |
| 348402 | No  |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 350456 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 350638 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 350655 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 351398 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 351500 | Yes |  | The leadership of the church                          |  |
| 351602 | Yes |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 351658 | Yes |  | The excitement during the worship services            |  |
| 351862 | No  |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 351891 | Yes |  | The leadership of the church                          |  |
| 352330 | Yes |  | The leadership of the church                          |  |
| 352408 | Yes |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 352431 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 352445 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 352488 | Yes |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |

|        |     |  |   |  |
|--------|-----|--|---|--|
| 352563 | Yes |  | The leadership of the church                          |  |
| 352568 | Yes |  | The excitement during the worship services            |  |
| 352571 | Yes |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 352682 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 353374 | No  |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 353610 |     |  |   |  |
| 353681 | Yes |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 353824 | Yes |  | The excitement during the worship services            |  |
| 353890 | Yes |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 353984 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 354580 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 354584 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 355787 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 356032 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 357828 | Yes |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 358492 | Yes |  | The excitement during the worship services            |  |
| 366241 | Yes |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 366593 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 366823 | Yes |  | The leadership of the church                          |  |
| 367274 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 367342 | Yes |  | The family atmosphere we feel when we enter the doors |  |
| 367345 | Yes |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 371989 | Yes |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |
| 374940 | Yes |  | The commitment of the church members                  |  |

| <b>Response</b> | <b>In your opinion, what is the church's main weakness in reach new attendees? (Choose the best answer)</b> |  | <b>On a scale from 1 to 5, how likely are you to invite someone to church?</b> |  |
|-----------------|---|--|--|--|
|                 | <b>Answer</b>   |  | <b>Answer</b>  |  |
| 63190           | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 4 Somewhat likely  |  |
| 181334          | The cliques that separate the church  |  | 4 Somewhat likely  |  |
| 322034          | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 1 Very unlikely  |  |
| 338353          | The cliques that separate the church  |  | 1 Very unlikely  |  |
| 341241          |   |  | 4 Somewhat likely  |  |
| 341692          | The cliques that separate the church  |  | 5 Very likely  |  |
| 341783          | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 4 Somewhat likely  |  |
| 342065          | The cliques that separate the church  |  | 5 Very likely  |  |
| 342127          | The church's mission is not in reaching new attendees   |  | 4 Somewhat likely  |  |
| 342170          | The cliques that separate the church  |  | 5 Very likely  |  |
| 342208          | The church's mission is not in reaching new attendees   |  | 3 Unsure   |  |
| 342257          | The cliques that separate the church  |  | 4 Somewhat likely  |  |
| 342265          | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 3 Unsure   |  |
| 342289          | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 5 Very likely  |  |
| 342294          | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 5 Very likely  |  |

|        |   |  |                           |  |
|--------|---|--|---------------------------|--|
| 342313 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 2<br>Somewhat<br>unlikely |  |
| 342330 | The church's mission is not in reaching new attendees |  | 4<br>Somewhat<br>likely   |  |
| 342338 | The pastor rarely introduces himself to new attendees |  | 1 Very<br>unlikely        |  |
| 342341 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 3 Unsure                  |  |
| 342347 | The church's mission is not in reaching new attendees |  | 2<br>Somewhat<br>unlikely |  |
| 342361 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 5 Very<br>likely          |  |
| 342371 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 5 Very<br>likely          |  |
| 342388 | The pastor rarely introduces himself to new attendees |  | 5 Very<br>likely          |  |
| 342392 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 5 Very<br>likely          |  |
| 342427 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 4<br>Somewhat<br>likely   |  |
| 342440 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 2<br>Somewhat<br>unlikely |  |
| 342442 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 5 Very<br>likely          |  |
| 342444 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 1 Very<br>unlikely        |  |
| 342458 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 5 Very<br>likely          |  |
| 342476 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 4<br>Somewhat<br>likely   |  |
| 342491 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 4<br>Somewhat<br>likely   |  |
| 342509 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 5 Very<br>likely          |  |
| 342550 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 2<br>Somewhat<br>unlikely |  |
| 342641 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 4<br>Somewhat<br>likely   |  |
| 342682 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 3 Unsure                  |  |

|        |   |  |                     |  |
|--------|---|--|---------------------|--|
| 342683 | The church's mission is not in reaching new attendees |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 342684 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 342703 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 4 Somewhat likely   |  |
| 342740 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 342786 | The pastor rarely introduces himself to new attendees |  | 3 Unsure            |  |
| 342826 | The church's mission is not in reaching new attendees |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 342829 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 2 Somewhat unlikely |  |
| 342890 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 4 Somewhat likely   |  |
| 342931 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 344059 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 1 Very unlikely     |  |
| 344197 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 344415 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 1 Very unlikely     |  |
| 345350 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 4 Somewhat likely   |  |
| 346307 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 346474 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 3 Unsure            |  |
| 346583 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 346725 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 4 Somewhat likely   |  |
| 346977 | The church's mission is not in reaching new attendees |  | 4 Somewhat likely   |  |
| 348230 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 348402 |   |  | 2 Somewhat unlikely |  |

|        |   |  |                     |  |
|--------|---|--|---------------------|--|
| 350456 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 350638 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 4 Somewhat likely   |  |
| 350655 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 351398 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 2 Somewhat unlikely |  |
| 351500 |   |  | 1 Very unlikely     |  |
| 351602 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 3 Unsure            |  |
| 351658 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 351862 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 2 Somewhat unlikely |  |
| 351891 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 352330 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 4 Somewhat likely   |  |
| 352408 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 4 Somewhat likely   |  |
| 352431 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 2 Somewhat unlikely |  |
| 352445 |   |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 352488 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 352563 | The pastor rarely introduces himself to new attendees |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 352568 |   |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 352571 | The church's mission is not in reaching new attendees |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 352682 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 1 Very unlikely     |  |
| 353374 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 2 Somewhat unlikely |  |
| 353610 |   |  |                     |  |
| 353681 |   |  | 5 Very likely       |  |

|        |   |  |                     |  |
|--------|---|--|---------------------|--|
| 353824 | The church's mission is not in reaching new attendees |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 353890 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 353984 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 4 Somewhat likely   |  |
| 354580 | The church's mission is not in reaching new attendees |  | 1 Very unlikely     |  |
| 354584 | The church's mission is not in reaching new attendees |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 355787 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 356032 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 357828 | The church's mission is not in reaching new attendees |  | 4 Somewhat likely   |  |
| 358492 | The church members are too distant to new attendees   |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 366241 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 366593 | The church's mission is not in reaching new attendees |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 366823 |   |  | 4 Somewhat likely   |  |
| 367274 | The cliques that separate the church                  |  | 4 Somewhat likely   |  |
| 367342 | The pastor rarely introduces himself to new attendees |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 367345 | The pastor rarely introduces himself to new attendees |  | 5 Very likely       |  |
| 371989 | The church's mission is not in reaching new attendees |  | 3 Unsure            |  |
| 374940 | The church's mission is not in reaching new attendees |  | 2 Somewhat unlikely |  |

| Response | Does your pastor put an emphasis on spiritual growth? |  | Does your pastor seek advice from other leaders in the church? |  |
|----------|---|--|--|--|
|          | Answer  |  | Answer   |  |
| 63190    | Regularly   |  | Occasionally   |  |
| 181334   | Regularly   |  | Regularly  |  |

|        |              |  |              |  |
|--------|--------------|--|--------------|--|
| 322034 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 338353 | Regularly    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 341241 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 341692 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 341783 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342065 | Regularly    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 342127 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342170 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342208 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342257 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342265 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342289 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342294 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342313 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342330 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342338 | Occasionally |  | Never        |  |
| 342341 | Occasionally |  | Never        |  |
| 342347 | Occasionally |  | Occasionally |  |
| 342361 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342371 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342388 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342392 | Regularly    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 342427 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342440 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342442 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342444 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342458 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342476 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342491 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342509 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342550 | Regularly    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 342641 | Regularly    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 342682 | Occasionally |  | Occasionally |  |
| 342683 | Occasionally |  | Occasionally |  |
| 342684 | Regularly    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 342703 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342740 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342786 | Occasionally |  | Never        |  |
| 342826 | Occasionally |  | Occasionally |  |
| 342829 | Regularly    |  | Never        |  |
| 342890 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342931 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |

|        |              |  |              |  |
|--------|--------------|--|--------------|--|
| 344059 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 344197 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 344415 | Never        |  | Never        |  |
| 345350 | Regularly    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 346307 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 346474 | Regularly    |  | Never        |  |
| 346583 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 346725 | Occasionally |  | Occasionally |  |
| 346977 | Regularly    |  | Never        |  |
| 348230 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 348402 | Regularly    |  |              |  |
| 350456 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 350638 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 350655 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 351398 | Regularly    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 351500 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 351602 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 351658 | Regularly    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 351862 | Occasionally |  | Never        |  |
| 351891 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 352330 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 352408 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 352431 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 352445 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 352488 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 352563 | Occasionally |  | Regularly    |  |
| 352568 | Regularly    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 352571 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 352682 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 353374 | Regularly    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 353610 |              |  |              |  |
| 353681 | Regularly    |  |              |  |
| 353824 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 353890 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 353984 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 354580 | Regularly    |  | Never        |  |
| 354584 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 355787 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 356032 | Regularly    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 357828 | Regularly    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 358492 | Regularly    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 366241 | Regularly    |  | Occasionally |  |

|        |           |  |              |  |
|--------|-----------|--|--------------|--|
| 366593 | Regularly |  | Regularly    |  |
| 366823 | Regularly |  | Regularly    |  |
| 367274 | Regularly |  |              |  |
| 367342 | Regularly |  | Occasionally |  |
| 367345 | Regularly |  | Occasionally |  |
| 371989 | Regularly |  | Regularly    |  |
| 374940 | Regularly |  | Occasionally |  |

| <b>Response</b> | <b>When considering the church, do you consider it to be:</b> |  | <b>Does your pastor put an emphasis on church attendance?</b> |  |
|-----------------|---|--|---|--|
|                 | <b>Answer</b>   |  | <b>Answer</b>   |  |
| 63190           | Declining   |  | Occasionally  |  |
| 181334          | Growing   |  | Regularly   |  |
| 322034          | Growing   |  | Regularly   |  |
| 338353          | Growing   |  | Occasionally  |  |
| 341241          | Growing   |  | Occasionally  |  |
| 341692          | Growing   |  | Regularly   |  |
| 341783          | Growing   |  | Regularly   |  |
| 342065          | Plateauing  |  | Regularly   |  |
| 342127          | Growing   |  | Occasionally  |  |
| 342170          | Growing   |  | Never   |  |
| 342208          | Plateauing  |  | Never   |  |
| 342257          | Growing   |  | Regularly   |  |
| 342265          | Growing   |  | Never   |  |
| 342289          | Growing   |  | Regularly   |  |
| 342294          | Growing   |  | Regularly   |  |
| 342313          | Growing   |  | Occasionally  |  |
| 342330          | Growing   |  | Occasionally  |  |
| 342338          | Plateauing  |  | Never   |  |
| 342341          | Plateauing  |  | Regularly   |  |
| 342347          | Declining   |  | Never   |  |
| 342361          | Growing   |  | Regularly   |  |
| 342371          | Plateauing  |  | Regularly   |  |
| 342388          | Growing   |  | Regularly   |  |
| 342392          | Growing   |  | Regularly   |  |
| 342427          | Plateauing  |  | Regularly   |  |
| 342440          | Plateauing  |  | Regularly   |  |
| 342442          | Growing   |  | Never   |  |
| 342444          | Plateauing  |  | Regularly   |  |
| 342458          | Growing   |  | Never   |  |
| 342476          | Growing   |  | Regularly   |  |
| 342491          | Growing   |  | Regularly   |  |
| 342509          | Growing   |  | Regularly   |  |

|        |            |  |              |  |
|--------|------------|--|--------------|--|
| 342550 | Declining  |  | Never        |  |
| 342641 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342682 | Plateauing |  | Occasionally |  |
| 342683 | Plateauing |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342684 | Growing    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 342703 | Declining  |  | Occasionally |  |
| 342740 | Growing    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 342786 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 342826 | Plateauing |  | Occasionally |  |
| 342829 | Plateauing |  | Occasionally |  |
| 342890 | Growing    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 342931 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 344059 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 344197 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 344415 | Declining  |  | Never        |  |
| 345350 | Plateauing |  | Regularly    |  |
| 346307 | Growing    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 346474 | Plateauing |  | Occasionally |  |
| 346583 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 346725 | Growing    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 346977 | Plateauing |  | Regularly    |  |
| 348230 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 348402 | Declining  |  | Occasionally |  |
| 350456 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 350638 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 350655 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 351398 | Growing    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 351500 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 351602 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 351658 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 351862 | Declining  |  | Regularly    |  |
| 351891 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 352330 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 352408 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 352431 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 352445 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 352488 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 352563 | Growing    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 352568 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 352571 | Plateauing |  | Regularly    |  |
| 352682 | Plateauing |  | Regularly    |  |
| 353374 | Growing    |  | Occasionally |  |
| 353610 |            |  |              |  |
| 353681 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 353824 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 353890 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |

|        |            |  |              |  |
|--------|------------|--|--------------|--|
| 353984 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 354580 | Declining  |  | Occasionally |  |
| 354584 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 355787 | Plateauing |  | Regularly    |  |
| 356032 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 357828 | Plateauing |  | Regularly    |  |
| 358492 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 366241 | Declining  |  | Occasionally |  |
| 366593 | Plateauing |  | Regularly    |  |
| 366823 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 367274 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 367342 | Growing    |  | Regularly    |  |
| 367345 | Plateauing |  | Regularly    |  |
| 371989 | Declining  |  | Regularly    |  |
| 374940 | Plateauing |  | Regularly    |  |

## APPENDIX F

*Church Attendance Reported to the Dodge County Baptist Association*

| <b>Church #</b> | <b>2018</b> | <b>2019</b> | <b>2020</b> | <b>2021</b> |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1               | 141         | 100         | 146         | 100         |
| 2               | 51          | 50          | 50          | 51          |
| 3               | 142         | 133         | 139         | 133         |
| 4               | 120         | 107         | 120         | 107         |
| 5               | 59          | 51          | 58          | 50          |
| 6               | 111         | 116         | 112         | 116         |
| 7               | 85          | 85          | 95          | 85          |
| 8               | 93          | 99          | 95          | 99          |
| 9               | 150         | 150         | 150         | 125         |
| 10              | 136         | 141         | 140         | 141         |
| 11              | 126         | 110         | 123         | 110         |
| 12              | 117         | 109         | 112         | 109         |
| 13              | 101         | 110         | 102         | 91          |
| 14              | 55          | 50          | 55          | 51          |

## **APPENDIX G**

*Participants' Best Needs, As Perceived by Survey Results*

| Church | Yes | %     | No | %    |
|--------|-----|-------|----|------|
| 1      | 5   | 83.3  | 1  | 16.7 |
| 2      | 11  | 91.7  | 1  | 8.3  |
| 3      | 3   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 4      | 5   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 5      | 7   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 6      | 10  | 71.4  | 4  | 28.6 |
| 7      | 8   | 88.9  | 1  | 11.1 |
| 8      | 2   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 9      | 10  | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 10     | 5   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 11     | 5   | 83.3  | 1  | 16.7 |
| 12     | 4   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 13     | 5   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 14     | 4   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| Total  | 84  | 91.3  | 8  | 8.7  |

*Note:* Results from the survey, based on the perceived perceptions of the participants.

## APPENDIX H

*Pastoral Assistance in Understanding the Church's Mission, as Perceived by Survey Results*

| Church | Yes | %     | No | %    |
|--------|-----|-------|----|------|
| 1      | 5   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 2      | 11  | 91.7  | 1  | 8.3  |
| 3      | 1   | 33.3  | 2  | 66.7 |
| 4      | 5   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 5      | 7   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 6      | 12  | 85.7  | 2  | 14.3 |
| 7      | 8   | 88.9  | 1  | 11.1 |
| 8      | 2   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 9      | 10  | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 10     | 5   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 11     | 6   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 12     | 4   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 13     | 4   | 80.0  | 1  | 20.0 |
| 14     | 4   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| Total  | 85  | 92.3  | 7  | 7.7  |

*Note:* Results from the survey, based on the perceived perceptions of the participants.

## APPENDIX I

*Pastoral Signs of the Fruit of the Spirit, as Perceived by Survey Results*

| Church | Yes | %     | No | %    |
|--------|-----|-------|----|------|
| 1      | 6   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 2      | 12  | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 3      | 2   | 66.7  | 1  | 33.3 |
| 4      | 5   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 5      | 6   | 85.7  | 1  | 14.3 |
| 6      | 12  | 85.7  | 2  | 14.3 |
| 7      | 9   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 8      | 2   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 9      | 10  | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 10     | 5   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 11     | 5   | 83.3  | 1  | 16.7 |
| 12     | 4   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 13     | 5   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 14     | 4   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| Total  | 87  | 94.6  | 5  | 5.4  |

*Note:* Results from the survey, based on the perceived perceptions of the participants.

## APPENDIX J

*Pastoral Expectations of Engagement, as Perceived by Survey Results*

| Church | Yes | %     | No | %    |
|--------|-----|-------|----|------|
| 1      | 5   | 83.3  | 1  | 16.7 |
| 2      | 9   | 75.0  | 3  | 25.0 |
| 3      | 3   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 4      | 4   | 80.0  | 1  | 20.0 |
| 5      | 6   | 85.7  | 1  | 14.3 |
| 6      | 14  | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 7      | 8   | 88.9  | 1  | 11.1 |
| 8      | 2   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 9      | 9   | 90.0  | 1  | 10.0 |
| 10     | 5   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 11     | 4   | 66.7  | 2  | 33.3 |
| 12     | 4   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 13     | 5   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 14     | 2   | 50.0  | 2  | 50.0 |
| Total  | 80  | 87.0  | 12 | 13.0 |

*Note:* Results from the survey, based on the perceived perceptions of the participants.

## APPENDIX K

*Pastoral Sermon Response Invitation, as Perceived by Survey Results*

| Church | Yes | %     | No | %    |
|--------|-----|-------|----|------|
| 1      | 5   | 83.3  | 1  | 16.7 |
| 2      | 5   | 41.7  | 7  | 58.3 |
| 3      | 2   | 66.7  | 1  | 33.3 |
| 4      | 3   | 60.0  | 2  | 40.0 |
| 5      | 5   | 71.4  | 2  | 28.6 |
| 6      | 11  | 78.6  | 3  | 21.4 |
| 7      | 8   | 88.9  | 1  | 11.1 |
| 8      | 2   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 9      | 9   | 90.0  | 1  | 10.0 |
| 10     | 5   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 11     | 5   | 83.3  | 1  | 16.7 |
| 12     | 4   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 13     | 5   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| 14     | 4   | 100.0 | 0  | 0.0  |
| Total  | 73  | 79.3  | 19 | 20.7 |

## APPENDIX L

# LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

September 8, 2022

Michael Carruthers  
Gary Bredfeldt

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY22-23-152 Analyzing the Potential Relationship Between Pastoral Leadership and Church Attendance in Baptist Congregations in Eastman, Georgia

Dear Michael Carruthers, Gary Bredfeldt,

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

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:104(d):

Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

**Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB.** Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

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

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

Sincerely,

**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**

*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*

**Research Ethics Office**