DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE MINISTRY WITH MID LIFE SINGLE ADULTS IN A MEGA CHURCH

A THESIS PROJECT SUBMITTED TO LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE MINISTRY WITH MID LIFE SINGLE ADULTS IN A MEGA CHURCH

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A review of current literature demonstrates that very little material is available to assist local churches with developing a targeted ministry with mid life single adults. The purpose of this project was to answer the basic research question of how an effective ministry with mid life single adults was developed in a mega church by answering six sub questions concerning demographic analysis, the need, a model, the membership, leadership and administration, forming a chain of variables for effective ministry. Based on an extensive questionnaire of the membership in 1991 and 1994 the project draws conclusions in this historical perspective case study. Based on a national survey of staff ministering with single adults, conclusions about leadership and management of effective ministry are given.

Abstract length: 120 words.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th></th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demographic Analysis</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demographic Analysis</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Results</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demographic Analysis</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demographic Analysis</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Membership 95
Leadership 97
Management 98

5 Implications 111
Demographic Analysis 111
Need 111
Model 112
Membership 112
Leadership 116
Management 117

Appendixes
Appendix One: Membership Profile 119
Appendix Two: Leadership Survey 120
Bibliography 121

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure
1. Chain of Variables for Effective Ministry 9

TABLES

Table
1. Sex 52
2. Race 52
3. Age 53
4. Occupation (Frequency) 54
5. Marital Status 55
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Education (Level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Christian (Length)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Membership (Length)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>First Contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Influenced to Join</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Housing (Type)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Residency (Length)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Residency (Distance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Commuting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Household (Size)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Activities (Satisfaction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Activities (Emphasis)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Background

The purpose of this research project was to understand ministry with, and examine the ministry of effective leaders of mid life single adults in mega churches using a case study of effective ministry. Effective ministry with mid life single adults is defined generally as "ministry that targets and meets the spiritual needs of middle aged single adults."

Indeed, American Demographics reports that there were 23.6 million people living alone in 1990. This is expected to increase to 27.7 million by the year 2000.¹

However, not much is known of this large segment of the American population.

Relatively few studies have been undertaken to determine the lifestyles, attitudes, and beliefs of single adults in America. Even fewer studies have attempted to gather data concerning single adults in the American Christian community.²

Mid life single adults represent a key ministry target. The word "single" no longer carries with it connotations of hedonistic playboys or unattractive spinsters. Many today are single by choice, and with this choice often comes a different lifestyle as well as different beliefs and attitudes. "Theoretically, middle adults are ripe for evangelism. Internalizing may lead them to consider spiritual matters."³

²Barna Research Group, p. 1.
³Charles M. Sell, p. 148.
Statement of the Problem

The Single Adult Ministry Journal asked single adult ministry pastors and leaders about the biggest issues, concerns, and challenges those in singles ministry will address in coming years. They identified the aging Baby Boomer and older, never married population as critical issues.4

One of the questions for this project, suggested by the literature of social science and ministry addresses the study of the need for ministry with this generation of single adults, all of whom will have reached mid life by the year 2000.5

The objective of this dissertation project was to provide a broad overview of this particular singles population. This gave a better understanding of how to incorporate this tremendous source of energy into the church. We considered how to target this population segment.

Terry Hershey, a leader in single adult ministry, defines young adults as younger than 35.6 Senior citizens are often grouped at age 55 and older. For this dissertation project we will use the U. S. Census division of 36-54 as middle aged. This division contains the "baby boom" generation born between 1946 and 1964.

"Single" refers to non-married persons; never married, divorced or separated, and widowed. Where appropriate throughout this dissertation project,

6Terry Hershey, Young Adult Ministry: Step-by Step Help for Starting or Revitalizing Your Ministry With People Ages 18 to 35, (Loveland, CO: Group, 1986).
single adults who have never been married will be differentiated from those who are "single again." "Single again" will mean the previously married, adults who are now separated, divorced, or widowed. "Mega church" will mean churches with a membership of at least 1,000. This generation of unchurched singles can be effectively reached, touched, and nurtured by the mega church.

**Statement of Limitations**

It is not the intent of this project to be an exhaustive study of single adult ministry. It is not the intent of the project to be an exhaustive treatment of middle age developmental psychology.

This project will deal specifically with middle aged single adults. The project is designed to explore the pastoral leadership of local church staff. We will not deal with interdenominational activities or programs except as they relate to the ministry of the local church.

There are special advantages of a large church, such as targeted ministry. This dissertation project will consider mega church ministry with mid life singles.

**Some Biblical Reflections**

Jesus gives the Great Commission,

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the World. Amen." (Matt 28:19-20, KJV).

Believers are to go, to preach, and to teach. To develop a comprehensive ministry with middle aged single adults is one way to obey the Great Commission of Jesus. This project will describe and investigate pastoral leadership and church management as they relate to middle aged single adults fulfilling the Great Commission through the ministry of a mega church.
This dissertation project is an examination of obedience to the Great Commission with a vision for ministry with middle aged single adults. Barna reports that

Vision is specific, detailed, customized, distinctive and unique to a given church. It allows a leader to say no to opportunities, it provides direction, it empowers people for service and it facilitates productivity.\(^7\)

Barna has examined pastoral leadership in growing churches that were making an impact in today's culture. He notes that a "pastor" refers to one who understands the needs of the congregation and the target audience and provides the necessary vision and spiritual guidance.\(^8\) We will investigate leadership through long range planning, administration, and time management.

While the church grapples with theological convictions regarding divorce, mid life single adults who are single again often flounder in hopelessness, needing ministry that only the church can provide. Churches clarify positions and theological convictions on divorce as their people, their Sunday School teachers, their pastors, and families experience the heartache of divorce.

The prophet Malachi says that God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16). Should we, as God's people, separate ourselves from those who are divorced, or should we give ourselves in compassionate ministry to the separated and divorced?

Genesis 3, Leviticus 18, Deuteronomy 24, Jeremiah 3, and Malachi 2 describe the breaking of a marriage covenant with the necessary steps of litigation. Some carefully note God's approval of covenant keepers and ignore His compassion for the abandoned. The Hebrew word for widow is almanah. This

word refers to a woman who has been divested of her male protector, usually though not always through death.

The Assyrian Dictionary of the University of Chicago, Oriental Institute states:

that "almanah" does not simply refer to a woman whose husband is dead. It also applies to the woman who enjoys no financial support from a male member of her family. The Old Testament taught that the forsaken spouse was considered in the same category as the widow.⁹

The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament clarifies the ancient definition.

The word "widow" is frequently used in a figurative sense in all ancient Near Eastern literature. When God forsakes His people Israel and their land, they can be characterized as an "almanah," "widow" (Isa 47:8), and their situation as "almanuth," "widowhood" (Isa 54:4).¹⁰

The attitude of Jesus toward the woman at the well is a key passage in the New Testament, which again provides biblical support for ministry with the single. Jesus broke significant cultural taboos in order to communicate with her. The church needs to follow the example of Christ. The church needs to reach the "woman at the well." This project will survey associate pastors with single adults, whose field of ministry includes middle aged adults who are single again.

We will answer the basic research question, "How is an effective ministry with mid life singles in a mega church developed?" There are sub questions which form a chain of variables for effective ministry.

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A Review of the Literature

Creswell's Research Design was a major source for the entire research process from problem identification to data analysis. His book provided a foundation for the entire study plan.\textsuperscript{11} A review of the literature went from general and secular to dissertations on single adult ministry.

The social science literature has an interest in the diagnosis and assessment of people and their personalities, cultures, and problems. The work that has been done to research the mid life crisis, divorce, and the single parent has helped provide validity to this project. Gary Collins' Christian Counseling, A Comprehensive Guide, added support and credibility to the ideas and conclusions about ministry with mid life singles. The journal articles in American Psychologist, The Journal of Marriage and Family, Journal of Psychiatric Treatment and Evaluation, Journal of Counseling Psychology, and the Journal of Counseling and Development, add secular authenticity to developmental concepts. These books helped in understanding the culture of being middle aged and single. From this literature the theory of a target audience was developed.

Books in the social sciences field such as Middle Age and Aging: A Reader in Social Psychology, Neugarten; Adult Development and Aging: A Life-Span Perspective, Hultsch; Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry/IV, Kaplan also support ministry objectives.

The study of people and relationships is a foundation for comprehensive ministry. A study of the middle age developmental transition aided the project. Helpful books included The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary

Life, Gergen; Second Chances: Men, Women, and Children a Decade After Divorce, Wallerstein; Welcome to Middle Years, Taylor.

Articles like Levinson's "The Baby Boomer's Midlife Crisis," in Fortune and Ostroff's "Targeting the Prime-Life Consumer," in American Demographics were supportive. Other books that discussed the Mid life developmental stage like Neugarten's Middle Age and Aging, and Levinson's The Seasons of a Man's Life were helpful.

Landon Jones in Great Expectations identified the early boomers as the heart of the baby boom. Research on baby boomers proved helpful in understanding the attitude of this generation as they enter and approach mid life. The second theory concerning ministry designed was prompted by this literature.

Writings on single adults in the church were helpful, such as Jerry Jones' edited Single Adult Ministry; Doug Fagerstrom's edited Singles Ministry Handbook; and Britton Wood's Single Adults Want to be the Church, Too, added light. This literature from those involved in the ministry of the church with mid life single adults provided the seed thoughts for theories of ministry concerning a relational ministry and the emphasis on ownership.

Thought has been given to ministry with this general population. Articles like Bill Flanagan's "What I Wish I'd Known About Single-Adult Ministry: A Veteran Shares What He's Learned," and books like Kennon Callahan's Twelve Keys to an Effective Church; Robert Dale's Ministers as Leaders, and George Barna's User Friendly Churches were insightful. This literature suggested the theories of ministry concerning empowerment and giving away ministry.

Material specifically addressing mid life singles and the church was sparse and the need prompted the project. A review of the dissertations was informative, such as, William Cox's "Development and Implementation of a Single
Adult Ministry at the First Baptist Church of Warrior, Alabama;" James Fung's "The Single Challenge: A Model of a Comprehensive Singles Ministry in the Local Church;" and Ralph Lien's "Determining Whether the Lutheran Church in Texas is Addressing or Failing to Address Concerns as Perceived by Its Middle-Aged Constituency."

The questions of demographic analysis, need, a model, membership, leadership and management were answered as a chain of variables for effective ministry was noted.

The basic research question for this project is "How is an effective ministry with mid life single adults in a mega church developed?" Six sub questions become a chain of variables for effective ministry. We want to know about demographic analysis, need, a model, the membership, leadership, and management.
Figure 1

THE CHAIN OF VARIABLES FOR EFFECTIVE MINISTRY

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS ➔ NEED ➔ MODEL ➔ MEMBERSHIP ➔ LEADERSHIP ➔ MANAGEMENT ➔ HOW AN EFFECTIVE MINISTRY WITH MID-LIFE SINGLE ADULTS WAS DEVELOPED ➔ RELATIONAL MINISTRY ➔ OWNERSHIP ➔ EMPOWERMENT ➔ EFFECTIVE MINISTRY ➔ TARGET DEFINED ➔ MINISTRY DESIGNED ➔ OWNERSHIP ➔ EMPOWERMENT ➔ EFFECTIVE MINISTRY
DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

After a review of the literature, the theory of target audience led to the first research question, "How does the demographic analysis of the community shape the ministry with mid life singles?" The Southern Baptist 1990 Census Guide, George Barna, and mid life developmental literature were helpful in developing a holistic picture and cultural context.

NEED

The theory of market segmentation and designing ministry to meet specific age group and cultural needs was suggested as the literature of this case study described the experiences and answered the question of how the etiology, or study of the need for effective ministry with mid life singles influenced ministry. Collins, Jones and Levinson provided background and Becker, Anderson, and Crist suggested ministry.

MODEL

The theory of historical perspective led to the case study of the Lighthouse ministry which explored a process and described how a model was developed. Barna, Schaller, and Brown provided insight in addition to the observations, as the third research question of what is a model for effective ministry was answered.

MEMBERSHIP

The theory of diagnostic analysis for ministry led to the fourth research question. The Church and Community Diagnosis Workbook, by Brown and Allen and the Questionnaire Interpretive Manual for Church Planning from the Home
Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention provided the questionnaire and diagnostic suggestions for ministry. The quantitative data was compiled in the context of qualitative observations to answer the fourth research question of what is a membership profile of an effective ministry with mid life singles in a mega church.

LEADERSHIP

The leadership theory of single adults having vision, goals, and focus for themselves led to the fifth research question. The experiences of those being led and their impression of the effectiveness of ministry will answer this research question of "What is effective leadership for mid life singles ministry?" for this case study. Kennon Callahan's Twelve Keys to an Effective Church, prompted the research question.

MANAGEMENT

The theory of time management for effective ministry led to the sixth research question. The quantitative data from a survey of leaders of mid life singles in mega churches provided qualitative data to answer the research question of, "How is an effective mid life singles ministry managed?" The data from the survey was used to develop a profile which answered the research questions of who the leader was and what he did with his time, for effective ministry.

The job title of the adult singles' pastor was not so important as the local church recognizing the need to reach singles for church growth because single adults have the potential of being the backbone of the church. Mega churches are hiring full-time associate pastors who are responsible for effective ministry with
mid life singles. A survey of single adult leaders in mega churches was conducted nationally. Most of them were a part of the National Association of Single Adult Leaders.

W. A. Criswell said, "Any preacher-pastor can reach and keep just so many people. How is the church then to continue to grow if the pastor can reach and hold just so many people? The answer lies in the staff." The adult singles' pastor will expand and support the ministry of the senior pastor and be a vital factor in church growth.

One church growth strategy to target single adults is to have an associate minister to singles who acts as a functional specialist in ministry. A vital concern for him would be developing a comprehensive ministry with mid life singles. The adult singles' pastor is an extension of the senior pastor. As a functional specialist he is concerned with reaching, teaching, and nurturing single adults in the faith.

An effective church staff is like a competitive sports team. The members form a cohesive whole which is greater than the sum of its parts: "...staff members will be interdependent with each person supporting others on the staff." Charles Tidwell thinks teamwork is important for the educational ministry of the church. He said,

...the pastor and other ministers of a church should be a team, as contrasted with a loose collection of individual ministers concerned only with their personal concepts of their ministry as individuals. When a church has several ministers to serve the church, fortunate is the church

---


and the ministers when they work together, subordinating their differences for the good of the body.\textsuperscript{14}

If a church wants to grow, the task of staffing is crucial because if the wrong people are hired the organization cannot function properly. There is a correlation between the level of personnel and the quality of achievement attained by them. The Barna Research Group found that numerical growth was an outgrowth of a strong ministry. \textquoteright{}The underlying belief of pastors of growing churches was that quantity is a result of quality.\textsuperscript{15} Engstrom says that \textquoteright{}many Christian organizations are often guilty of hiring mediocre personnel because highly competent, well-trained people are often in short supply.\textsuperscript{16}

In his book \textit{Managing for Results}, Peter Drucker says,

First-class people must always be allocated to major opportunities, to the areas of greatest possible return for each unit and first class opportunities must always be staffed with people of superior ability and performance.\textsuperscript{17}

Many mega churches with a vision and burden to be relevant in the next century plan to have a staff minister targeting singles for church growth.

\textbf{Considerations}

America is composed of many non-traditional households. As American demographics change, the church needs to be prepared to change strategies for growth, outreach, and ministry. The Hebrew word for \textquoteleft{}widow\textquoteright{} leaves us without

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{17}Peter F. Drucker, \textit{Managing for Results}, (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 150.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
excuse for ignoring ministry with the "single again." An extensive internal analysis will be conducted to be correlated with the 1990 Census. Although, the sparseness of the literature dealing with middle aged singles and the church is apparent. Much can be learned from developmental psychology and single adult ministry.

As we explored the mega church ministry with mid life singles, the priority, the plan, and the program for ministry was seriously questioned and thoroughly explored. The questions of demographic analysis, need, a model, membership, leadership, and management were answered as a chain of variables for effective ministry was noted.

The figure showing the variables for effective ministry is a picture of the implications for ministry. The demographic analysis produces ministry defined. The target audience is described. The need results in a specific, distinct, targeted ministry designed. The membership yielded a sense of belonging. The leadership produced a philosophy of giving the ministry away. The management philosophy resulted in effective ministry.
CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

This case study was facilitated by being an observer/participant in the Lighthouse ministry with single adults for six years. Research questions about demographic analysis, need, a model, membership, leadership, and management were studied.

Three surveys were used to elicit quantitative data. A group of middle aged single adults in the Lighthouse class in 1991 and 1994 were surveyed. Older single adults at Heritage Baptist Church were surveyed in 1996 for comparison. Leaders of mid life singles in mega churches were surveyed to develop a profile. The survey from Brown and Allen's Church and Community Diagnosis Workbook was used to develop a membership profile. This survey is used in Southern Baptist Churches nationally. External validity is achieved by the Questionnaire Interpretive Manual for Church Planning from the Research Division of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention providing suggestions for analysis and implications for interpretation. This same survey was used to develop an effectiveness profile. Data was generated from single adults based on Callahan's Twelve Keys to an Effective Church.

The research method for this project has been influenced by the tradition in the literature on social science that advocates the use of multiple methods. This form of research strategy is usually described as one of convergent methodology or triangulation.

Triangulation was used when the same questionnaire was administered in 1991 and in 1994 for a longitudinal analysis. Another mega church administered the same questionnaire in 1996, to provide confirmability, showing that the findings of the study could be confirmed by another group of mid life singles in a
mega church. The credibility of this research demonstrates that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subjects were accurately identified and described.

The validity of the quantitative research is strengthened by the author being an observer/participant for the years 1988 to 1994.

Transferability, generalizability, and external validity are usually problems with qualitative research that are eliminated by the thorough, repeated, and multiple site analysis of the survey data (triangulation).

A problem with the membership survey is dependability. An attempt to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon of mid life singles for ministry in a mega church is attempted by an increasingly refined understanding of the setting. Notions of reliability assume an unchanging universe, where inquiry could, quite logically, be replicated. This assumption of an unchanging social world is in direct contrast to the qualitative/interpretive assumption that the social world is always changing, and the concept of replication is problematic.

The quantitative data from the questionnaires of multiple comparison groups is strengthened by the field observations of the author as an observer/participant.

Triangulation is used to capture a more complete, holistic and contextual portrayal of mid life single adults in a mega church. The use of the qualitative method of observer/participant plays a prominent role by eliciting data and suggesting conclusions to which other methods would be blind.

The author has been able to sustain a profitable closeness to the situation which allows greater sensitivity to the multiple sources of data. Qualitative analysis functions as the glue that cements the interpretation of multi method results.
This chapter provides the background for the project. The rationale and parameters of the study are discussed. The biblical and theological basis for ministry with mid life single adults is developed. The methodology of the project is delineated and a review of the literature is conducted.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Research question one, "How does the demographic analysis of the community shape the ministry with mid life singles?" was examined by using the Metropolitan Statistical Abstract for Lynchburg, Virginia. This case study sought to understand and explain how the Metropolitan Statistical Area influenced ministry. The intent of this ethnographic research was to obtain a holistic picture of mid life singles by observing and interviewing them and relevant others. Singles revealed how they described and structured their world.

NEED

Ministry was designed to meet the needs of this age group of older baby boomers, as characteristics and generational idiosyncracies were observed as the second research question was studied. This case study described the experiences and answered the question of how the study of the need for ministry with this age group influences ministry. The answer to this research question revealed how "early boomers," who are mid life singles shaped plans for ministry. This generation was segmented and analyzed. Conclusions about characteristics of this generation were applied to concepts of ministry with mid life singles as this statistically significant group experienced
middle age. The need was studied by literature review, observation, and the completion of the membership questionnaire for this project.

**MODEL**

This case study of the Lighthouse ministry with mid-life singles at Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia explored a process for ministry and described how a model was developed. The history of the class was reviewed in church records and interviews of past members in an attempt to take note of what needed to be conserved, as the third research question of what is a model for effective ministry was studied.

**MEMBERSHIP**

Research question four was studied by questionnaires used for data collection about the membership of the Lighthouse class, with the intent of generalizing from a sample to a population (Appendix One). A theory was derived by using multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationship of categories of information. Two primary characteristics of this design are the constant comparison of data with emerging categories and sampling of different groups to maximize the similarities and the differences of information. The question of what is a membership profile of an effective ministry with mid-life singles was answered. An examination of attendance patterns was conducted and the physical resources available for ministry use at the church were analyzed. The members of the sample group were profiled by sex, race, age, occupation, marital status, education, length of time as a Christian, church membership, attendance, first
contact, residence, traveling time, household size, and income. This data was a significant link in the chain of variables for effective ministry.

**LEADERSHIP**

A case study of leadership described the experiences of those being led and their impression of the effectiveness of ministry. The degree of satisfaction with the activities of the class was tabulated. The activities that need to receive more emphasis, the growth potential, outreach, effectiveness of sharing one's faith, and willingness to be trained were surveyed. The most needed changes, overall mood, and personality of the group were investigated as a list of significant concerns was developed.

The organizational profile of programs, pastoral ministries, Bible teaching, training, music, missions, and planning were examined. An effectiveness profile was generated and concerns for future planning were considered as a result of this internal leadership audit.

Census data figures were examined for long range planning and pastoral leadership. A community diagnostic survey was implemented. The Research Division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board provided a computerized demographic analysis by census tables. This data provided long range planning information essential for leadership.

**MANAGEMENT**

*Profile of the Effective Single Adult Pastor*

Therefore, an attempt to develop a profile of the single adult pastor will greatly aid the young man who feels the call of God to ministry, and the church and pastor looking for a man to fill this ministry position as a functional specialist.
serving this needy population segment (1992 Survey of Single Adult Leaders, cf p.20). Single Adult pastors were surveyed nationally. An attempt was made to determine if this ministry position is one that men use to prepare for the senior pastor position. Was this a career position?

The educational background was surveyed and analyzed. As academic institutions did not intentionally prepare men for ministry with singles, we surveyed these men about their preparation for ministry with singles. Did they go to college? What was their major? What degree did they pursue? Did Single Adult pastors go to graduate school? Were they trained to handle the Scriptures? Were these ministry professionals currently students? Are they involved in continuing education? Did their churches pay for the expense of education?

The average single adult moves every eleven months. How often did single adult pastors move? Were these men ordained? Were they pastors exclusively with singles or did they have other ministry assignments?

After finding out just who they were it was meaningful to ascertain how he functioned in ministry.

How much of the time spent in ministry with singles was spent in the office? Did they see themselves as pastors? How much of their time was spent in pastoral care? How much time did they spend in single adult activities? How much time did they spend studying? What did they study? What did they read? How much time was spent counselling? Did they aggressively pursue singles? How much ministry time was spent in visitation? In attempting to determine who the singles pastor was and what he does Books in Print, various articles, and Dissertation Abstracts concerning the ministry function of the singles pastor was examined. This study will make a significant contribution to an area of ministry that comprises perhaps the greatest area of need in the church today.
Responses to the survey came from eleven different denominational groups. Thirty percent were from large churches with at least three thousand attending Sunday morning worship. Fifty-six percent were from churches with at least one thousand attending worship (1992 Survey). Even though their single adult ministry had been positioned in the community as area-wide and interdenominational, they were a vital part of a strong, vibrant church.

This study was triangulated with quantitative data from a survey of leaders of mid life singles in mega churches about who they were and how they spent their time. This study answered the question of how an effective ministry with mid life singles was managed. We examined what he did with his time. We investigated the full time associate pastor with responsibility for ministry with mid life singles. A survey was mailed nationally to mega churches with membership of 1,000 or more persons. The survey answered two questions: 1) Who this pastor was, and 2) what he did. Associate pastors in mega churches responded to questions about age, education, continuing education, ordination, and churches served (Appendix Two).

These same pastors responded to questions about how they managed their time. They evaluated the percentage of time spent in visitation, activities, counseling, pastoral care, study, and administration.

A profile of the effective associate pastor with single adults was be developed. This was proposed as an evaluation tool to develop an effective ministry with mid life single adults.

The purpose of this case study demonstrated the need for targeted ministry with mid life single adults and suggested the professional staff position of associate pastor with single adults as a strategy for effective ministry.
In summary, this study answered the following sub questions:

*Research Question One - How does the demographic analysis of the community shape the ministry with mid life singles?

*Research Question Two - How does the study of the need for ministry with mid life singles influence ministry?

*Research Question Three - What is a model of effective ministry?

*Research Question Four - What is a membership profile of an effective ministry?

*Research Question Five - What is effective leadership for mid life singles ministry?

*Research Question Six - How is an effective ministry managed?

These research questions were triangulated by a quantitative analysis of membership questionnaires, observations as a participant, and a qualitative analysis of how the process of effective ministry was developed.
CHAPTER THREE
RESULTS

The results of a careful study of demographic analysis, need, a model, membership, leadership, and management were assessed. Theoretical coherence was achieved by examining the research question of how an effective ministry with mid life single adults in a mega church was developed. When considering how to develop an effective ministry with mid life single adults in a mega church, the first link in the chain of variables for effective ministry was to examine how the demographic analysis shaped ministry.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The theory of a targeted audience for ministry provided the first research question which asked, "How does the demographic analysis shape ministry?" A result was quantitative data defining the targeted audience. The Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) had a total population of 142,199. The city of Lynchburg had 66,049. The targeted census tracts for the ministry of the Lighthouse class numbered 66,743. "In 1990, 29 percent of the population were middle adults, . . ."12 For Lynchburg, Virginia MSA there were 28.4 percent nonfamily households. In 1990 there were 13,161 householders living alone.

The 1990 Census lists the population of Lynchburg, Virginia age 36 - 54 as 13,242. There were 28.4 percent non-family households. The population of single adults age 36 - 54 in the Lynchburg, Virginia MSA is 4,045.

Community Definition Profile

The purpose of the Community Definition Profile was to define who and/or where the church community is now and who and/or where you wanted your church and community to be in the future. The Lighthouse class met the criteria for a "Special Purpose" church because it met the particular needs of a particular group of people. Many mid life single again and single parents found the Lighthouse class to be the only church in the area that targeted and met the needs of mid life single again and single parents.

The U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990 reported that the total Central Virginia population age 36-54 was 26% of the population, or 53,290. 28.4% or 15,055 non-family households were in the Lynchburg, Virginia Metropolitan Statistical Abstract. There were 7,451 householders under age 65 and living alone.

Nevertheless, some churches must be defined by the groups of people they serve rather than by geography. The 'Special Purpose Church' serves a particular group of people and may be the only church of its type in an area. Location is of minimal importance because this is the only church in town believed to meet the member's particular need.

Since its beginnings, the Lighthouse class targeted mid life singles as part of a culture that emphasized families. However, we realize that,

This emphasis on marriage and family must not ignore the fact that single people reach middle age too. Many of the special challenges of singleness, including divorce and the issue of being a single parent, come into the unmarried person's life and intensify his or her middle-life struggles.

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13Brown and Allen, p. 92.

14Brown and Allen, p. 92.

Psychologists have intensely studied middle life. Their research suggests that learning is slower in middle age, memory is slightly poorer, and thinking is less flexible. But the mid life person is also more experienced than he or she was in earlier years. For many, this is the prime of life when people are at the height of their influence, creativity, personal accomplishments, and earning capacity.\textsuperscript{16} Levinson tells us that,

\ldots life changes appreciably between early and middle adulthood. Men, for example, tend to become more reflective and compassionate, less bothered by inner conflicts and external demands, more loving and gentle.\textsuperscript{17}

Others might agree with Carl Jung, the famous Swiss psychiatrist, who described middle age as the time in life when we are free to move on to other things because we have pretty much completed such tasks as the "begetting of children \ldots protecting the brood \ldots gaining of money and social position."\textsuperscript{18}

How should leaders in the church think of middle age? Chronological age is no longer the positive marker that it was earlier in life when to become older means to become bigger, more attractive, or more important; neither is it the positive marker that it becomes in old age, when each additional year lived increases one's distinction. Mid life people look to their positions within different life contexts - body, career, family - rather than to chronological age for their primary cues in clocking themselves.\textsuperscript{19}


Yale psychologist Daniel Levinson, sees adulthood as a series of phases, each with its own benefits and liabilities. The middle life phase begins around age forty and involves a period of self-examination and reevaluation. Levinson's observations reveal much about the causes of mid life problems: Middle age activates deepest anxieties about decline and dying.

Consequently, middle age is usually regarded as a vague interim period, defined primarily in negative terms. The connotations of youth are vitality, growth, mastery, the heroic, whereas old connotes vulnerability, withering, ending, the brink of nothingness. Overly negative imagery of old age adds greatly to the burden of middle age. It is terrifying to go through middle age in the shadow of death, as though one were already old; and it is a self-defeating illusion to live in the shadow of youth, as though one were still simply young.20

As we focused on our target audience, we noticed that,

Like all of life's changes, the movement into middle life is a time for adjustment and reevaluation. Some handle this smoothly and without difficulties; others feel the threat, instability, and uncertainty that makes this a time of moderate or severe crisis.21

"One psychiatrist has suggested that the American culture 'conspires against sound mental and bodily hygiene in middle life."22 The society favors and encourages striving for pressured jobs and adaptation through the use of drugs (stimulants, tranquilizers, and antidepressants) or alcohol (business lunches and cocktail parties). Doctors are willing to prescribe drugs, but there is little interest in personal lives and not much emphasis on diet or exercise.


22Butler, p. 1949.
purpose of the demographic profile was to collect population data on people who lived in the defined church community and compare selected community data with church membership data.\textsuperscript{23}

After all, seeing the city as a collection of target groups is to see the city as a Christian sociologist sees it.\textsuperscript{24} For example, the Lighthouse class looked for groupings of people and then designed ministries with their lifestyles in mind. The goal, as Barna points out, is to reach an unchurched culture. Statistical research, analyses of this culture, and long-range projections all clearly indicate that ours is no longer a churched culture. Study after study and the decline of many mainline denominations confirm this fact. The United States is clearly and decisively entering the mission field of the 1990's.\textsuperscript{25}

Add geography to age, generation, marital and parental status as a factor that differentiates unmarried America from married America. Singles are unevenly distributed throughout the country. They are plentiful in certain towns and relatively scarce in most rural communities. Unmarrieds between 35 and 44 tend to be concentrated in larger communities.\textsuperscript{26}

As described earlier, mid life singles are a significant portion of the unchurched culture of the Lynchburg community.

The "SBC Church Planning Profile for 1980 Census Data" and the "Census Data Manual for Church Planning" were used to conduct a demographic analysis. Since the Lighthouse Singles were targeting mid life singles only a portion of the data was pertinent.

\textsuperscript{23}Brown and Allen, p. 96.

\textsuperscript{24}Tillapaugh, p. 45.

\textsuperscript{25}Callahan, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{26}George Barna, Unmarried America, How Singles Are Changing and What It Means for the Church, a Barna Report, (Glendale, CA, Barna Research Group, 1993, p. 13).
The total population for the census tracts selected as the geographical mission field was 66,743. In all, 29.4 percent or 15,839 were single. Another 6.1 percent or 3,290 were divorced. The city of Lynchburg had 804 widowed in 1990. The population of single adults, age 36 - 54 in the Lynchburg, Virginia MSA is 4,045.

Seven million of the nation's 8.5 million single-parent households have female householders. The median age of a female single parent is thirty-three years. Thirty-eight percent of female single parents are divorced.27

Singles generally tend to be low income apartment dwellers and highly mobile. Thus ministries to singles are likely to require more financial outlays than will be realized in return income. Among single adults who have never been married the average annual income is $10,891, compared to married couples whose annual income is $39,895.28

In any given age group, divorced females will tend to outnumber divorced males. For several reasons, females may require a greater degree of affirmation and acceptance. These needs will be heightened if the woman is a single parent with the dual responsibilities of both earning a living and rearing a family.

In 1980, forty percent of all families with incomes below poverty level were comprised of female-headed families with children under age eighteen. For the Lynchburg, Virginia, Metropolitan Statistical Abstract there were 3,720 families below the poverty level of which 1,842 were female householder families. There were 4,291 female householder families with children under age eighteen.

27Census Guide, p. 3.
Community Makeup Profile

The purpose of the community makeup profile is to determine the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, life-style, and population density makeup of the community.\textsuperscript{29}

However, Lynchburg is an old historic town rich in the legacy of the past. It is also a blue collar town. Also, the young single adult population of the five area colleges impact the town.

The Jerry Falwell ministries have greatly influenced the city. Although efforts have been made to improve public relations with the city, there remains a negative (if not hostile reaction) from many in the city.

Liberty University has helped the ministry relate to the town. Lynchburg is now realizing the school is here to stay. Filling an arena and a stadium with thousands to see an athletic competition notifies the city that Liberty is a real school.

Community Evangelistic Ministry Profile

Therefore, The purpose of the ministry profile is to evaluate the ministry activities in the church and ministry opportunities in the community.\textsuperscript{30}

The Lighthouse ministry has addressed areas of need with their support groups for Singles, Single Parents, and Grief Recovery, a support group for widows and widowers.

A weekly visitation program targeting mid life single adults for evangelism is a priority requirement.

\textsuperscript{29}Brown and Allen, p. 102.

\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., p. 109.
Overall, only one out of every fourteen adults who do not attend religious services in a typical month said they would definitely do so if a friend or family member who attends a Christian church in their area invited the nonattender to accompany them to the church.

The data points out that unchurched adults would be more likely to attend a church service with a friend or family member than to attend a Bible study group, if invited to such a gathering.31

The purpose of the other groups profile is to survey other religious groups in the community in regard to location, makeup, ministry endeavors, and growth trends.32

**Community Contextual Factors Profile**

Therefore, the purpose of the contextual factors profile is to determine factors that impact the church. Contextual factors mean those factors outside of the institution of the church that are making an impact on the church.33

For example, the Lighthouse Singles ministry was greatly impacted by employment conditions at the Old-Time Gospel Hour and related ministries. Some singles moved to Lynchburg for employment in the ministry.

Baby Boom singles will continue to age. The 1980 census data showed that during the seventies the population aged 25-34 was the fastest growing.

**Concerns for Future Planning**

One of the major concerns was community awareness of the multifaceted Lighthouse Singles ministry. Support groups were held on Monday evenings at

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32Ibid., 115.
33Ibid., p. 116.
Thomas Road. The goal was to use the small group meeting to build the Lighthouse class. It was a one-by-one approach. A look at the numbers was invigorating.

The demographic analysis revealed quantitative data showing the target audience for mid life ministry in Lynchburg. The Lynchburg, Virginia MSA showed 4,045 mid life single adults. A review of local churches revealed a lack of targeted ministry for this age group of single adults.

**NEED**

The second research question asked, "How does the study of the need for ministry with mid life singles influence effective ministry?" Is there a need for the church to consider targeted ministry to this unique age group? In order for the church to welcome this generation back within its doors, it is imperative that it understand the Baby Boomer cultural and personal ethos.

The generation born between 1946 and 1964 are collectively known as the Baby Boomers. The population explosion peaked in 1957 at 4.3 million births but remained in the 4 million annual range through 1964. Now the first wave of this nation within a nation has reached middle age. By the year 2000 this entire generation, 76 million strong, will have reached middle age. As we consider our target range of ages for ministry (36-54) we can learn much by observing the Baby Boomers. Our observation of this generation highlights the need for ministry with single adults as typical mid-life struggles are more noticeable because of the staggering numbers.

Moreover, this is the first generation to grow up watching television. Compared to their parents, the baby boomers are less formal and more fitness
The "cycle of poverty" hits these people hard. Single-parent families are not only poor, but also less educated. Their children are more likely to go to jail. Their energy is exhausted not in improving, but merely in maintaining their lives.40

Mid Life Direction

Many mid life singles are successful, but miserable. LaBier's intuitive book portrays a seven-year study of these outwardly successful but inwardly miserable people whose job dissatisfactions have filled their days with sorrow, broken relationships and fractured self-worth. Many of these expected to succeed -- and did -- only to find that their lives are filled with broken dreams.41

Therefore, these mid life single adults are part of a generation on the move, often aimlessly. As they get older they will change jobs and careers. Some estimates suggest that by the year 2000 the average adult will make four to six career changes during his or her lifetime.42 These adults have learned to change. The information explosion is transforming us from an industrial economy to an information economy.43 Flexible is a key word for the future. A Business Week report states,

Advancing new computer technology is . . . changing the nature of white-collar and service-sector work. Many formerly fragmented tasks are being converted into jobs requiring multiple skills. Computer networks, integrating diverse functions, also require employees who can work as a


team, more often on projects than on tasks. . . . The shift to more complex, project-type jobs should suit well-educated baby boomers, who are demanding broader responsibilities at work as they age. But many workers, particularly younger ones, are deficient in computer literacy or even basic work skills, which places new pressure on corporations to educate labor.44

Therefore, every year more of this generation enters the ranks of mid life. By the turn of the century almost one-third of all Americans will be in the 40-59 age bracket.45 Often middle age is the most productive time in life. Mid life baby boomers - highly educated, at peak effectiveness - are now assuming leadership roles in our society. Our goal as the church should be to harness this energy for the Lord.

For many, the first twenty years of their adult lives have been geared to moving up. Often, anticipated promotions do not come, hoped-for moves are blocked, and the psychological blows can be crushing.46 These adults need to find opportunity for involvement, and meaningful participation in their church.

Nevertheless, mid life singles want to pay their bills, but that is not their primary reason for working. One survey found that 68 percent of the generation wanted jobs in which they could express themselves, and 77 percent were looking for positions that would be challenging and fulfilling.47 “Some may never come to grips with the real meaning of success or self-worth, but few of these people will be content to go on living the way they do, with lives that seem


45Collins, Baby Boomer Blues, p. 5.

46Ibid., p. 5.

47Jones, Great Expectations, p. 285.
As the generation looks for direction and purpose, the church has a wonderful opportunity to lead the way. "Now, perhaps more than any time in baby boomer history, these care-less people are looking for truth, identity, and something to believe in that will give their lives a real center."49

The time has come for the church to develop a comprehensive ministry with this age group as they search for answers to some of life's most difficult problems. Psychology teaches us certain truths about developmental stages. "This, in part, explains recent shifts in baby boomer lifestyles. No longer teenagers or irresponsible college students, these people are entering midlife, and some are beginning to think much more seriously about the future."50

Consequently, as we consider ministry with these singles we will examine how to empower them. "This group insists on participatory management and will look for organizations that provide that opportunity. If they don't 'own' a decision, they tend not to support programs to implement it."51

Mid Life Values

In the seventies Christian leaders spoke of a "war against the family." As they enter mid life many single adults have lost the war. They are single again. What do "family values" mean to them? What is important, meaningful, sacred, to them?


Baby boomers focus on themselves. They constantly ask, "What's in it for me?" and they expect sermons, seminars, educational programs, and reading materials to be both relevant and of the highest quality. They prize excellence and shun mediocrity. It may become important at times to stretch our thinking and examine the real cost of producing quality in our programs.\textsuperscript{52}

These people enjoy active involvement in sports, education, entertainment, church activities, and almost everything else they do. Baby boomers like small groups, interaction, and experience. They dislike formal lectures, long sermons, and most other passive spectator activities.\textsuperscript{53}

After all, baby boomers have grown up in a world marked by change. They resist rigidity, traditions, and "the same old church services." They can choose from a variety of menu items, television channels, shopping center stores, and course offerings at the local community college. In a similar way, many shop for churches and are willing to change if the present church does not meet their needs. Few have emotional ties to any one denomination. For this generation, the name of the game is flexibility. Without compromising our message, we should pursue new methods of ministry, e.g. support groups, prayer retreats, direct mail, among others.

The zeal that fueled the antiwar movement of the sixties is now channeled into other activities. Enthusiasm on both sides of the abortion issue illustrates this. When baby boomers' fervor is directed to worthwhile causes, the result can be major positive social and spiritual impact. The challenge of the hour is for the church to give mid life singles a flag to fly and a cause to rally behind.

\textsuperscript{52}Collins, \textit{Baby Boomer Blues}, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{53}Ibid., p. 12.
Therefore, baby boomers like to dress casually. Except for many of their weddings, they do not like to dress formally, interact in formal ways, use formal titles, or participate in formal meetings. Comfort, openness, and casual interaction permit a focus on things other than outward appearance.\textsuperscript{54} It is important to regularly have activities and small group meetings that allow singles to be casual.

A generation that grew up with the message that they should ask questions now continues to challenge, scrutinize, and evaluate almost everything they hear. There is little tolerance for authoritarian monologues, sermon oratory, or demands for blind obedience.\textsuperscript{55} Clergy, politicians, therapists, and others are examined not only for what they say, but also for their lifestyles and honesty. Leaders and ideas are accepted and followed wholeheartedly, once they pass the test for sincerity. The responsibility is more keenly felt to minister with a firm commitment to the Lord, blameless conduct, and a genuine heart for people.

Tolerance and equality are widely accepted among baby boomers. They openly accept people of different race, gender, marital status, or lifestyle preferences. Baby boomers, even those who are Christians, readily accept the rights of others to believe what they want about God, religion, sex, politics, or almost any other issue.\textsuperscript{56} Because of their tendencies to be accepting, baby boomers are able to show selfless love, although their tolerance also can dampen evangelistic zeal. We have worked hard to develop a philosophy of ministry that says "Love the sinner, hate the sin." As we learn how many mid life singles look at life, we should be more determined to display God's love to all, remaining just

\textsuperscript{54}Ibid., p. 24.
\textsuperscript{55}Ibid., p. 35.
\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., p. 60.
as firm in clearly teaching and standing for what is right, and even being more zealous to communicate God's grace to all men.

Consequently, baby boomers have been criticized because they appear to be committed primarily to themselves.\textsuperscript{57} As a result, they often do not stay faithful to one church, the same employer, brand names, a life long career, or consistent attendance at worship services. Transience is common, and often commitments are short-term -- even commitments to marriage.

Baby boomers have grown up with fast food, one-hour cleaners, drive through washes, and television programs that solve even the most involved problems in thirty or sixty minutes. This is not a generation that likes to wait. They want fast service, concise answers to their questions, quick solutions to their problems, immediate spiritual growth, short term academic degree programs, little study, and brief counseling. With most baby boomers, patience is a "drag," not a virtue. It will help us to realize how many mid life singles are thinking, but we need to be aware that we can't have instant ministry with mid life singles. It is important for them to know that we are there for the long term.

\textbf{Family Life of a Mid Life Single}

According to demographic predictions, ninety percent of baby boomers will marry, at least once; about one-third will marry twice. Half will get at least one divorce, one in five will get two divorces, and five percent will divorce three times or more.\textsuperscript{58}


By the time the older baby boomers complete their marriage course, an estimated sixty percent of women who have ever married will also have been divorced at least once.  

The Lighthouse ministry has been dominated by single parents. However, many singles who are hurting, don't find warmth or acceptance at God's house, but rejection and isolation.

When separation and divorce occur, there often is intense psychological pain, spiritual emptiness, a sense of failure, and feelings of insecurity -- especially in the children of divorce.

Single parents need to know that the church cares about their family. Divorce was once seen as an exception, and both parties were excluded from the fellowship of the church, with no place to fit in. If the church is going to have any influence with families in the future, it will need to aggressively minister with those whose lives have been shattered by the trauma of divorce.

Divorced men are more likely than married men to have psychiatric problems, serious accidents, and to be in poor health generally. Divorced women often experience depression and frequently suffer from markedly reduced and even impoverished economic circumstances. The children of divorce become more vulnerable to developing a wide variety of social, behavioral, emotional, and academic problems.

The risks to healthy, wholesome child development that appear linked to divorce include an increased probability that the following problems may emerge: (1) angry and aggressive behavior; (2) sadness, low self-esteem, and depression; (3) impaired academic performance; and (4) trouble with intimate relationships in adolescence and adulthood.

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59 Light, Baby Boomers, p. 147.

60 Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee, Second Chances: Men, Women and Children a Decade After Divorce (New York: Plenum, 1987), pp. 91-95.

61 Ibid., p. 94.

62 Ibid., p. 95.
Nevertheless, for some youngsters these difficulties are short-lived, and within a year or two of the parental separation they regain their developmental stride and are able to put the problems behind them. However, there is mounting evidence now that a substantial number of children, perhaps as many as thirty percent to fifty percent, bear the painful and disruptive legacy of their parents' divorce for years.63

Moreover, the complex world that the mid life single often lives in includes dealing with the complex problems of rebellious youth, and caring for aging parents. They are sometimes called the sandwich generation. *Already there is evidence that the baby boom is encountering a senior boom that will put added pressure on both groups.*64

**Mid Life Singles and the Church**

The church has a wonderful opportunity for the impact of the gospel and the influence of a comprehensive ministry to impact entire family systems and generations for the Lord. The task before us is awesome. The time has come for God's people to marshal our resources and energy to creatively plan how to effectively minister with these adults who present a challenge, an opportunity and a responsibility for the people of God.

Consequently,, many have been surprised to notice large parts of the generation that dropped out in the sixties coming back to the church. Gary Collins tells us that we should have expected it. For decades, young adults have dropped

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out of the church in their late teens and twenties, but an estimated eighty percent come back later. As they approach mid life, baby boomers including singles are now coming back to church, looking for answers, and help with their problems, to a church that has at times been unprepared. Boomers have been attracted to certain types of churches.

Churches that minister effectively to baby boomers emphasize small groups, active involvement, meeting needs, and helping people find and use their spiritual gifts.

The organization that wants to relate well to boomers will promote variety, treat everyone as a professional, value straight talk and truthfulness, encourage participation, minimize layers of management, and be sensitive to individual needs and relationships.

Magazine articles have focused on ways to reach a culture that is steeped in consumerism. We have been raised to "think continually like consumers." Mid life singles often shift from one congregation to another with no desire to become members of any church. These adults have become accustomed to the one-stop shopping convenience of suburban malls and supermarkets. The mega church is in a position to reach the mid life singles who are consumers of religion.

They often like a one-stop church complex that offers a variety of groups and programs, high quality programming, and the opportunity to identify with a large and successful enterprise.

65 Collins, p. 96.


67 Leith Anderson, Dying for Change (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1990), p. 94.


Therefore, early boomers bring this mind set to church. Attenders expect worship services to be more appealing than either the newspaper or the television set. Collins warns of changing the gospel message from one that saves to one that sells.\textsuperscript{70}

There are some things that are clearly right or wrong for any generation. Our message must not change. It will help us to sense the need, and be aware of how mid life singles think about life. Certainly we would not hinder our cause by considering how to "package" and "market" the truth of the unchanging gospel to a generation headed toward hell.

After all, a dynamic singles ministry can provide an excellent evangelistic tool in the hand of the local church. It becomes possible to reach the newly divorced person who would have little interest in attending the annual Mother's Day banquet, but would welcome the opportunity to attend a divorce-recovery workshop and small-group discussion.\textsuperscript{71}

**Conclusions Applied to Ministry**

- Older baby boomers born 1946 - 1957 are a target group for ministry.
- This is a productive stage of life with ministry potential to benefit the church.
- Older boomers who appear to be committed to themselves only, can be effective in ministry.

\textsuperscript{70}Collins, p. 100.

- The broken family is a major part of this group and provides opportunity for ministry for the church.
- They bring the boomers mind set to church and the church can reach them.

MODEL

The third research question asked, "How is the Lighthouse class at Thomas Road Baptist Church a model for ministry with mid life singles?" This historical perspective case study explored the process of ministry with this group.

The History

A result of this case study was to gather a factual and interpretive history of the Lighthouse class. Brown and Allen point out that this kind of history of a church reveals several things:

1. Gaining a better understanding of the group's unique personality.
2. Studying the strengths, victories, and successes of the past to determine which should impact future goals.
3. Developing a document useful for reminding newer members of the class's heritage.
4. Understanding those things in the past that are making a significant impact on the present for good or bad.72

The singles ministry at Thomas Road Baptist Church was started by Gordon Luff who had earlier organized and developed the church's youth ministry.

72 J. Truman Brown, Jere Allen, p. 23.
He launched the College and Career class as the first ministry to young single adults. After Luff left, the new leader of the young single adults, Glen Wright, suggested beginning an additional class for singles over 25 years of age. Wright's recommendation was carried out and in the summer of 1980, the "Lighthouse Class" began with approximately twenty members. Dave Holdren was recruited from the Counseling Center as the first teacher and taught the class until the summer of 1984 when, Glen Shultz of Lynchburg Christian Academy became the teacher.

Another class for singles was begun in 1981 when Ron Hawkins started the Rebuilders Class. As head of the church's counseling ministry, Hawkins sensed the need for a such a class for divorced and separated single adults and served as the teacher for six years. This was the golden era for the class because of the large number of singles being reached.

In the fall of 1987, Norm Yukers joined the staff of Thomas Road Baptist Church as an associate pastor to young single adults. When the author returned to Lynchburg the following spring as an associate pastor at Thomas Road Baptist Church, Norm Yukers recruited him to help Dave Marston with the Lighthouse singles. By the end of May 1988, the author had become the first full-time pastor at Thomas Road Baptist Church to minister to older single adults. One year later, in the spring of 1989, three classes for single adults were begun from the original Lighthouse Class. Almost two hundred single adults gathered weekly to study the Scripture in the Agape class, the Lighthouse class, and the Rhema class. It was approximately ten years from the beginning of a ministry to older single adults at Thomas Road Baptist Church.

However, in addition to these three classes, many mid life singles attend the Pastor's Bible class while others gather in a new counseling-oriented class
called the "Bridge" while others preferred to meet with the younger Agape singles. As part of the Agape Singles ministry, a small group called "Rhema" provides options for singles Bible study and fellowship within the megachurch.

The young single adults are led by a part-time singles pastor and full-time professor at Liberty University's Center for Youth Ministry, Doug Randlett, who was also instrumental in founding the National Association of Single Adult Leaders.

**Impacters and Leaders**

Mike Kachura greatly impacted the Lighthouse Singles. Kachura helped teach the "Rebuilders" Sunday School class for separated and divorced single adults. As a counselor at Liberty University, many of the single adults he helped during the week were encouraged to attend the class on Sunday.

The author recruited Kachura, a licensed, professional counselor, to lead the Wednesday evening discussion group for the Lighthouse Singles, answering questions and dealing with relevant issues in a special meeting for singles. Over thirty singles were reached in a low pressure, non-threatening environment. Thus, many singles who would have ever entered the church auditorium were now active in a singles discussion group.

Jim Schuppe also made an impact on the Lighthouse Singles. A speech professor at Liberty University, Schuppe is a great communicator, and the master of the thought provoking question. He has created a thirst for the Scripture and made the Bible really come alive for singles.
Full-Time Vocational Workers

Many of those who have been involved in the Lighthouse Singles ministry during the past twelve years are now in full-time ministry. Glen Schultz was the teacher from 1984-1987. He taught the class as a layman, while in full-time Christian service as a Christian school administrator. He is now a regional director with Association of Christian Schools International.

Norm Yukers was the administrator for the class from 1987-89. He came to Lynchburg as a retire Chief Petty Officer in the Navy, to lead the young single adults. During the two years he was a singles pastor at Thomas Road Baptist Church he completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in Religion at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. Yukers now leads a dynamic singles ministry at the Rehobeth Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia.

Dorcas Harbin was a single adult who was in the Lighthouse Singles ministry during the "golden era." In an interview with the author, she told of many from this group who are in full-time Christian service including Dave and Lauren Magnuson are with Trans World Radio in Bon Aire, Netherlands Antilles; Steve and Claudia Gardner, in Germany; Bob Lugar in France; and Ron Swann now a pastor in Georgia. In addition, former class members Ed Hedding is a youth pastor in Illinois, and Jim Montgomery is a minister of music in Georgia, Angie Gallagher is a pastor's wife in New Jersey while Larry Lagrande is with Pioneers Missions in Indonesia.

In 1988 Tim Smith was a single adult seminary student participating in the Pastor's Class at Thomas Road Baptist Church. The author persuaded him to bring his guitar to the Lighthouse Class. He graduated from seminary and became one of the visitation pastors. Tom Smith, Tim's twin brother, followed
him to seminary two years later, and is now a pastor in Anahiem, California after being a leader in the Lighthouse ministry.

One of the most thrilling testimonies of the Lighthouse Singles ministry as preparation for full-time Christian service is that of Chaplain Bill Appleton, now stationed aboard the USS Hue City, homeported in Jacksonville, Florida. Appleton was a seminary student at Liberty while preparing for the chaplaincy in the Naval Reserve. The United States Navy Chaplain Corps has identified one of the greatest areas of ministry needs to be that of single parents in the Armed Services. Appleton wanted experience working with single parents so it was not difficult to recruit him for ministry with the Lighthouse Singles. In preparation for the chaplaincy, the United States government requires two years of full-time ministry experience after the M.Div. or equivalency. The United States government recognized his ministry with the Lighthouse Singles as full-time ministry. Larry Teboe is a retired Air Force veteran and a seminary student who also worked with the Lighthouse Singles. He now pastors in Fairfax, Virginia.

Ministry

Another class that started from the Lighthouse Singles in the Spring of 1989 was the King's Daughters. The teacher was Marie Chapman. The class eventually drifted into non-existence.

A group to leave the Lighthouse Singles was more than twenty regular attenders who have become workers throughout the church. Five of these went to the Good Samaritan Center for the inner-city ministry in downtown Lynchburg.

This class was the beginning of a ministry targeting mid life singles. The Lighthouse class that began for singles over 25 years of age became a new class for singles over the age of 25. The emphasis of Lighthouse ministry had become
single again and single parents. The emphasis of the younger group became never married singles.

A dynamic pattern of church growth has been overlooked. To chronicle what God has done with a group of mid life single adults would fill volumes. New people are continually being reached. Single adults are one of the most transient segments of our society. The Lighthouse Singles annually help some of their members move. Many of these have been single parents.

At times older single adults are difficult to reach. Often single adults do not want to explain why they are at least thirty years old and still not married or are single again. Thus, single adults must be reached one-by-one in a caring, compassionate way.

Therefore, when single adults were exposed to the Lighthouse Singles they met a group of caring and compassionate Christians. In many cases, the stage was also set for finding a new life's partner. After they married they were encouraged to be involved in another part of the ministry of the church. Throughout the church there were approximately ten married couples serving who were once a part of the Lighthouse Singles ministry.

In his book *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church*, United Methodist Church Growth Consultant, Kennon Callahan, says that the community grapevine ought to describe a church as a "caring" church. More than a philosophical statement, more than a character reference, the testimony of the Lighthouse Singles is a history of being caring people. This group of single adults has found a way to personal victory by being concerned about others. Their concern for others answered the third research question of how they were a model for ministry.
MEMBERSHIP

The fourth research question asked, "What is a membership profile of an effective ministry with mid life singles in a mega church?" These single adults were very transient. There was an attitude of newness.

In 1995, there were forty active members of the Lighthouse class. Not one is still active who was present when the author took over the class in 1988. Schaller speaks of median tenure, and the need to keep forming new groups. One half of today's members joined before a certain date and the other half joined since that date.73 The Lighthouse class ministered to people in transition. Singles refuse to be bound by location. These single adults drove for miles to join with a group that cared about their special needs.

There were 109 singles who were members of Thomas Road Baptist Church, who were over thirty-five. Twenty-seven were baptized there. Sixty-two joined the church by transfer of letter and twenty-one joined the church by Statement of Faith. For the first eight weeks of 1991 compared to the first eight weeks of 1988 the group more than doubled. The Agape class quickly doubled the attendance of singles over 25 years of age. The average attendance for the years 1988 through 1993 was twenty-four. For the fall of 1993 the goal was to double the average. On September 25, 1993, fifty mid life singles and workers gathered in the Lighthouse Class.

Location

Nevertheless, Dr. Frank Schmitt speaks of growth strangulation being reached when eighty percent of the available space has already been used. Since

the Lighthouse Singles began meeting in the Institute Room of Thomas Road Baptist Church it has changed locations several times. A goal was to find a location that could be called their own and which they could decorate. A large office across the hall was provided for the teacher with a phone for single parents' Sunday morning "emergencies." The office also provided privacy for immediate counseling. There was convenient parking at the Thomas Road Baptist Church complex with the auditorium balcony and with restrooms nearby.

Membership For Ministry

What is the profile of the membership of an effective ministry with mid life singles? This case study attempted to build an explanation about the case and conduct a "time-sense analysis" in which changes in a pattern over time were traced.

Membership Profile

The author ministered in the Lighthouse class from March of 1988 to October 1994. An extensive "internal audit" survey was conducted in 1991 and 1994 for the purposes of seeing who the members were and for long range planning. The purpose of the membership profile was to compile a profile of composite characteristics of the membership and to provide criteria for evaluation of the effectiveness of the programs, staff, and facilities. Evaluation was a tool for planning.

In the Lighthouse Class there was a diversity in ages but the largest percentage were in the target age group of age 36-54. The largest percentage of the Lighthouse group were professional people.

---

74 Brown and Allen, p. 55.
The Lighthouse Membership Profile showed 80 percent female membership. This was a reflection of groups of single adults nationwide. Emphasis had been placed on male leadership in the Lighthouse class. However, there were 22 females and 6 males who completed the survey in 1994. The class became 80 percent female, in spite of having men lead the opening and other responsibilities (table 1).

### Table 1. Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Singles of all races were welcome. Hence, the representation of different races was higher than the national average. The goal was to send a signal to the area that all people were accepted and welcomed. Even the presence of one black person sent a powerful signal.

No non-white members completed the survey in 1994. There was one active black member (table 2).
Table 3. Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUP</th>
<th>% Female</th>
<th># Female</th>
<th>% Male</th>
<th># Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The age group best represented was the 45-54 age bracket with 50 percent of the group in this bracket for 1991. In 1994 the 45-54 age bracket was still the largest group. The greatest growth was in the 35-44 age bracket, with a 45 percent increase in the number of females responding to the survey over 1991 (table 3).
Table 4. Top Six Occupations in Order of Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>PERCENT OF TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROFESSIONAL</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SALES</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LABOR</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVICE</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PART-TIME</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEMPLOYED</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therefore, this indicator described the adult population by a person’s work. It identified segments of society with similar characteristics. 53 percent of the adult work force were white-collar workers.\(^75\) The Gallup report *Religion in America 1979-80* found that professional and business workers were more likely to attend church than manual workers.\(^76\) More than 50 percent of the Lighthouse class were professionals or white-collar workers (table 4).


\(^76\)Ibid.
Table 5. Marital Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARITAL STATUS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEVER MARRIED</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARRIED</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPARATED</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIDOWED</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIVORCED</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, in 1980, 26.3 percent of the total American population age 15 and over was single. Social interaction with other singles was important to this group. Because older singles were highly mobile, they tended to have less involvement and commitment to the community than more permanent residents. In 1980 6.4 percent of the population age 15 years and over classified themselves as divorced and another 2.3 percent as married but separated from their spouse.\(^7\)

The number and percent of never marrieds increased. The largest population group and greatest growth in the Lighthouse class became the divorced. This targeted group became "mainstreamed." Living alone became a common denominator (table 5).

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 18.
Table 6. Education (level)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATIONAL LEVEL ACHieved</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 9-11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRADE 12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUSINESS/TRADE SCHOOL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLEGE, 1-3 YEARS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COLLEGE, 4 YEARS OR MORE</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSTGRADUATE WORK</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hence, the impact of Liberty University was felt when 26 percent of the Lighthouse class members had completed some graduate work. The Lighthouse class was a very literate group. Many were well read professionals. Exposure to various viewpoints through their educational experiences made them more tolerant, and possibly more experimental in their searching.

Not as many members had done post graduate work, but most had completed some college. In 1991 48 percent of the class members had not gone past high school. In 1994, 69 percent had completed education beyond high school. The percentages formed a close comparison with the national sample of the research division of the Home Mission Board, SBC. The Lighthouse Class was not as literate as the national sample. (Less than grade 12 - 33 percent Lighthouse compared to national sample 13 percent had not attended college) (table 6).
In March of 1992, 70 percent of the group had been a Christian for at least ten years. By October 1993 those who had been saved less than a year went from five percent to ten percent of the group.

The group became more mature spiritually. Some more experienced Christians joined the ranks. Even though length of time as a Christian does not equal spirituality, among the ranks of mid life singles in our city and our church, there were mature Christians (table 7).

Table 8. Membership (Length)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LENGTH OF MEMBERSHIP</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOT A MEMBER</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LESS THAN A YEAR</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 YEARS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 YEARS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 YEARS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-20 YEARS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 OR MORE YEARS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Lighthouse class was a vital part of the church, but for the purpose of analysis the median tenure of the membership in the group was considered. In October 1993 the median tenure was observed. There were forty active members that attended at least half of the time. The year they became involved was noted. Half the people joined after 1992. The group had the spark and energy of life, because of the influence of new members.

The ten to twenty year church members were the largest group of Lighthouse class members. Some seasoned Christians comprised the group. As the class reached some in the community, church members were attracted (table 8).

Table 9. Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTENDANCE (4 TIMES) MONTH</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNDAY SCHOOL</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNDAY AM WORSHIP</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNDAY PM WORSHIP</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDWEEK PROGRAMS</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHURCH VISITATION</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentages increased for Sunday School, but decreased for worship, evening worship, mid-week programs, and visitation. The survey was conducted in Sunday School. The mid-week support groups became a strong focus of ministry. Those in Sunday school were not reflected in the support groups. Many of the Sunday morning group were not involved during the week. This was true of all church members (table 9).
Table 10. First Contact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST CONTACT WITH THE GROUP</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRIEND/RELATIVE RECOMMENDED IT</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPOUSE ALREADY A MEMBER</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REARED IN THIS CHURCH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAME ON MY OWN</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORMER PASTOR RECOMMENDED IT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL VISIT OF THE PASTOR</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL VISIT OF A MEMBER</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHURCH'S ADVERTISEMENT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RADIO OR TV PROGRAM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The importance of knowing an individual's first contact with the group helped to determine effective outreach methods as well as methods which were less effective. More people were attending the Lighthouse class because of the recommendation of friends and relatives (table 10).
Table 11. Influenced to Join

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFLUENCE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>1994</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BECAUSE IT IS A BAPTIST CHURCH</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I LIKE THE WORSHIP SERVICE</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT IS LOCATED NEAR MY HOME</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BECAUSE OF MY CHILDREN</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I LIKED THE MINISTER</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT IS A FRIENDLY CHURCH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT IS MY FAMILY CHURCH</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITS FACILITIES</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITS PROGRAMS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHARE A COMMON INTEREST/BACKGROUND</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most common reason for joining the church was that they liked the Sunday morning class time. Several of these Lighthouse singles in 1994 said that they joined the class because of family, programs, and evangelistic outreach. The synergistic effect of being part of a mega church was effective (table 11).

Table 12. Residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OWN</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RENT</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home ownership gave a clue to the relative stability of the families in the area. Three percent of the Lighthouse class members owned their homes.
Percentages below 50 percent reflected communities strongly influenced by renters with high community mobility and/or economic dependency.\(^{78}\)

Two did not respond to the questions on the 1994 survey. The number and percentage of home owners showed a gradual increase. This was high for single adults (table 12).

**Table 13. Housing (Type)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF HOUSING</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SINGLE FAMILY HOUSE</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 UNITS</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-49 UNITS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+ UNITS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOBILE HOME/TRAILER</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Lighthouse class had 65 percent single family housing compared to the national average of 60 percent in 1980. Churches tend to thrive in areas where there is an abundance of single-family dwelling units.\(^{79}\)

There was a significant increase in the number of the group living in single family housing. This was a reflection of the increasing stability of the group (table 13).

\(^{78}\)Ibid., p. 38.

\(^{79}\)Ibid., 38.
Table 14. Residency (Length)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LESS THAN 2 YEARS</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 YEARS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 YEARS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-20 YEARS</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 YEARS OR MORE</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all, 56 percent of the group were at their present address less than two years in 1991. The longer a family resides at one address, the more ministry opportunities are created.

The extended length of residence reflected stability and outreach to some long time residents. The stability of the core group of leaders had a steadying influence on the group (table 14).

Table 15. Residency (Distance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTANCE FROM CHURCH</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LESS THAN 1 MILE</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 MILES</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 MILES</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 MILES</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-20 MILES</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORE THAN 20 MILES</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In all, 51 percent of the group lived within five miles of the church. The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board Research Division says that nationally more than four-fifths of those surveyed travel less than 15 miles to church.
The greatest change was that of reaching some who lived near the church. Singles drove great distances to a church that met their needs. 43 percent of them lived more than 5 miles from the church (table 15).

Table 16. Commuting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRAVEL TIME TO AND FROM CHURCH</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LESS THAN 5 MINUTES</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 MINUTES</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15 MINUTES</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-20 MINUTES</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30 MINUTES</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORE THAN 30 MINUTES</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

People develop the same travel patterns to work, recreation and church in both direction and travel time. A typical person travels 21.7 minutes to work. 79 percent of the group traveled less than 20 minutes to church.

The greatest number lived 5-10 minutes from the church, but more were driving further and more were reached from near the church. Some of these single adults drove many miles for various programs (table 16).

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80Ibid., p. 41.
However, one dramatic population change that occurred in the last 30 years was household size. In the fifties when so many churches were growing by large numbers, the average-size household was 3.37 compared to 2.75 in 1980. The shrinking household was also caused by the fact that in 1980, 22 percent of all people in the United States were living alone, whereas in 1950 only 9 percent of households were persons living alone\(^8\) (table 17).

Table 18. Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCOME</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LESS THAN $10,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 - $14,999</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000 - $19,999</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 - $24,999</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 - $34,999</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000 - $49,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 OR MORE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^8\)Ibid., p. 22.
After all, the poverty level or low income level for the group was high. Ministries offered depended more on volunteer efforts and required creative use of resources. It was difficult to make a mold for this group with the high percentage of home owners and educated and a large number of low income members. The low income home owners were retired, those living with parents, and those with divorce settlements (table 18).

Table 19. Activities (Satisfaction)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE</th>
<th>VERY SATISFIED</th>
<th>SATISFIED</th>
<th>DIS-SATISFIED</th>
<th>VERY DIS-SATISFIED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUNDAY AM WORSHIP</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNDAY SCHOOL</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSIC MINISTRY</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNDAY PM WORSHIP</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRAYER MEETING</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOUTH PROGRAM</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISITATION PROGRAM</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1991 Sunday school and morning worship service received the most "very satisfied" ratings on the national and Lighthouse composite profile. This should be expected since these were the times when most questionnaires were administered as well as the activities with the highest participation. In 1994 Sunday school received the most satisfactory ratings followed by the morning worship service (table 19).
Table 20. Activities (Emphasis)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>TIMES MARKED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FELLOWSHIP</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSIC</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLE STUDY</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOUTH PROGRAM</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The national composite registers Bible study as the emphasis most needed, with youth and leadership as second and third. In 1991 the Lighthouse singles registered fellowship as the most needed emphasis with an equal number listing as second music, Bible study and youth.

In 1994 the most needed emphasis was Bible study with an equal number listing as second fellowship and leadership training. The third most needed emphasis was recreation.

After all, singles needed and wanted fellowship. More attention needed to be given to singles planning activities. Even though the music at the church was some of the best in the world, emphasis needed to be given to the music in the Singles meeting. The Thursday evening discussion group members confirmed their thirst for God's Word with their faithful attendance (table 20).

**Outreach**

Efforts relating to fellowship, greeting visitors, spending more time with new members, and efforts to make the class accessible to handicapped persons were attempted. Willingness to be trained and participation in visitation was a weakness. The group did well with direct mail outreach. Class bulletins were mailed with notes to absentees weekly. A monthly newsletter was sent to the
entire role. Letters were written to inactive members, copies made, and mailed from the church. In 1991 and 1994 the first contact most members had with the group was because of the recommendation of friends and relatives.

Accepted

In 1991 the composite showed that most participants perceived that they were a vital part of the group. The class was concerned about those who did not see themselves as a vital part. The largest proportion of participants never made a suggestion at the group.

Expect Help

The composite scores for 1991 showed that the class was truly a caring place with most of the participants registered that the group would help them. Leaders in the group took the initiative in looking for needs.

In 1994, as the group changed, the members still felt the class would help them in a time of trouble. This was the key character trait of the Lighthouse class.

Lighthouse Singles Programs

Nevertheless, the Lighthouse Singles were an integral part of Thomas Road Baptist Church. They did not function as an autonomous organization. As a result of survey questions, about programs, conclusions were drawn as to the profile of the Lighthouse single adult programs.

Sufficient organization was established to conduct and coordinate the Lighthouse Singles programs and services. The organization was appropriate for the size, composition, and locality of the Lighthouse Singles.
These older singles had the same full-time pastor for six years, but the leadership teams were continually changing. There was a need to develop a chart showing the organization of the ministry.

The present organization was flexible enough to be adapted to future growth needs. There was no constitution or bylaws setting forth the agreements that were to govern the life and work of the Lighthouse Singles.

Hughes was a student at Liberty Baptist Seminary and continuously evaluated the need for and effectiveness of the Lighthouse Singles programs. A Single Adult Council regularly reviewed the life and work of the Lighthouse Singles ministry.

Communication was easy and effective throughout the organization. The Lighthouse Singles printed a monthly newsletter and weekly bulletin. The newsletter was mailed to over 100 singles.

The Singles understood the organization and its organizational relationships. The church provided the facility and supported a full time pastor. The Lighthouse Singles operated on a limited budget.

The greatest strength of the Lighthouse Singles ministry was that the single adults were aware of the mission. The Lighthouse mission field was specific and targeted.

In 1994 the group felt that the most needed emphasis was Bible study; fellowship was second; and training third. This was indicative of spiritual growth.

There was some concern based on members' perception of whether they felt accepted in the church fellowship. Most of the Lighthouse Singles thought that their suggestions would be heard and that they could expect help in a time of need.
17. The largest number (47%) live alone compared to 33% who live in 3 member households.

18. While they are not wealthy, 57% earn more than $20,000 annually.

19. A significant finding is that 28% of those older single adults survey at Heritage Baptist Church were either "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with Sunday School.

20. A very significant finding is that 42% wrote in as one area needing more emphasis is that of older single adults.

21. It is worth noting that of the hours spent in church-related activities during a typical week, (63%) said that none brought them into contact with inactive church members or lost persons for either a direct or indirect Christian witness.

22. On a scale of 1 - 7, 57% say they feel their suggestions for change would get a hearing at their church.

23. One of the most significant and promising findings of this survey was that 78% felt that members of their church would help in a time of trouble.

Observations

As a result of this survey of single adult church members at Heritage Baptist Church, a healthy, vibrant, caring church was noted. Mid life singles at this church were overwhelmingly committed to their church. There was great potential for a single adult ministry, targeting the needs of mid life singles.
LEADERSHIP

The fifth research question asked, "What is effective leadership for mid life single ministry?" Another link in the chain of variables for effective ministry is to examine leadership. What are the characteristics of leaders of mid life singles in a mega church? This case study described the experience of being a leader with mid life singles. Human experiences were examined through the detailed descriptions of the people being studied. As a qualitative research method the procedure involved studying a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning.

The Leadership Team

Direction, focus and vision for ministry with mid life singles was achieved by leading them to assume ownership of the group. The purpose of the leadership profile was to discover and analyze the opinions of a cross section of the leadership. Generally defined, leadership is an action-oriented, interpersonal, influencing process.

The Lighthouse ministry with mid life single adults was led by a group of adults with a focused vision to reach and minister with a targeted population segment. They captured the "dream" of reaching a difficult age group in some of life's most difficult predicaments. The "dream" for ministry is reaching adults in transition, knowing that for many their contribution will be small and brief.

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83 Brown and Allen, p. 66.

According to Bob Dale, a church begins with a "dream." Usually that dream includes the evangelization of many persons in its community and a bringing of its members closer to God. The church can be restructured according to the present beliefs of the church until it finds itself once more setting realistic goals for ministry. The reality of being a part of a mega church provided a foundation for faith. The Lighthouse single adult council was composed of the teacher, support group co-ordinator, and visitation team leader, joined with singles who were not as forceful or vocal. The Lighthouse leadership team was constantly in transition because of the transient nature of the group. Married couples helped to add stability to leadership. The goal was to recruit and train leaders from among this group of single adults. This does not mean that the best leadership for singles' classes ought to be single. In fact, couples are normally better. The Lighthouse group was an example of a team of volunteer workers for ministry. More than an activities committee of an adult Sunday school class, these adults led others in a comprehensive, vital life-changing ministry.

The leadership team became the activities committee. These single adults assumed ownership of a multi-faceted ministry and became a model for others.

Any administrative event breaks naturally into four parts. The first one has to do with ideas or concepts. The second has to do with things, or the operation of the event. The third and fourth have to do with people. People need someone to excite and encourage them to become involved in the work of God. Once the event is launched, someone needs to be concerned for the human relationships which revolve around the event.

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86 Tillapaugh, p. 159.

In the midst of a group of people, many who were divorced, trying to raise children alone, mourning a broken engagement or the death of a spouse, it was easy to feed on the negative. It was important that leaders pointed the group toward a positive outlook.\textsuperscript{88}

Leaders don't grow on trees. Some leadership will rise on its own, but it will generally not be enough to sustain a class over a significant period of time. Many classes experience a 50 percent turnover in a single adult class within a six month period. It never fails that many of these will be class leaders. Therefore, single adult leadership must be constantly developed and trained.\textsuperscript{89}

This group displayed some important leadership characteristics that were commended by students of leadership.

\textbf{Objectives}

The Lighthouse class attempted to incorporate a "Management by Objective" philosophy of ministry. Management by objective refers to a formal, or moderately formal, set of procedures that begins with collaborative goal setting and continues through performance review. The Lighthouse class developed a system of collaborative goal setting with the activities committee. The common objective of creating stability and support for the hurting unified the Lighthouse ministry. The performance was evaluated by completion of the membership survey for this project (Appendix One).

\textbf{Authority}


People develop their competencies in direct relation to the authority that has been delegated to them, not the responsibilities they have been asked to take. In any organization, the higher the delegation of authority, the higher the level of competencies and the more leaders the organization helps to nurture forward.\textsuperscript{90}

Therefore, the Lighthouse class adopted the philosophy of ministry "Giving Away the Ministry." The goal was for all of the single adults to be involved in the ministry. Leaders were given authority to plan, lead, and develop different parts of the ministry. Fifteen had specific job descriptions, i.e., setting up and tearing down the room, planning activities, planning special music, making announcements, taking prayer requests, co-facilitating support groups, calling and visiting absentee and prospective members, writing articles for newsletters, etc.

\textbf{Decision Making}

However, people learn leadership best in an environment where decision making is participatory and straightforward. They learn leadership worst where the decision-making environment is top-down and drawn out. The key principle for a straightforward decision-making environment is this: The shorter the time frame, the better the decision-making environment.\textsuperscript{91} If it took the Lighthouse class three months to make a thirty dollar decision, damage was being done to the leadership-development environment. Callahan describes four types of decisions: (A) specific central characteristics the group is planning to expand or add in the coming three years. (B) supportive key objectives planned to achieve


\textsuperscript{91}Kennon L. Callahan, \textit{Twelve Keys to an Effective Church}, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983) p. 154.
this year. (C) mid-range decisions that come to the leadership council on a month-to-month basis. (D) Week-to-week incidental decisions. In a healthy decision-making environment as many persons as possible were invited to participate in the "A" decisions.

Continuity

The leadership strength of the Lighthouse class was that Charles Hughes spent six years working with the same group of single adults. "People learn leadership best in an environment of continuity, not discontinuity. Leadership is learned over a period of time. Part of the continuity comes from two to four long-range objectives, part of it comes from living and working with a congregation over the long haul, and part of it comes from growing and developing understanding of the past in a given setting."92

Competency

People learn leadership best in an environment of competency, not willingness. When the team of persons with which one is working is competent, then one can most fully develop one's leadership abilities. The art is to look for someone who will do it well, not someone who is willing.93

So, competent leaders directed the Lighthouse class. Five graduate students, some of whom were single, single parents, or previously married led this ministry. These lay leaders in the Lighthouse group have displayed competency by planning, responding quickly in times of need, and developing flexible alternatives for ministry and activity.

92 Callahan, p. 154.
93 Callahan, p. 154.
To satisfy the need for discipleship of single adult men was essential. One of the greatest needs was one of the greatest strengths of the Lighthouse Singles ministry as the author met weekly for one hour with five men.

Randy Cash was a single adult man who was the glue that held the organizational profile together. As a member of the activities committee, Randy unselfishly gave his time, talent, and resources to make ministry happen.

**Pastoral Ministries**

Therefore, the Lighthouse Singles followed their singles pastor in performing church tasks. One of the prominent strengths of the Lighthouse Singles was their participation and support of the ministry of Thomas Road Baptist Church.

Over twenty Lighthouse Singles left to begin other classes or to work in the church in some capacity. This was a strength of the Lighthouse Singles ministry.

In looking at the Lighthouse singles some saw one of the smallest adult Sunday school classes. They failed to notice that the Lighthouse Singles were everywhere. They formed the nucleus of the downtown Good Samaritan ministry. Also ten couples were married and functioned throughout the church.

The pastoral leaders of Thomas Road Baptist Church were aware of the unique spiritual needs of single adults. The church members and many of the pastoral staff failed to recognize the unique challenge of being a single adult.\(^{106}\)

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The single adult pastors at Thomas Road Baptist Church worked hard to augment the image of the church in the community. The Lighthouse Singles worked hard to allow the community grapevine to broadcast that they were caring people. One of the greatest needs was to heighten community perception of the Lighthouse Singles.

The needs of the Lighthouse Singles for personal counseling were being met through two support groups that met at the church weekly. A discussion group Bible study also met once a week which fulfill the need for group counseling. Another strength of the Lighthouse Singles was that they developed one of the most outstanding small group ministries in America. Small groups were led dealing with the single adult issues of divorce, grief, and loneliness that were an outreach and a depth builder.

A significant number of Lighthouse Singles were being dealt with professionally. Most of the Lighthouse Singles met occasionally with their singles pastor who was also a trained counselor. He spent almost twenty per cent of his ministry time counseling singles.

One of the strengths of the Lighthouse Singles was evangelism. Many of the Lighthouse Singles were certified trainers in the Evangelism Explosion program. An indispensable part of the Lighthouse Singles philosophy of ministry was building "the kingdom."

In the past, the Lighthouse Singles were active in the evangelism ministry of the church, targeting mid life singles for personal evangelism. A prevailing philosophy had been for the singles to work in the church visitation program. However, this was not productive for the Lighthouse class. This study highlighted the need for singles themselves to aggressively pursue singles for Christ.
The Lighthouse Singles gathered on Sunday morning for Bible study which was the rallying point for the week. The meeting was well organized and led by singles. Through their responses to the survey, singles felt that the scripture was communicated effectively and reported leaving the class knowing God had spoken to them. A concern for future planning was to make these “Sunday morning singles” find time for personal evangelism targeting mid life single adults throughout the week.

Bible Teaching Program

After all, the heart of the Lighthouse Singles ministry was Bible study. Sunday morning provided a verse-by-verse expositional teaching of the Scripture. On Thursday evening the singles met for a discussion group Bible study at the church.

The Bible classes manifested a spirit of evangelism. Testimonies were given about leading people to the Lord. The interesting and challenging Bible classes lead members to witness, worship, learn and minister daily.

Training Program

However, the only formal training program of the Lighthouse Singles was in counseling and discipleship. Because an effort was constantly made to recruit leaders, there was a continual need for leaders and workers to be trained.

There was a further need for in-service training for those in leadership positions. Mature, effective Christians were being produced through the
Lighthouse Singles ministry apart from an organized training program. The philosophy was leadership training through discipleship.  

Members were taught how to apply Christian principles to their daily lives. After six years of discussion, counseling, and group interaction, the author noticed that most of the Lighthouse Singles did not understand the beliefs of the church. Neither were they well informed about Christian and Baptist history.

The singles did not understand Baptist polity and organization, therefore, they did not need to serve on committees or be involved in the administration of the mega church. The Lighthouse Singles needed more thorough training in worshiping, witnessing, and ministering.

**Music Program**

Still, some of the singles have participated in the church choir and music program at Thomas Road Baptist Church as there was no comprehensive music program within the Lighthouse Singles.

There were trained musicians, but no music education program. Appropriate music was planned for the singles' meetings. The quality of music performance was excellent. By being a part of a great church with a great music program the singles themselves planned the music with a wealth of talent from which to draw. Overall, the meetings were well planned, relevant, and interesting.

**Missions Program**

Although the Lighthouse Singles were constantly challenged by the missions program at church, there was a need for the group to have its own

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107Hageman, p. 140.
mission projects. The small children of single parents had opportunity to participate weekly in a missions program of their own on Wednesday nights.

Missions was an area of weakness for the Lighthouse Singles. The Lighthouse Singles were a part of a church with a great missions program. These singles should have been encouraged not just to financially support a project, but to be involved themselves.

**Effectiveness Profile**

Lighthouse Singles were surveyed to determine how effective the class was, using the twelve keys developed by Callahan. The purpose of the effectiveness profile is: 1) to obtain the perception of the group regarding the twelve keys to an effective and successful church, 2) to determine which of these are intact and should be strengthened, 3) to determine which of the keys should be added. A discussion of the characteristics with the Lighthouse leaders proved to be informative.

Twelve characteristics can be identified that contribute to a church's being effective and successful. These twelve characteristics fall into two categories: six are relational characteristics and six are functional characteristics. Generally speaking, effective, successful churches have nine of these twelve central characteristics.

1. Specific, Concrete, Missional Objectives
2. Pastoral and Lay Visitation
3. Corporate, Dynamic Worship
4. Significant Relational Groups
5. Strong Leadership Resources
6. Streamlined Structure and Solid, Participatory Decision Making
7. Several Competent Programs and Activities
8. Open Accessibility
9. High Visibility
10. Adequate Parking, Land, and Landscaping
11. Adequate Space and Facilities

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Objectives

One key is having specific, concrete missional objectives. "Specific refers to the fact that the local congregation has focused its missional outreach on a particular human hurt and hope..."\textsuperscript{110} The Monday evening support group for single parents targeted a particular area of need. The group was led by two single parents. "Concrete" refers to the local church's delivering of effective help, hope, and new life in a competent, compassionate, committed, and courageous manner.\textsuperscript{111}

"Objectives" refers to missional direction stated in sufficiently clear fashion that is possible to know when they have been achieved. Those missional objectives may be stated in formal or informal ways. The local congregation that is effective in mission is the congregation that has a compelling passion for the achievement and accomplishment of mission and has moved forward toward the substantial accomplishment and achievement of very clear, intentional goals.\textsuperscript{112}

In the fall of 1993 the Lighthouse class had a goal of doubling the class's average attendance of twenty-four for the past three consecutive years. On September 26, 1993 fifty middle-aged, single adults and workers attended the class.

\textsuperscript{109}Ibid., p. 86.

\textsuperscript{110}Callahan, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{111}Ibid., p. 1.

\textsuperscript{112}Callahan, p. 2.
Worship

Another key is corporate, dynamic worship. The weekly Lighthouse Singles meetings were holistic in music and message, corporately planned, and led by a compassionate, competent team of laity and pastor. For this project, the key that is called "worship" will refer to the weekly Sunday morning meeting of the Lighthouse class for Sunday school.

Worship is corporate whenever there is a strong sense of belonging, a strong sense of togetherness and community among the people who share in it. Worship is dynamic whenever the service stirs and inspires the people who participate in it and whenever profound help and hope are shared with and among them. Worship does not need to be funny or complex. Nor does it need to contain gimmicks and razzle-dazzle. Rather, it means that people experience their togetherness in a simple, profound way amidst the dynamic gospel that shares with them help and hope.113

The Lighthouse class was more than programs, doctrine or dogma. Over the years, unbelievers attended the Lighthouse class. At times, their eyes moistened as their hearts were touched. What the class lacked in organizational structure was compensated for with its emphasis on meeting people's needs.

People search for community, not for committees . . . The search for community is the search for roots, place, and belonging - for a group of people in which significant relationships of sharing and caring can take place.114

113Ibid. p. 24.
114Ibid., p. 35.
Leadership

Another intact key was strong leadership resources. The Lighthouse Singles nurtured their leaders to be relational and caring with both individuals and groups of singles.

Of the keys that were intact and still needed to be strengthened was leadership training. These single adults had enormous problems but they were capable of performing ministry themselves. Another intact key that needed to be strengthened was groups. There were two support groups which met on Monday evening at the church. Many of the ones that attended the groups were not from Thomas Road but attended as part of the singles outreach. However, the Lighthouse Singles were constantly starting new caring groups in which singles discovered their roots, place, and belonging.

The structure was streamlined, but the decision-making was not participatory enough. The singles needed to be more involved in the planning, and function of activities. The Lighthouse Single Adult Council needed to function to plan and prepare these activities.

MANAGEMENT

The Management of Ministry - A Functional Specialist

The final link in the chain of variables for effective ministry was to answer the sub question, "How is an effective ministry with mid life singles managed?" This case study defined and described the single adult leader, who he was, and what he did. This was the final link in the chain of variables for effective ministry.
CHAPTER FOUR
CONCLUSIONS

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

After examining the development of effective ministry, some conclusions about demographic analysis, need, a model, the membership, leadership, and management were reached. The first research question that formed the background for a thorough study was, "How does a demographic analysis influence effective ministry?"

This case study examined an intact cultural group in a natural setting during a prolonged period of time by collecting, primarily observational data. The research process evolved contextually in response to the lived realities encountered in the field setting. This study attempted to raise consciousness of the need for targeted ministry with mid life single adults. This study invokes a call to action that potentially will lead churches to plan effective ministries.

The Lighthouse ministry with mid life single adults, was located geographically in a Metropolitan Statistical Area that affords opportunity for effective ministry because of the number of mid life single adults who lived within driving distance of the facility at Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia. The community of the mid life and unmarried adults provided a unique target for ministry. There was a need to reach and minister to the special needs of the targeted population. This case study of the Lighthouse class displayed a model of the process of ministry with this group. This analysis of the membership traced over time developed a case study that showed patterns compared to the literature on mid life single adults. This phenomenological study produced an organizational profile that described the experience of leading a ministry to mid life singles. A survey of some of the
National Association of Single Adult Leaders in mega churches showed who they were and how they managed their time.

In 1990, the total population for Lynchburg, Virginia Metropolitan Statistical Abstract was 142,199. The population age 36-54 was 53,290, twenty-six percent of the total population. Lynchburg, Metropolitan Statistical Abstract had 36,970 in the 36-54 age bracket with 4,045 middle aged single adults. The issues of divorce and of being a single parent intensified mid life struggles. This particular population not only had special needs, but were able to provide energy for leadership. The Lighthouse Singles goal was community awareness through small groups.

This qualitative analysis of effective ministry was aided by the observation of the numbers. The enormous task was made complex by the unique problems of this population group.

In this qualitative research project we were concerned with the essential qualities of effective ministry with mid life single adults. By answering the question of how a demographic analysis affects ministry we were concerned with counting. The number of mid life single adults in the Lynchburg, Virginia MSA provided a plausible direction for ministry. Clustering was a tactic for generating meaning for ministry as the number of adults in each group of divorced, widowed, and single adults presented opportunities with each people group. As we looked at the number of adults, the mid life single adult in Lynchburg often stood alone, sometimes hurting. As we observed and participated in support groups these adults told of living alone. The demographic analysis provided a goal of being an oasis of ministry to adults all alone in a crowd of people. We have observed the numbers in each group, we saw the potential of bringing together mid life single adults from the number of divorced, never married, and
widowed singles. As we looked at the demographic analysis, we noticed patterns, metaphors, clusters, and themes. Analytically speaking, the effective ministry with mid life single adults was more than the sum of its parts. The demographic analysis was the first link in the chain of variables for effective ministry.

As we developed theoretical coherence we fixed the findings of our study to over arching, across-more-than-one-study propositions that accounted for the "How?" and "Why?" of effective ministry. One of the strengths of this qualitative research was precisely its capacity to describe in detail the empirical phenomena under study.

By the turn of the century an entire generation of baby boomers, 76 million strong, will have reached middle age. Psychology's emphasis on developmental stages helped to explain how to understand and minister with this age group. This generation of single adults often returned to the church with their own values. They wanted to participate in the leadership. Many of this generation were victims of the war against the family. To effectively minister with these middle aged singles, the church needed to provide a program for the single parent family. The mega church was uniquely equipped for ministry with this generation of single adults.

NEED

A conclusion of the study of the need left the mega church without excuse for not engaging in ministry with this population. A study of the literature on older boomers showed unique needs and unique gifts to provide the mega church opportunity for targeted ministry.
Research question two was answered by showing that the study of the need for ministry with this population of mid life single adults revealed a unique people group with distinct needs.

**MODEL**

Research question three asked how the Lighthouse class was a model for ministry. A conclusion reached after years of ministry with mid life singles, was that the Lighthouse ministry was an example for ministry with lessons to be learned for churches of all sizes and a model for mega churches. An important lesson for all churches was that the Lighthouse class was more than a Sunday school class for mid life singles. They have finally found a place to belong. Many were in a transition period because of death or divorce and there was an important need in their lives to be a part of something. All churches can extend and amplify their Sunday ministry, even without a full time pastor or full program of activities, by using the mail and the telephone to encourage singles to attend.

The Lighthouse class modeled the use of support groups in the local church. Many mid life singles fill the waiting rooms of professional counselors. The Lighthouse support groups sent a powerful message to the community that they were ready to listen and that they cared.

Although Sunday morning was the base and focal point of ministry, support groups, visitation and activities complemented a multifaceted program throughout the week. A key factor in ministering with these adults was the confidence and support they received by knowing that they were part of a great church.
After being an observer participant for years, surveying one group in 1991 and 1994 and comparing another church in 1996 the greatest similarity seemed to be a willingness to be trained and a lack of involvement in evangelism.

1994 Comparisons

One of the goals of the Lighthouse ministry was to create a haven of rest from the storms of life. Lives of middle aged single adults were constantly changing. There was significant growth and change since the first survey.

MEMBERSHIP

Research question number four asked what was a membership profile of effective ministry. In compiling composite characteristics of the membership, significant change was noted in several areas. The percentage and number of females increased from 63 percent in 1991 to 80 percent in 1994. In 1991 there were no women ages 25-29. In 1994 11 percent of the women were in this age group. The number and percent of divorced singles almost doubled from 5 to 9 and 19 percent to 32 percent. In 1994, the composite membership profile was more educated. Some mature Christians joined the group. Ten to twenty year church members became the largest group. A concern was that while Sunday school attendance increased, attendance of other meetings decreased.

A significant change was that most in this group who joined the church in 1994 did so because they enjoyed the worship service. An unusual change was the increased number of those who entered the group from the church neighborhood and those who drove great distances.
A dramatic change was the increased and predominat number who lived alone. They found belonging, acceptance, and family in the class. This membership profile helped evaluate the effectiveness of programs, staff, and facilities.

The greatest change was the result of the philosophy of "giving the ministry away." Single adults assumed ownership of the group. The greatest number felt that their suggestions for change would be heard. The Lighthouse ministry became their group.

**Most Needed Changes**

The purpose of the survey was to identify areas of needed change as perceived by the singles themselves. The survey confirmed the following ten concerns:

1. advertisement—awareness of ministry in the community
2. activities—one first class activity per month
3. relationships—harmony, trust, belonging
4. visitation—essential for growth
5. involvement by every single
6. measurable goals
7. larger facility
8. new carpet
9. activities for children of single parents
10. elevate self esteem

Lighthouse Singles saw a change in the attitude needed in approach to their ministry. They saw the need for singles to think of themselves as ministers.
Lighthouse Singles thought that the leadership should ask for the input of singles as to how they could help in a practical way.

One of the most needed changes was for a new facility. Christian educators speak of growth strangulation. The small size of the present singles classroom was a barrier to growth. Members also noted that the room desperately needed new carpet.

A further need was for advertising the Lighthouse Singles as a group where every single adult was involved. Singles looked for a place to belong.

**Recommendations**

Therefore, after years of observation, study, and involvement with ministry to mid life singles, three suggestions for future consideration are offered. First, there is great potential for a Sunday school class for older singles, over twenty-five years of age. Single adults see a need and indicate a willingness to be trained for evangelism. Second, there seems to be a great potential for an evangelism explosion-type program. Third, the testimony of a caring church could be capitalized for ministry with the addition of lay-led support groups. Those in leadership are concerned enough to complete the survey and analyze their ministry with single adults.

**LEADERSHIP**

Research question number five asked what was effective leadership. From research question number five, it was concluded that leadership training through discipleship needed to be continued and specific goals needed to be developed. There was a need to plan an annual leadership training retreat. Singles felt that an Evangelism Explosion program for Lighthouse Singles was a priority. It was a
part of the philosophy of ministry for the singles to know that they were the church. So many workers had been recruited from the class for the Good Samaritan Center, Evangelism Explosion, and the Sunday school that the ministry to singles had been neglected.

Thomas Road Baptist Church provided the physical resources, leadership, and program for a model of ministry. A pattern of growth and ministry targeting mid life singles had been established for years. In response to a survey for developing an effectiveness profile, these single adults felt the Lighthouse class needed a better visitation program and a more participatory single adult council.

A survey of the leaders of large groups of singles was conducted nationally. Most of these were full-time pastoral staff. Thirty-five percent of their group were over 35 years of age. They were well educated, had served in one church for the past five years, and saw the Sunday School as the best way to attract new singles. These leaders of singles spent 26 percent of their time in the office. A full time pastor for single adults was suggested as a strategy for developing a targeted ministry with mid life singles.

MANAGEMENT

The Church Staff

Research question number six asked how an effective ministry was managed. So, in this fast-paced, high-tech, sound-byte society we live in, single adults are attracted to a ministry that is well organized, properly staffed with volunteers and professionals, yet concerned about them as individuals. In 1976, a British minister did a study of four American churches with significant growth
patterns. His observation was that "one key factor in all their growth patterns was strategic staff development."¹

The use of the term "professional" in local church ministry is a relatively recent development. Even though some ministries still hesitate to use the term, it simply refers to those individuals who have trained for a specific ministry in the local church and are paid a salary for the service they render. F. E. Bullet has defined the professional as

... a field of human endeavor with a well defined body of knowledge, containing basic principles common to all, application and techniques unique to the field, with practitioners skilled and experienced in applying these techniques, dedicated to the public interest.²

In recent years, professionals in the local church have greatly increased in number and variety of ministry. A number of churches today include salaried professionals involved in very specialized ministries.

There is a well-defined body of knowledge unique to the adult singles' pastor. It is true that a senior pastor can minister to single adults without a professional staff person, but the relationship is like that of a general practitioner to a medical specialist. Some of life's most difficult perplexities are being faced by single adults. The heartaches of divorce, child custody, grief, and loneliness are only a few of the single parent issues requiring mastery of a well-defined body of knowledge. Clearly there are some common principles of ministry unique to the singles' pastor, and there are some pastors today who are skilled and experienced in applying ministry techniques unique to the single adult world.

Age

Adult singles' pastors responding to the 1992 survey for this project were, on the average, thirty-eight years of age. The youngest was twenty-six while the oldest was fifty-five. Four were over fifty and twelve were between forty and forty-nine (1992 Survey). This information reveals that the successful adult singles' pastor is a mature person; few are novices. They have experience in living and are mature enough to help single adults face some of life's toughest problems.

Although many have felt that any associate pastor role was a stepping stone to the position of senior pastor, the ages of the pastors responding to the survey further indicated they are people with experience in living who have made a commitment to ministry at an age of limited choices. For most, there will be no turning back. These men are willing to give the best years of their life to a ministry with an exciting segment of our adult population.

Educational Background

The survey also showed something of the educational background and continuing involvement of the adult singles' pastor (1992 Survey). All were college graduates, except one who had completed three years of Bible college. Of these single adult pastors, 70 percent selected an academic discipline for their major in college in a non-religious field of study (1992 Survey). These men brought various backgrounds with them to the single adult ministry.

Many men who sensed the call to the ministry were choosing non-religion majors in their undergraduate studies. Some, who knew they were bound for seminary and graduate school, were choosing psychology and social science majors in college.
Some feel that a minister to singles should have a seminary degree. This may be helpful, but is not required. Many have not had seminary training. Many seminaries are limited in courses that offer help for singles ministry. Some have come into singles ministry from other careers, feeling a special burden for adult singles.\(^3\)

At least 79 percent had a master's degree (1992 Survey). The most popular kind of graduate degree was the Master of Divinity. Many of these men prepared well for the ministry and saw themselves as pastors for this unique singles population segment.

The Master of Religious Education degree had been earned by 14 percent (1992 Survey). These men were functional specialists ministering to singles but their ministry was enhanced by understanding the educational ministry of the church.

A new development in graduate studies for those bound for ministry in the local church was that an equal number (16 percent) had pursued the Master of Arts degree. A Master's degree in Education represented seven percent (1992 Survey). Some teachers left education to pursue ministry vocationally. These men who lead single adults on the staff of great churches all over America truly are professionals. Earned doctorates were represented by 20 percent. Of these, two were Ph.D.'s and the others were Doctor's of Ministry (1992 Survey). These men who were leading large groups of singles had also reached a hallmark of professional competency.

Leaders of single adult programs are not thought of as scholars but many of these men with graduate degrees were trained to study the Scriptures in the original languages. Singles' pastors involved in some type of continuing education represented 61 percent. Of these, 50 percent of their churches paid

their expenses and 11 percent did not (1992 Survey). Many were involved in conferences and seminars but, for the purpose of this analysis, this activity was not considered continuing education.

Any form of ministry calls for training and professional competence. These men have worked hard to continue to strive for excellence in ministry.

Ted Engstrom says,

Every good leader knows that training leads to competence, and without it no organization can flourish. The investment of time and money pay rich dividends for no one is immune from learning more about his work, responsibilities, and abilities. Training, therefore, is not only for the orientation of new staff people, but to produce better performance by those already on the job.⁴

**Churches Served and Length of Stay**

These leaders of single adults have served an average of 1.4 churches in the past five years (1992 Survey). Singles are a transient group but they seem to enjoy a leader who is stable. Their longevity and stability helped them to market their program. A church growth strategy to target single adults is to have a leader who knows the community because he has been there and whom single adults are willing to commit the time and energy necessary to implement church growth strategies.

These adult singles' pastors have been in their present position an average of 3.2 years. Those in their present position more than five years represented 35 percent. A factor in the large, growing groups of singles is a specialist in ministry who is committed to them for a length of time.

⁴Ted W. Engstrom, p. 147.
Ordination

Eighty-one percent of the adult singles' pastors in the survey were ordained (1992 Survey). These leaders were aware that the adult singles' ministry, or the church, cannot grow until the laymen capture a vision for growth and ministry.

Ordination implies commitment of a life to serve the Lord. The work of church growth will be done by the lay person, but the ordination of the adult singles' pastor shows his commitment to the Lord and the church's recognition of him as well as their commitment to him.

Adult singles' ministries can be area wide and interdenominational, but the groups that are making an impact on the single adult world are those that are a part of the ministry of a local church.

Adult Singles' Ministry Tasks and Duties

After all, the adult singles' pastor is an extension of the senior pastor. As a functional specialist he is concerned with reaching, teaching, and nurturing single adults in the faith. Single adults need someone to be their champion. "It is the responsibility of the single's minister to make sure that singles of all ages and stations of singleness are not discriminated against in positions of church leadership."\(^5\)

It is the responsibility of the singles' minister to interpret the adult singles' ministry to the rest of the church staff.

Because a single adult ministry deals with divorced people, a church staff should have a solid understanding of what this means in other ministry areas, such as youth and Christian education. The remarriage issue is large in this respect as well.\(^6\)

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\(^5\) Doug Fagerstrom, "Role of the Singles Minister in the Church," *Singles Ministry Handbook* p. 267.

\(^6\) Ibid., p. 266.
As a strategy for church growth, it is the responsibility of the singles minister to let the community at large know that his church welcomes singles and will minister lovingly and positively to their many needs.7

The adult singles' pastor is one who gives his ministry away. Britton Wood says that "as their minister, I can be a facilitator and keep the supplies available and keep opening the doors they choose to walk through. But nothing takes place unless they want it to happen." A key for developing ministry with these adults has been for them to assume ownership.

It is important that singles have a pastor to lead them. Wendell Belew sees pastoral leadership as essential for church growth.

There is little growth of any kind taking place in churches in which the pastor has not played the key role. He should "equip" the saints, but it is not likely they will be "well-equipped" unless he shows them how. In nearly every instance of exciting church growth, the pastor is the major motivator. He informs of why and he shows them where or how.9

The successful adult singles' pastor will not build the ministry around his personality, polish, or charisma. He should be a responsible enough individual to know not to initiate a singles ministry simply because he was put in the position to do it. "He must support its inception as a ministry born of need in our time that will continue on in the church even if the leadership changes."10

Time Management

How do these adult singles' pastors spend their ministry time?

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7Ibid., p. 267.


10Doug Fagerstrom, p. 267.
Of all the things we have to work with, the most important is the time God has given to us. There is a price to pay in the use of our time because it seems that we human beings are born congenitally lazy. So we have to alter this process. In the final analysis, managing our time really means managing ourselves. We have to budget our time just as carefully as we have to budget our money.\textsuperscript{11}

Men in ministry are not hourly wage earners. It is a real challenge to squeeze the most ministry out of every minute. It is fascinating to see how these adult singles’ leaders used their time.

Given two leaders of equal ability, the one who uses best time as a tool by planning his time more effectively will far out perform the other person. He will take time for creative thinking and the problem-solving which is vital to the job. The other simply put them off until he “finds time.”\textsuperscript{12}

The survey showed that the successful adult singles’ pastor was effectively managing his ministry and his time. Dr. Frank Schmitt teaches that leaders improve their effectiveness by improving their use of time. “Leaders really need to learn how to manage themselves and not just how to manage time. This process calls for careful time management based on goals or objectives.”\textsuperscript{13}

The survey question was designed to separate pure ministry functions, such as visitation, counseling, study, activities, pastoral care, and the ministry function in the office of administration.

They spend 26 percent of their ministry time in the office performing administration. Among those surveyed the most time spent in the office was 60 percent and the least was 10 percent (1992 Survey).

\textsuperscript{11}Ted W. Engstrom, p. 101.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{13}Frank J. Schmitt, Christian Leadership, Pastors or Bishops. (Class Notes, 1986).
During a personal interview with Norm Yukers, the adult singles' pastor at Los Gatos Christian Church in Los Gatos, California, thought adult singles' pastors of the future would be spending more time in the office.

A Christian leader's style will be determined by what he considers administration. If he sees it as a necessary evil, he will not put his heart and soul into it. Then, the organization will suffer and administration will appear to him as unspiritual and non-essential. If he believes it is essential, his organization will have dynamic growth.\(^{14}\)

It is clear that one of the gifts God metes out to men is a special ability to administer or manage. The concept of administrative exercise of government by leaders in no way contradicts the organic form established by the gifts of the Spirit. It is only the recognition that among the differing gifts there must be those to help people to work together by providing adequate organization and direction.\(^{15}\)

Successful adult singles' pastors found themselves spending 17 percent of their ministry time in activities (1992 Survey). The most time given to activities was 40 percent and the least was one percent.

They spend 12 percent of their ministry time in pastoral care (1992 Survey). It is important that they see themselves as pastors. It is important that single adults be accepted as part of the church, but more than any other population segment single adults need a pastor.

George Barna says that there are four primary types of activities in which your church can engage, from a strategic perspective to encourage growth. Those are personal communications, mass communications, community outreach, and event marketing. This allows the "use of activities as a means of drawing the attention and involvement of outsiders."\(^{16}\)

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\(^{14}\)Ted W. Engstrom, p. 54.

\(^{15}\)Ibid.

The successful adult singles' pastor spent 17 percent of his ministry time studying (1992 Survey). "It is the responsibility of the singles minister to do research, reading, interviews, and homework in the area of singleness to understand the ministry directed toward singles." They are truly professionals but they are all reading and studying to keep abreast of their program.

They spend 16 percent of their time counseling (1992 Survey). The problems associated with the single adult world are so complex that any singles pastor could spend all of his time counseling. The most amount of time spent was 50 percent and the least was five percent.

Some have stayed clear of the singles ministry because they fear they will get too burdened by the counseling. You don't have to suffer from overload. One of the great things about divorce or grief recovery workshops is that you can affect many people at once through a group experience. As your people train themselves to become better listeners, the load will decisively change. You may also have professional counselors in your area to whom you can make referrals. The minister should set counseling limits. It cannot be accomplished by one person.

The single adult pastor surveyed spent nine percent of his ministry time visiting. The most was 40 percent and the least was none. It is possible to have a week filled with every night engaged in some group activity. It is possible to have leaders developed to the point of not having to do all the work. It is almost impossible to have an effective ministry with singles and not do any visitation. There are always prospects. There are always singles who are waiting to have someone personally talk to them about the Lord. There are always singles eager to go with their leader to visit.

The most amount of time spent in any ministry activity is spent in the office doing administrative work. The work of organizing, planning, managing, 

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17 Doug Fagerstrom, "Role of the Singles Minister in the Church," p. 266.
and delegating for ministry makes for a tough day before a night filled with a single adult activity.

"It is the responsibility of the singles minister to share with the senior pastor the vision and burden for a singles ministry. Most ministers are willing to be lovingly brought along in any new dream."19 One of the most important aspects of the ministry of the single adult pastor is to be an extension of the senior pastor's ministry.

In George Barna's new book, *User Friendly Churches*, he discusses what growing churches are doing to reach people.

Their personal decisions tended to be need-driven. If their ministry was growing in adult singles ministry, a person who specialized in single's ministry was the next addition regardless of how organizationally lopsided or unusual the staff looked to the outsider. These churches did not believe that there is a standard progression for hiring. They hired the staff they needed, and they got the best available candidate to fill the slot.20

**Variables For Effective Ministry**

These variables for effective ministry led to quantitative data and have defined the targeted population. This demographic analysis led to an examination of mid life developmental characteristics.

Quantitative data concerning the make up of the community led to ministry designed to meet distinctive needs. Older boomers were examined and unique opportunities for ministry were explored.

The result of this historical perspective case study decided how a model for ministry with mid life single adults was developed. The process of ministry was explored as relational ministry was depicted.

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19Doug Fagestrom, "Role of the Singles Minister in the Church," p. 267.

The fourth research question developed the membership profile of effective ministry. Layers of research at different times and locations revealed a key variable - a sense of ownership for the ministry.

The fifth research question examined effective leadership. As a qualitative research method the procedure involved studying this small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning. This variable for effective ministry produced empowerment for ministry. When older single adults realized that the responsibility for ministry was theirs, they enjoyed the belonging, owning, and ministering.

The sixth research question asked how an effective ministry was managed. The study focused on the single adult leader himself and how he managed his time. Those responsible for ministry with mid life singles in ten different denominations and thirteen states were surveyed. Leaders of effective ministries with mid life single adults in mega churches were surveyed as to how they managed their time and ministry to answer the sixth question. Many of these leaders were professionals in ministry. A result was the noting of effective ministry.

Patterns of effective ministry were noted from the survey of leaders in ministry with mid life singles in mega churches. Effective single adult leaders in mega churches managed their ministry well because they managed their time. They continually made choices about priorities. They delegated responsibility, shared concerns, and involved their people.

They were well trained and spent time as a theologian studying to make the truths of God relevant to singles. Much of their time was spent in the heat of the battle, pastoral care, activities, counseling and visitation. These conclusions
were reached after examining the demographic analysis, the need, a model, the membership, leadership and management.
CHAPTER FIVE
IMPLICATIONS FOR MINISTRY
DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

After reviewing the conclusions, the demographic analysis, the need, the model, the membership, leadership and management, implications for ministry were gleaned. An examination of the census data for the Metropolitan Statistical Abstract, Lynchburg, Virginia, revealed different groupings of mid life single adults. The Lighthouse support groups showed that the church cared for the mid life single adult living alone, divorced, widowed or separated. The potential for enlarging the Sunday morning Sunday school ministry was great.

These mid life single adults were in their peak spending years and were eager to attend financial seminars on personal finance. These adults were eager to be involved in leadership of effective ministry. The mega church found a way to the heart of these adults by offering ideas for self improvement and personal development. They listened to the church with ideas about family management.

After years of ministry with these singles, the most effective form of ministry was the support group. The most effective strategy for ministry only required a place to belong and some one who cared.

NEED

The next question was how the study of the need influenced ministry. Many Baby Boomers were returning to the church. These early boomers, all middle aged, were prime targets for ministry. The church needed to be prepared to minister with a generation looking for something to believe in.
MODEL

These mid life "boomers" were looking for something that related to "me." A mega church needs to consider the family struggles of this "sandwich generation." The Lighthouse support groups reached the boomer mind set by the customized, personal, individualistic approach to ministry.

In an attempt to reach an unchurched culture, it was important not to use "Baptist lingo" or the "language of Zion." It was important for new people to feel wanted and welcomed. The sense of ownership that had been developed did not unintentionally foster exclusiveness.

The surveys were administered during Sunday School to adequately reflect inactive members. One of the aspects of effective ministry was participation in a well-rounded program.

The first contact with this group designing an effective ministry was relational rather than functional. For effective outreach and ministry, the group needed to consider not what they were, but how they were perceived. Emphasis needed to be on how they lived their faith rather than how they articulated their positions. The support group was an appropriate venue.

MEMBERSHIP

The next link in the chain of variables for effective ministry with mid life single adults was to understand something of the scientific study, cultural insight, and sociological analysis of this generation, as the membership profile was developed to answer research question number four.

The issues connected with mid life and the importance placed on children were very significant in the return of the Baby Boomer to the church, and the
development of effective ministry. It was important to provide child care for activities with single parents.

In understanding the Baby Boomer cultural ethos, the mentality of the support group, the discussion group, and limited interaction on Sunday morning honored the individual's right to think on his or her own.

However, as Baby Boomers returned to church, it was important to emphasize to a generation that was biblically illiterate with a fuzzy picture of Jesus being a religious leader, that He alone was Lord. In a culture which has settled for relativism at the expense of truth, Baby Boomers needed to hear that truth did exist in the form of Jesus.

The Lighthouse ministry needed to learn from the past and conserve the best ideas for use in future ministry. The support groups needed to be continued. Encouragement for those entering full time ministry needed to be expanded.

Relationship building with an emphasis on participation and "ownership" of the ministry was a catalyst for effective ministry.

An emphasis on male leadership was important for balance. This generation has learned to accept racial diversity and it was a vital part of ministry for all races to be accepted.

More than half were professional or white collar workers. They were less emotional and more informational and more likely to examine and question information presented to them. The support group was a vehicle for ministry.

The group successfully reached some divorced singles. The use of professional counselors and counselors-in-training from Liberty University for leadership of support groups, divorce recovery workshops, seminars, and group meetings was an effective strategy for ministry. The grief recovery support group was an effective strategy to target the widowed population.
Exposure to various viewpoints through their educational experiences made them experimental in their searching. It was important for discussions to be speculative and idea-centered rather than authoritarian and emotion-centered.

One identifiable characteristic of this group was that many were apartment dwellers. Lighthouse ministry offered a wide range of services including household repairs, auto maintenance, budget management, security measures and self-defense. This group examined financial responsibility through special emphasis on stewardship. Foster parents and foster grandparents were enlisted to provide regular support networks within the church.

In conjunction with the weekly support groups the Lighthouse offered divorce recovery workshops. It was important for the divorced population to see the church as a place to belong.

Emphasis needed to be placed on male leadership for effective ministry. For effective ministry, age group firmness was not as important as creating a place to belong. Studies conducted by the Home Missions Board, SBC have revealed a higher incidence of white-collar workers on church rolls as compared to the percentage of white-collar workers in the community.

More than half the group were white-collar persons who tended to be information handlers. Such persons were likely to respond to verbal and written communications that were less emotional and more informational in nature, including the use of concepts, ideas and values. These persons were more likely to examine and question information that was presented to them.

One of the key implications of this indicator was the need for counsel and support to persons who were divorced. The use of counseling professionals, faculty, and graduate students was expanded for support groups, discussions, and individual counseling.
Divorced females outnumbered divorced males and required a greater degree of affirmation and acceptance. Group activities met spiritual and social needs of divorced persons.

Persons with a college education were more open to change. Exposure to various viewpoints through their educational experiences made them more tolerant of others' views and concerns or more experimental in their searching. Discussions tended to be speculative and idea-centered rather than authoritarian and emotion-centered.

The schedule of activities needed to vary enough to consider students, shift workers, and single parents. The importance of knowing an individual's first contact with the church helped to determine effective outreach methods. The goal to build relationships with the unchurched through activities and groups was an effective method. Members have been attracted by how believers live their faith rather than what they believe.

The longer singles and single parent families resided in the community, the more opportunities for ministry were created. Effective ministry was enhanced over time.

Many of these single adults lived more than five miles from the church and were willing to drive more than fifteen minutes to get there. It was important to consider the travel time when planning activities.

Income needed to be considered when thinking of helping those with genuine needs. Occasionally, activities that appealed to professionals needed to be planned and help provided for those who could not afford it.
LEADERSHIP

The fifth research question looked at the characteristics of leaders as the next link in the chain of variables for effective ministry with mid life single adults. The key ingredient was that the singles assumed ownership of the ministry. The leadership was a team effort. Singles needed to rally around the objective of creating support for the hurting. It was important for each person to have responsibility and a need to belong. Effective ministry with mid life singles was enhanced by the continuity of leadership. Leaders learned the task of leading and their competency increased the effectiveness of ministry.

Nevertheless, one of the most important characteristic of leaders in the group needed to be compassion. Leaders needed to rise to the top. The overall mood and personality of effective ministry needed to radiate warmth and caring.

The organizational profile of an effective ministry focused on single adult men in leadership. The pastoral ministry focused on leadership in evangelism, support groups, and Sunday morning Bible study.

The organizational profile was augmented by an individualized program and dynamic music program. A desire was for the group to be involved in a missions project.

The singles themselves looked at the Twelve Keys to an Effective Church by Kennan Callahan. They used this to examine their own effectiveness in ministry with mid life singles. They saw their strength for effective ministry as 1) the support groups, 2) goals for Sunday morning attendance, 3) the dynamic meetings, and 4) leadership resources. The keys that needed to be strengthened were 1) leadership training, 2) a productive visitation program, and 3) a functioning Single Adult Counsel.
The administration of ministry by the single adult leader was the final link in the chain of variables for effective ministry.

**MANAGEMENT**

The sixth research question was about how an effective ministry with midlife singles was managed. Leaders who were identified by the National Association of Single Adult ministries as leading effective ministries in mega churches were surveyed as to how they managed their time. Twenty-six percent of their time was spent in the office on administration of effective ministry. The final link in the chain of variables for effective ministry is the leader of the lonely, giving away ministry, building lives and constantly thinking of ways to reach that one lost sheep.

A portion of the Single Adult leader survey dealt with types of activities that midlife single adults responded to. Strategies for effective ministry would be a future study. Implications for effective ministry were gleaned from observations about demographic analysis, need, a model, the membership, leadership and management.

**The Chain of Variables for Effective Ministry**

**With Mid Life Single Adults in a Mega Church**

An effective ministry can be developed in mega churches by implementing these variables. The first link was a demographic analysis. It was important to look at the community and age group characteristics. It was important to understand the Baby Boomers cultural and personal ethos to understand midlife adults.
It was then essential to examine membership; knowing about them was an indispensable link in the chain of variables. A necessary link was to examine and develop effective leadership. Giving the ministry away was a basic philosophy, but the final link in the chain was the single adult leader himself. Many of these leaders in mega churches were professional staff.
APPENDIX ONE
MEMBERSHIP PROFILE
Church Membership Questionnaire

1. Sex:
   — a. Male
   — b. Female

2. Race:
   — a. White/Anglo
   — b. Black
   — c. Hispanic
   — d. Asian
   — e. Other

3. Age: (Check appropriate age bracket.)
   — a. 12-17 years
   — b. 18-24 years
   — c. 25-29 years
   — d. 30-34 years
   — e. 35-44 years
   — f. 45-54 years
   — g. 55-64 years
   — h. 65 and over

4. Occupation: (Check the one category that best describes your occupation.)
   — a. Managerial and professional specialty (executive, administrative, and managerial occupations)
   — b. Technical, sales, and administrative support (technicians, salespersons, and related support, clerical)
   — c. Service (includes private household; protective service)
   — d. Farming, forestry, and fishing
   — e. Precision production craft; repair
   — f. Operators, fabricators, and laborers (machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors; transportation and material moving; handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers)
   — g. Student
   — h. Housewife
   — i. Part-time
   — j. Unemployed
   — k. Retired

5. Marital Status:
   — a. Single
   — b. Married
   — c. Separated
   — d. Widowed
   — e. Divorced

6. Check highest educational level you have achieved:
   — a. Grade 0-4
   — b. Grade 5-7
   — c. Grade 8
   — d. Grade 9-11
   — e. Grade 12
   — f. Business/trade school
   — g. College, 1-3 years
   — h. College, 4 years/over
   — i. Postgraduate work

7. How long have you been a Christian?
   — a. Not a Christian
   — b. Less than one year
   — c. years
   — d. 2-5 years
   — e. 5-10 years
   — f. 10 or more years

8. How long have you been a member of this church?
   — a. Not a member
   — b. Less than a year
   — c. 1-2 years
   — d. 2-5 years
   — e. 5-10 years
   — f. 10-20 years
   — g. 20 or more years

9. In a typical four-Sunday month, how often do you attend each of the following activities? (if never, enter 0)
   — a. Sunday School
   — b. Morning worship
   — c. Church Training
   — d. Evening worship
   — e. Midweek programs
   — f. Church visitation
10. What was the first contact you had with this church? (Mark only one.)
   ____ a. Friend/relative recommended it
   ____ b. Spouse was already a member
   ____ c. Reared in this church
   ____ d. Came on my own
   ____ e. Former pastor recommended it
   ____ f. Personal visit of a pastor
   ____ g. Personal visit of a member
   ____ h. Church's advertisement
   ____ i. Radio or TV program
   ____ j. Revival/crusade
   ____ k. Bus visitor
   ____ l. Religious survey

11. What one thing influenced you to join this church? (Mark only one.)
   ____ a. Because it is a Baptist church
   ____ b. I liked the worship services
   ____ c. It is located near my home
   ____ d. Because of my children
   ____ e. I liked the minister
   ____ f. Because of the evangelistic outreach of the church
   ____ g. It is a friendly church
   ____ h. It is my family's church
   ____ i. Its programs (music, education, etc.)
   ____ j. Its facilities
   ____ k. Common interest and background with the people of the church

12. Residence:
   ____ a. Own (buying)
   ____ b. Rent (leasing)

13. Type of housing:
   ____ a. Single family house
   ____ b. Apartment/condominium, 2-4 units
   ____ c. Apartment/condominium, 5-49 units
   ____ d. Apartment/condominium, 50+ units
   ____ e. Mobile home/trailer

14. How long has your family lived at your present address?
   ____ a. Less than 2 years
   ____ b. 2-5 years
   ____ c. 5-10 years
   ____ d. 10-20 years
   ____ e. 20 years or more

15. Approximately how far do you live from the church building?
   ____ a. Less than one mile
   ____ b. 1-3 miles
   ____ c. 3-5 miles
   ____ d. 5-10 miles
   ____ e. 10-20 miles
   ____ f. More than 20 miles

16. How many minutes do you spend traveling one way from your home to the church building?
   ____ a. Less than 5 minutes
   ____ b. 5-10 minutes
   ____ c. 10-15 minutes
   ____ d. 15-20 minutes
   ____ e. 20-30 minutes
   ____ f. More than 30 minutes

17. How many persons are living in your home? ________

18. Indicate the range of your family income:
   ____ a. Less than $10,000
   ____ b. $10,000-14,999
   ____ c. $15,000-19,999
   ____ d. $20,000-24,999
   ____ e. $25,000-34,999
   ____ f. $35,000-49,999
   ____ g. $50,000 or more

19. Indicate the approximate number of hours you spend in church-related activities per week. ________

20. Of the hours in question 19, how many were devoted to outreach (church-related activities that bring you in contact with inactive church members or lost persons for a direct or indirect Christian witness)? ________
21. Indicate your degree of satisfaction with the following activities of your church. Place a number beside the activity (1 = very satisfied; 2 = satisfied; 3 = dissatisfied; 4 = very dissatisfied).

- a. Sunday morning worship
- b. Sunday School
- c. Church Training
- d. Music ministry
- e. Evening worship
- f. Prayer meeting
- g. Woman's Missionary Union
- h. Brotherhood
- i. Youth program
- j. Visitation program

Comments: __________________________________________________________

22. Check four of the following that should receive more emphasis:

- a. Leadership training
- b. Recreation
- c. Church facilities
- d. Worship
- e. Senior adults
- f. Young adults (aged 20-24)
- g. Youth
- h. Bible study
- i. Social ministries
- j. Fellowship
- k. Evangelistic services
- l. Missions education

Comments: __________________________________________________________

23. Considering our present location, program structure, and leadership, I believe this church's potential for growth is:

- Low / 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- High

24. I believe the outreach program of our church is:

- Weak / 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- Effective

25. I feel my effectiveness in sharing my faith with others is:

- Low / 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- High

26. My willingness to participate in training for an outreach ministry is:

- Low / 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- High

27. I feel my suggestions for change will get a hearing:

- Low / 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- High

28. I feel members of this church would help me in a time of trouble:

- Low / 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- High


4. After completing the “Church Membership Questionnaire,” tabulate questions 1 to 18 (except 3 and 4) for comparisons to a national sample (p. 59). 1

Add all the responses from your church membership questionnaires to each of the questions and enter in the first column.

For the second column, calculate percentages separately for each question. (For example, add male and female totals, then divide male by the total and multiply by 100 for percentage.)

The third column has a percentage based on a national composite of 12,998 questionnaires.
Charles Hughes  
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary

Dear Mr. Hughes:

I have just finished reading your recommendations, from the singles' survey we took for your project. Our singles group and I must say that we were both encouraged and motivated.

Several of your suggestions, based on our singles' responses, are avenues of ministry that we have either just put into place or are currently looking to implement at Heritage. In particular, the recommendation for a Sunday School class for older singles has already been met with great results (lives being ministered to - not numerical growth). We have also started using more singles on our platform to show that we are open and inviting to singles in our church, as your observation noted. We have organized a lay-led singles ministry team to head-up the activities and ministries of the singles group, utilizing several of our guys to train them as leaders and this has also been very positive. Lastly, I was motivated by the singles desire for more emphasis on singles (47%), their length of salvation (63% saved over ten years), desire for study, and their desire to reach out in evangelism (63%). This gives me some direction for the future activities and ministries of the singles group.

I want to thank you for allowing us to partake in your project. The observations and recommendations made either confirm that we are heading on the right track in ministering to our singles, or shows us where we can be headed to better minister to them. Thank you!

To the LORD be the glory,

Timothy M. Kroll  
Adult Ministries Pastor

Dr. F. Gerald Kroll, Pastor  
219 Breezewood Drive • Lynchburg, Virginia 24502  
Phone: (804) 328-6610 • Fax: (804) 328-2880 • Email: PastorKroll@juno.com
APPENDIX TWO

LEADERSHIP SURVEY
Dear Friend:

I need your help! I am conducting research for my dissertation for the Doctor of Ministry degree at Liberty University. One of my chapters will be on the position of Single Adult Pastor on the local church staff.

If you will help me by completing the enclosed survey, I will send you my conclusions and a summary of the survey. Please return the survey as soon as possible to:

   Lighthouse Singles  
   Thomas Road Baptist Church  
   701 Thomas Road  
   Lynchburg, VA 24502

Thank you for your investment in my ministry and timely response.

Yours,

Charles Hughes  
Associate Pastor
SURVEY FOR PASTORS AND SINGLE ADULT PASTORS

PERSONAL DATA

PASTOR____ SINGLE ADULT PASTOR____ (PLEASE CHECK ONE)

AGE____

EDUCATION MAJOR YEAR DEGREE

HIGH SCHOOL ___________ _______ _______

BIBLE COLLEGE ___________ _______ _______

COLLEGE ___________ _______ _______

SEMINARY ___________ _______ _______

OTHER ___________ _______ _______

ARE YOU INVOLVED IN A PROGRAM OF CONTINUING EDUCATION?_______

DOES YOUR CHURCH PAY THE EXPENSE?_______

HOW MANY CHURCHES HAVE YOU SERVED IN THE PAST FIVE (5) YEARS?_______

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AT YOUR PRESENT POSITION?_______

ARE YOU ORDAINED?_______

WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR TIME DO YOU SPEND:

VISITATION _______

COUNSELING _______

STUDY _______

ACTIVITIES _______

PASTORAL CARE _______

IN THE OFFICE (ADMINISTRATION) _______
ABOUT THE CHURCH

HOW LARGE IS YOUR SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP ATTENDANCE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PRESENT</th>
<th>TWO YEARS AGO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNDER 5,000</td>
<td>_______</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDER 3,000</td>
<td>_______</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDER 1,000</td>
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<td>UNDER 500</td>
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<td>UNDER 300</td>
<td>_______</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDER 100</td>
<td>_______</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HOW MANY PAID STAFF MEMBERS ARE THERE? _______

MY CHURCH IS:
RURAL _______
SUBURBAN _______
INNER-CITY _______

SINGLE ADULT MINISTRY IS A VITAL PART OF MY CHURCH’S MINISTRY PLAN:
VERY IMPORTANT _______
NO MORE THAN REST _______
NOT VERY IMPORTANT _______
NOT NEEDED _______

A FULL-TIME PAID ASSOCIATE MINISTER WITH SINGLE ADULTS IS A PART OF OUR MINISTRY PLAN:
VERY IMPORTANT _______
IMPORTANT _______
NOT NECESSARY _______

_______% OF OUR CHURCH ARE SINGLE ADULTS
_______% TWO YEARS AGO

I AM:
MARRIED _______
NEVER MARRIED _______
WIDOWED _______
DIVORCED _______

WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR SINGLES ARE:
18-21 _______
22-24 _______
25-35 _______
35+ _______
HOW EFFECTIVE IS YOUR CHURCH'S MINISTRY WITH SINGLE ADULTS COMPARED TO TWO YEARS AGO?

MORE EFFECTIVE  
ABOUT THE SAME  
LESS EFFECTIVE  

MINISTRY TECHNIQUES

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO GET NEW SINGLES INVOLVED IN YOUR MINISTRY (RANK 1-10)

SPORTS
CELL GROUPS
SUPPORT GROUPS
VISITATION
RETREATS
SEMINARS
HOME BIBLE STUDY
SUNDAY SCHOOL
PERSONAL EVANGELISM
GIVING LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY

IN YOUR PLAN FOR CHURCH GROWTH RANK THESE POSITIONS (1-5):

ASSOCIATE PASTOR
MINISTER OF MUSIC
MINISTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
SINGLE ADULT PASTOR
YOUTH PASTOR
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VITA
Charles R. Hughes

PERSONAL
Born: April 17, 1955
Children: Sarah Lynn, born May 5, 1980
           Rachel Lea, born December 1, 1981.
           Rebecca Grace, born April 30, 1986.

EDUCATIONAL

MINISTERIAL
Ordained: June 28, 1981, Cross and Crown Baptist Church, Pensacola, Florida

PROFESSIONAL
Founder, Lighthouse Baptist Church, Titusville, Florida, 1981.
Minister of Visitation, Temple Baptist Church, Titusville, Florida, 1981.
Pastor, Glen Fork Baptist Temple, Glen Fork, West Virginia, 1987-88.
Associate Pastor, Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia, 1988-94.

Instructor, External Degree Program, Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia, 1994 - present.