LIBERTY UNIVERSITY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

STRATEGY FOR MERGING UNHEALTHY CHURCHES AND LEADING THE MERGED CONGREGATION TO A HEALTHY CHRIST-CENTERED NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

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for the Degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By
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To the memory of my beloved late parents, Mr. George Benjamin Holdbrook and Madam Beatrice Quansah for instilling in me during my developmental years the fear of God and the desire to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ.
Thesis Project Approval Sheet

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Mentor

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To God be the glory, great things He has done in my life to bring me this fare to become a faithful and useful instrument in His hands for the Kingdom.

I wish to affirm my deepest appreciation to the following people who assisted me significantly in the completion of this project.

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Also, to Morgan Cassady, Turabian expert and my proofreader.
ABSTRACT

Samuel Holdbrook-Smith

Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012

Mentor: Dr. Charlie Davidson

The hypothesis of this project is that merging two or more local churches is a practical option to growing a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church as opposed to closing those declined and dying churches. This project will examine and evaluate the merger process of Charles Wesley United Methodist Church and Earle’s Chapel United Methodist Church in 2005, led by the author to form a new congregation called New Life Community United Methodist Church. A post-merger questionnaire will be developed and used to evaluate the merger process. Second, a healthy growth ministry plan will be developed and implemented to lead the merged congregation to a Christ-centered New Testament Church. Finally, a National Church Development assessment tool will be used to evaluate the health of New Life Community United Methodist Church to produce a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.

Abstract length: 137 words
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<td>Centreville-Newtown Charge</td>
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<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>District Superintendent</td>
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<td>NCD</td>
<td>Natural Church Development</td>
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<td>NLCUMC</td>
<td>New Life Community United Methodist Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPRC</td>
<td>Pastor Parish Relations Committee</td>
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

On July 1, 1999, immediately following seminary, this author was appointed to a three-point charge called Centreville-Newtown United Methodist Charge by the bishop of the Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. According to the Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, a three-point charge consists of three local “churches that are organized under and subject to the Discipline of The United Methodist Church, with a charge conference, and to which an ordained or licensed minister is or may be duly appointed or appointable as a pastor in charge or co-pastor.”¹ Therefore, the pastor is responsible for three churches. This kind of appointment, a pastor appointed to serve more than one church is very common in the United Methodist denomination, especially in rural communities where there are small churches.

The name of the first church on the charge was Charles Wesley United Methodist Church located in Centreville, Maryland. The Charles Wesley United Methodist Church is one of the oldest African-American churches in Queen Anne's County of Maryland. The original cornerstone shows the date of 1873; however, the congregation was established prior to this date. For many years, the church was the social center of the Black community in Centreville. The second church on the charge was Earle’s Chapel United Methodist Church located in the Brownsville area of Centreville, Maryland, just 3 miles away from Charles Wesley United Methodist Church. Earle's Chapel United Methodist Church was founded in 1876 on land given by the Earle Family.

The third church on the charge was New Zion United Methodist Church located in Cordova, Maryland. The church is fourteen and one-half miles away from Centreville, where Charles Wesley and Earle’s Chapel United Methodist Churches are located. The New Zion United Methodist congregation was founded in 1888. Like many small churches, this is a family church, in which the Bowser’s family represents a long-standing tradition. All three of these churches were located in the Easton District of the Peninsula Delaware Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church; however, New Zion United Methodist Church is located in Talbot County, while Charles Wesley and Earle’s Chapel United Methodist Churches are located in Queen Anne’s County.

These churches had already been on a charge since 1970, due to their decline before this author was appointed as the fourth pastor to the charge in thirty years. In a normal charge with three churches, the pastor travels the circuit preaching three sermons every Sunday, which is not good for the pastor’s health, ministry effectiveness, and relationship with the congregation; however, when this writer was appointed to this charge, these three churches had already been worshiping together every Sunday at one location for the last fifteen years. Worshiping together meant they were rotating to a different worship location each week in order to satisfy each local congregation on the charge. This pastor followed this same routine of rotation for three years. He discovered that this was a recipe for declining congregation. The problem with this arrangement was that most of the time only a few members from the two other communities would come to worship service in the community where service was being held. That meant the door of the church building would not be opened for worship service in one community for two or three weeks. This drove potential new members away because visitors to these churches went
somewhere else when they discovered that the church’s doors were not opened for worship services for two or three consecutive Sundays.

Even though preaching one sermon instead of three on one Sunday was advantageous to the pastor of the charge, it was very difficult to concentrate on implementing vital ministries to help the churches grow because what worked for one community would not work for the other. Instead, each church wanted to see the same ministry duplicated in its community. When the pastor started a weekly Bible study, prayer, and Sunday school, he had to rotate the meeting location every week to satisfy each church community; otherwise, members from the other two communities would not participate. Apart from worshiping on Sundays together, it was very difficult for the pastor to encourage them to do any kind of ministry together.

**Statement of Problem**

The unhealthy situations mentioned above are not unique to the churches on CNC.\(^2\) There are many United Methodist Churches, especially those of the Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference (of which NLCUMC is a part), that are plateaued or declining. If something is not done to intervene, many of these churches will slowly die. For the past forty years, the United Methodist denomination in the United State has been losing members. When the Evangelical United Brethren and Methodist churches merged in 1968, membership was at its highest: 10,789,624. According to the latest data from the United Methodist General Council on Finance and Administration, membership has dropped to 7,774,420 in 2008. This is a decline of almost 28%.\(^3\)

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\(^2\) CNC is an abbreviation for Centreville-Newtown Charge.

According to the 2008 edition of “This Is Our Story” report, there are currently 33,855 United Methodist churches in the United States of America. Most of these churches (68.9%) are considered small churches, with a congregational size of 1-99. The study further reports that 25.6% of the churches are considered medium churches with a congregational size of 200-749. Only 4.7% are considered large churches with a congregational size of 750-1999, while 0.9% is considered mega churches with a congregational size of 2,000 and more.\(^4\) While the overall American population has grown 54% since 1964, the United Methodist Church in the United States has lost almost 28% of its membership. It is reported that in 2005, 41% of the country’s United Methodist churches did not receive a member by profession of faith.\(^5\)

These national statistics are also relevant for the Annual Conference to which NLCUMC belongs. The Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church “Report of the 2009 Strategic Financial Positioning Task Force”\(^6\) asserts that the conference has 448 churches. Most of these churches fall into the small congregational size of 1-99. The report also says 101 of these congregations have fewer than 50 people in membership, while “360 use less than 5% of their budget for missions other than apportionments, 64 use 85% or more of their budget for clergy and building support.”\(^7\) Moreover, 278 of these churches had no “net growth in membership.”\(^8\) The Task Force further “projects that even with successful outreach and

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\(^7\) Ibid.

\(^8\) Ibid.
evangelism, membership will continue to decline by 500–1000 per year due to the advancing age
distribution of the membership and the recent history of declining membership.” These are
sobering statistics that call for prayerful bold steps. One such bold step would be strategic
planning to merge some of these plateaued and declining congregations that are closer to each
other. Instead of waiting until the pews are empty, the churches would grow healthier, stronger,
and more Christ-centered.

After four years of pastoring the three churches on the charge, it became apparent that
the churches were not growing as they should, vital ministries were not taken place, and all three
congregations were in maintenance and survival mode. It was very unhealthy for the pastor and
the churches under such conditions. In addition, Earle’s Chapel was having a serious financial
problem. Since 1999, the church had not been able to pay her equal share of the pastor’s salary,
benefits, and parsonage expenses; therefore, the other two churches were paying more than their
share of the charge’s expenses.

During an emergency meeting with the leaders of all three churches on May 22, 2001,
called to discuss Earle’s Chapel’s financial problem, the idea of the three churches merging
arose, but was quickly dismissed. Earle’s Chapel had about fourteen members, out of which
seven were active. It was obvious that they could not meet their financial responsibilities to the
charge. In light of Earle’s Chapel’s decline and financial struggle, the District Superintendent
met with the leaders of the charge on November 8 and December 6, 2003, to discuss some
options for Earle’s Chapel and the future of the charge. Many meetings later, all three churches
agreed that unless something was done about the charge’s situation, the churches would

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eventually die and close their doors completely, because thirty-three years of being on a charge had not helped them to grow.

As a result, a charge taskforce was put together with this author as the leader to look into the future ministry of the charge. The taskforce concluded that merging the three churches would be the best option; thus creating Christ-centered New Testament Church with vital ministries to engage the community for God’s Kingdom. The taskforce’s conclusion was shared with each congregation on the charge for further discussion and consideration. After looking into the recommendation of the taskforce all the three churches agreed to the idea of merging.

Therefore, a merger taskforce consisting of the pastor and members from each church studied the idea and worked out the details of the process for the merger. The pastor did his research and led the taskforce through all of the legal and denominational process of the merger until all the three churches on the charge agreed to merge on January 1, 2005, with a new name, New Life Community United Methodist Church to reflect their new identity. The merged church also decided to use Charles Wesley United Methodist Church building as their place of worship and ministry.

Everything was going accordingly, until suddenly New Zion United Methodist Church took a legal action against the merger, the members began worshiping by themselves, and they eventually withdrew from the merged church. This action caused much tension and poor relationships with the remaining members of New Life Community United Methodist Church. Nevertheless, the smallest congregation, Earle’s Chapel United Methodist Church with 13 members and the largest congregation, Charles Wesley United Methodist Church with 40 members, solidified the merger and kept the name New Life Community United Methodist
Church (NLCUMC). The church is striving to achieve a greater health to become Christ-centered New Testament church.

Statement of Purpose

The process of merging two or more congregations is very difficult and includes disappointments, conflicts, emotions, sentimental attachments, and uncertainties. In order for a merger to be successful, the people involved have to be flexible, have the attitude to work for the common good, and have the mind and desire for the building the kingdom of God. It is not the intent of this young merged congregation called NLCUMC to continue down the same path of long-term decline to buy a little time or to reinforce an eroding foundation for a few more years before the church declines again and closes or dies. Instead, these congregations merged to have a rebirth with a fresh sense of identity and purpose to become a Christ-centered New Testament church.

The purpose of this project is healthy church growth through merging: developing a practical strategy for merging two or more declined, dying, or unhealthy churches and leading the merged congregation to become a Christ-centered New Testament church. The hypothesis of this project is that merging two or more local churches is a more practical option to grow a healthy church than to close those declined, unhealthy, and dying churches. This project will examine and evaluate the initial steps of the merger process of the three United Methodist churches on the Centreville-Newtown Charge and highlight the problems that developed during the merger process to cause one of the churches to break away from the merger. The merger process and the strategic planning will be detailed in this project. A post-merger evaluation will also be conducted to find out whether the merger process was successful to help solve the problems that initiated the merger by answering the following questions: Are there vital
ministries in the church to engage the community for God’s kingdom? Are church members growing spiritually? Has the church grown numerically and financially? During this evaluation process, surveys of church members will be conducted through a post-merger questionnaire.

Second, a healthy church growth ministry plan will be developed to lead the merged congregation to become a Christ-centered New Testament church. The healthy church growth ministry plan for leading NLCUMC to become a Christ-centered New Testament church included prayer, God’s vision, the pastor’s personal leadership development plan, small group leaders development, connection of people through small groups, an intentional and need-based evangelism plan, gift-based ministry, and engaging and inspiring worship. The ministry plan will be implemented and evaluated with the Natural Church Development survey to measure the church’s relative health in eight areas that have been verified to have a clear relationship with healthy church growth.10

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10 The Natural Church Development Survey, in the Living Stones Associates, http://www.living-stones.com/ncd/ncdmeasure.htm (accessed July 27, 2011). This survey “measures the church’s relative health in eight areas that have been demonstrated to have a clear correlation with healthy church growth known as Quality Characteristics. The survey consists of about 80 questions to be answered by 30 church members who are active in ministry, involved in some kind of small group life, and who are considered by the pastor to be at the center of church life, plus a questionnaire to be filled out by the senior pastor. This data is computer scored to generate scores for each of the eight quality characteristics showing how much above or below the national norms the church’s scores are in each of the eight Quality Characteristics.” See Appendix E for a copy of the survey used with permission from Natural Church Development and ChurchSmart Resources.
Special Terminology

The following explains the special terminology used throughout this project:

*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* refers to “a fundamental book outlining the law, doctrine, administration, organizational work and procedures of The United Methodist Church.”11

Annual conference refers to a regional, organizational unit of The United Methodist Church and the yearly business meeting of that unit, both presided over by a bishop.12 In this project, it refers to the Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Bishop is an elder (ordained minister) who is elected to the office of bishop and consecrated for the office of bishop by other United Methodist bishops. A bishop serves as a general superintendent of the denomination to give general oversight to the temporal and spiritual interests of the entire denomination. It is a responsibility of the bishop to see that the rules, regulations, and responsibilities of the denomination are understood and effectively carried out. Also, a bishop is responsible for setting all clergy appointments in the annual (regional) conferences he or she serve.13

District refers to “a regional group of churches or charges, supervised by a district superintendent.”14

District Superintendent (DS) refers to “an ordained minister appointed by a bishop to oversee the pastors and local churches in a district.” The superintendent’s “primary

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12 Ibid.


responsibilities relate to overseeing the work of the local churches, including presiding at Charge Conferences, and supervising the work of the pastors, including participating with the bishop in the making of appointments.\textsuperscript{15}

Charge, also known as pastoral charge refers to “one or more local United Methodist churches to which an ordained or licensed minister is appointed by the bishop.”\textsuperscript{16}

The charge conference is the basic governing body of each United Methodist local church and is composed of all members of the church council. The charge conference directs the work of the church and gives general oversight to the church council, reviews and evaluates the mission and ministry of the church, sets salaries for the pastor and staff, elects the members of the church council, and recommends candidates for ordained ministry.\textsuperscript{17}

The church council plans and implements the programs and ministry of the local United Methodist church as well as oversees the administration of the church.\textsuperscript{18}

Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) also known as the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) works closely with the pastor and staff concerning their relationship with the congregation and the entire work of the church. The committee is to be sensitive to the opinions and concerns of the congregation concerning the pastor and staff. It is to confer with the district superintendent or the bishop concerning the appointment of the pastor for the church.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{16} Sharing God’s Gifts Glossary of United Methodist Terms, 31.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19} Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation 2009-2012: Pastor-Parish Relations, (Cokesbury, 2008), 6-7.
Church conference refers to “the convening of the Charge Conference as a meeting in which all members of a local United Methodist church are invited to attend and are extended the privilege of vote. A Church Conference is called to have broad participation of the members of the congregation.”

Merger refers to a process that joins two or more congregations together legally to become one to start a new congregation with a new identity and a renewed sense of mission to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church to fulfill the Great Commission to make disciples of Jesus Christ and the Great Commandment to love one another. These merging churches deliberately die to their old identities or legally disband in order to start a new congregation with a new name that reflects their new identity.

A healthy Christ-centered New Testament church refers to a congregation that seeks to obey the Great Commission to make disciples of Jesus Christ and the Great Commandment to love one another. This church is led by an inspired and visionary pastor who prayerfully integrates a clear vision into the gift-based ministry of church to connect members to spiritually dynamic small groups where members are developed to become healthy leaders to multiply themselves. This church is prayer driven, biblically based, mission minded through intentional and need oriented evangelism, and the congregation is engaged and inspired through worship experiences.

Church profile indicates how well developed each of the NCD’s eight quality characteristics of growing churches are in NLCUMC situation and what the church’s present minimum factor is.

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20 A Dictionary for United Methodist.

21 Christian A. Schwarz and Christoph Schalk, Implementation Guide to Natural Church Development (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1998), 10.
The minimum factors are those quality characteristics of the NCD’s eight quality characteristics of a church which are developed the least; thus, blocks the healthy growth of the church. A church needs to focus attention on those quality characteristics the most in order to achieve balance to restore continues health to the church.22

The term maximum factors signify those quality characteristics of the NCD’s eight quality characteristics in a church which are developed the strongest.23

The Radical Quality Balance Index is the quotient of Minimum Factor to Maximum Factor, related to the absolute quality level of a church.24

**Major Assumptions**

One of the major assumptions made by this author is that merging two or more unhealthy local churches is a practical option to growing a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church as opposed to closing those declined and dying churches. A second major assumption made by the author is that since the unhealthy habits that cause churches to plateau, decline, or die do not automatically cease after church merger, intentional effort must be made to assist the merged church to reverse the unhealthy trends to enable the congregation to grow to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church. The final major assumption held by this writer is that a well developed and implemented healthy church growth ministry plan will lead the merged congregation to becoming a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.


23 Ibid.

24 Bob Rummel “NLCUMC NDC Profile, 5-Result 1,” [personal e-mail] 26 April 2012
Statement of Methodology

The proposed design of the project will consist of six chapters. These chapters will be presented in sequence regarding the development of a practical strategy for merging two or more unhealthy churches and leading the merged congregation to becoming a Christ-Centered New Testament Church. Below is the chapter outline for the project and a summary of each chapter:

Chapter 1—Introduction

The introduction of this project will consist of the proposal for the project. It tells the reader about the author’s awareness, concern, and the rationale for the project and what will be expected throughout. This includes a theological basis for the project, a statement of methodology and review of literature.

Chapter 2—Congregation Life Cycle and Characteristics of an Unhealthy Church

Chapter two will address the issue of the congregation life cycle which asserts that in God’s creation, there is a season for everything; there is an expected life cycle that every organism tends to go through. This life cycle applies directly to local churches. Local churches have predictable life cycles, and after a certain number of years, churches follow a slow decline that sometimes leads into an unhealthy period of stagnation and sometimes even death. The rest of the chapter will present the characteristics of an unhealthy church.

Chapter 3—The Merger and Post-Merger Evaluation

This chapter will state the case for the merger by chronicling the issues that brought about the decision to merge. It will record the process, effort, and the strategic planning that went into the merger and the unforeseen problem that developed during the process and how it was solved. Chapter three will end with a post-merger evaluation. Members of the congregation who were
part of the merger process will take part in answering a post-merger questionnaire to access the success and effectiveness of the merger process.

Chapter 4—Factors of Church Growth and Characteristics of a Healthy Church

This chapter will present factors of church growth from first century churches mentioned in Revelation, chapters two and three, as well as the church growth movement and characteristics of a healthy church.

Chapter 5 —A Ministry Plan for Healthy Christ-Centered New Testament Church

Chapter five will outline a ministry plan to lead the merged congregation to a Christ-Centered New Testament Church. This plan will include prayer, godly vision, the pastor’s personal leadership development plan, small group leaders’ development, connecting people through small groups, intentional and need-based evangelism plan, gift-based ministry, and engaging and inspiring worship. The ministry plan will be implemented, evaluated, and analyzed to determine the current health of the church.

Chapter 6—Conclusion

In this chapter, the author will summarize his project and outline a step by step plan for merging two or more declined, unhealthy, and dying churches and leading the merged church to becoming a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.

Statement of Limitations

This thesis will examine and evaluate the initial steps of the merger process of the three United Methodist Churches on the Centreville Newtown Charge, which actually resulted in the merger of two of those churches to become NLCUMC. Then, a healthy church ministry plan
will be developed to lead the merged congregation to become a Christ-Centered New Testament Church. The ministry plan will be evaluated for effectiveness.

First, a post-merger evaluation will be conducted to find out whether the merger process was successful to help solve the problems that initiated the merger. This part of the research will utilize a post-merger questionnaire which will be distributed to members of the congregation who were part of the merger process.

The second part of this research will evaluate the health of the newly merged church. A National Church Development healthy growth assessment tool will be made available to members of the congregation to evaluate the health of the church. The results of this evaluation and analysis will become the conclusion of this dissertation. This research is restricted to the evaluation of this particular merger that happened between two of the churches on Centreville Newtown Charge United Methodist Church, Charles Wesley, and Earle’s Chapel United Methodist, to become NLCUMC and the assessment of the health of NLCUMC.

**Theoretical and Biblical Basis for Topic Choice**

When Centreville-Newtown United Methodist Charge (Charles Wesley, Earle’s Chapel, and New Zion United Methodist Churches) finally decided to accept the taskforce’s recommendation to explore merging, there were many questions that needed to be answered. None of the churches had gone through a merger before, and the pastor had no experience in leading congregations to merge. Therefore, in order to lead an effective merging process, the pastor needed to research to find resources to help answer the questions of the congregations. Even though the three congregations had agreed to explore the possibility of merging, some people were experiencing anxiety as they questioned the effect the merger would have on their churches and positions.
As already mentioned, a merger of two or more congregations is a difficult process that includes disappointments, conflicts, emotions, sentimental attachments, and uncertainties. For a merger to be successful, the people involved must be flexible and have the attitude to work for the common good and for the building of the kingdom of God. This thesis will show how theory, theology, and Bible study helped these congregations come to understand the right motivation for merging. It will also clarify and maximize the purpose of the merger which is to bring resources together and utilize the strength of each congregation to create a vital congregation to more effectively fulfill God’s mission for the church, which is the Great Commission effort to reach people and the Great Commandment effort to love them.

The search for information about merger of local churches first took the author to *The Book of Discipline* of the United Methodist Church, where paragraph 4545 states that “Two or more local churches, in order to more effectively fulfill their ministry . . ., may merge and become a single church by pursuing the following procedure.” The key phrase, “in order to more effectively fulfill their ministry” stood out. Paragraphs 201 and 202 define the functions of “a local church” as follows:

¶ 201. *Definition of a Local Church*—The local church provides the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs. It is a community of true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by persons divinely called and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world.

¶ 202. *The Function of the Local Church*—The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world. It is primarily at the level of the local church that the church encounters the world. The local church is a strategic base from which Christians move out to the structures of society. The function of the local church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is to help people to accept and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live their daily lives in light of their relationship with God. Therefore, the local church is to minister to persons in the community where the church is located, to provide appropriate training.

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and nurture to all, to cooperate in ministry with other local churches, to defend God's creation and live as an ecologically responsible community, and to participate in the worldwide mission of the church, as minimal expectations of an authentic church.²⁶

According to the above definitions, those who accept and confess Jesus Christ are to live their everyday lives in light of their relationships with God and do ministry together with other local churches to fulfill God’s mission for the church. This author believed that the merger of the churches on the CNC would enable the members to become effective witnesses of Jesus Christ to the community to fulfill God’s purpose for the church. Even though, the idea for the merger was created by economic issues and many years of membership decline, the merger would give birth to a new church with a new hope and new vision to make disciple of Jesus Christ. Therefore, with determination, the Word of God, and prayer, the writer was equipped and prepared to help the merger taskforce and the charge to be truthful about the real issues and at the same time realign their motivation for the merger.

Although the decision for the merger was caused by economic issues and many years of membership decline, the primary motivation for this merger was to create a vital congregation to more effectively fulfill the Great Commission effort to reach people and the Great Commandment effort to love them. This is what a Christ-centered New Testament Church must do. In order to help the churches to understand the purpose of the merger from scriptural point of view, the pastor and the taskforce members had to study the importance of unity and love in the body of Christ. Even though there were three congregations, they were “one flock with one shepherd.”²⁷ The Shepherd’s desire is for those whom He has made to be unified into one new body, and the church is to live out this unity before unbelievers in their communities. The

²⁶ The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 127-128.

²⁷ John 10:16. Unless otherwise stated, all Bible quotes and references are taken from the New Living Translation (NLT).
merger would demonstrate that visible unity to the community, thereby drawing unbelievers to Jesus Christ.

In his high priestly prayer, Jesus appealed to his Father to preserve the unity of believers by saying,

Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are. ... I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. 28

As part of the Body of Christ, the three churches on the charge could not fulfill the Great Commission in the community and the world if they were not united in love. There is a vital connection between relationships among Christians and the salvation of those around them. Thus, the merger could demonstrate to the community that the members of the congregation were united in their love for one another.

The concept of unity among believers was so important to the Apostle Paul that in his letter to the Ephesians, he reminded them the following:

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace. 29

Like the believing Jews and Gentiles Paul speaks of in the above verses, members of CNC ought to learn to enjoy unity in this merger process because they know and belong to same Shepherd. Again, Paul pleads with all Christians to humbly, gently, and patiently bear with “one another in love” and eagerly “maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and

28 John 17:21-22.

one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

Instead of remaining as individual struggling churches, the three churches could see themselves as part one body and put their differences aside and humbly, gently, patiently, and lovingly bear with one another and merge to work under the power of the Holy Spirit to fulfill God’s purpose of making disciples of Jesus Christ.

In order to help Christians to understand how crucial this unity is, Paul compares the human body to the unity of the church in Christ in the following passage:

The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part . . . This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.

As part of the spiritual body of Christ, members of CNC are endued by Christ with the Holy Spirit into unity with each other and all other believers; thus, there should not be disharmony among them to derail the merger process.

Disharmony, however, among CNC members did prevent one of the churches from continuing with the merger; thus, preventing the charge from fulfilling the purpose for merging. That purpose was to more effectively reach people for Jesus Christ (The Great Commission) and to love people (The Great Commandment). There is a fundamental relationship between unity among Christians and their effort to make disciples of Jesus Christ. The basis of this Christian

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30 Eph. 4:2-4.
31 1 Cor. 12:12-14, 25-27.
unity that compels these three struggling churches to merge, to foster health, and to become a Christ-centered New Testament church is love.

Love is patient with people and kind to them; love does not envy and is not arrogant. Love is never rude or overbearing; it does not want its own way. Love “rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.” Christian love assumes the best about others and forgives unconditionally. Therefore, members of CNC could look pass the disharmony and practice unconditional love in the unity of the Spirit to come together as one church to testify to their unity in Christ and their love for one another.

In his Great Commandment found in Mark 12:30-31, Jesus teaches that people must love God with all their heart, all their soul, all their mind, and all their strength and to love their neighbor as themselves. No other commandment is greater than this. Again, in his New Commandment in John 13:34-35 Jesus states, “Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” Beyond the essentials of Christian faith, Jesus commands that His followers should love each other to set them apart from the world. Love for God and love for one another is the only motivation that would be sufficient to drive the CNC to merge to pursue God’s assignment to be His witnesses in the world.

Followers of Jesus Christ are encouraged to “respect the diversity of opinions held by conscientious persons of faith.” John Wesley, the founder of Methodism understood the importance of love among Christians, especially in decision making process. “Wesley followed a

32 1 Cor. 13:4-7.

33 The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 51.
time-tested approach: ‘In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity.’ “34

“The spirit of charity takes into consideration the limits of human understanding. ‘To be ignorant of many things and to be mistaken in some,’ Wesley observed, ‘is the necessary condition of humanity.’ The crucial matter in religion is steadfast love for God and neighbor, empowered by the redeeming and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit."35 In agreement with Wesley, this writer believes that love is the basis for all Christian actions. Therefore, only the love of God which manifests through the body of Christ is able to motivate the churches on CNC to merge to become effective witnesses of Jesus Christ in the community.

In His Great Commission, “Jesus came and told his disciples, ‘I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”36 No church merger will be successful in creating a healthy congregation to effectively fulfill the Great Commission effort to reach people and the Great Commandment effort to love the other unless that merger is motivated by love for God and each other. Loving God and neighbor means letting go of what is not working, sentimental attachments, family rituals and allegiances, sacred cows, buildings, and selfish mentality. Before any work could begin on the merger, the congregations needed to embrace faith and hope in Jesus Christ who makes all things new and allow God, who gives encouragement, to help them live in harmony with each other, as is appropriate for those who follow Jesus Christ.

34 The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 51.

35 Ibid.

With the Bible in one hand and *The Book of Discipline* in other hand, together with some research and depending on God through prayer, the charge sought God’s heart and will throughout the process. Some of the conversations were about different personalities, cultures, values, mission, and beliefs. The taskforce members asked some difficult questions concerning how to deal with the differences mentioned above, including the fact that New Zion was located in a different county and the location of the proposed merged church. Those concerns demanded honest answers to enable the process to continue. Throughout the merger negotiation process, those concerns were answered to allow the merger process to move forward. However, New Zion United Methodist Church suddenly took a legal action against the merger because they did not want to give up their church building. New Zion United Methodist Church eventually withdrew from the merged church. This action caused much strain and disappointment along the way. Nevertheless, two of the churches on the charge, Earle’s Chapel United Methodist Church with 13 members and average service attendance of 6 and Charles Wesley United Methodist Church with 40 and average service attendance of 19 members, merged to become a new church with a new identity called New Life Community United Methodist Church.

According to Dan Reiland, a leadership development specialist, consultant, speaker, author, and executive pastor at Crossroads Community Church, after the people have finally voted with their attendance it “takes anywhere from 1-5 years to realize the full impact of a merger for a church. A shorter time frame will tell the tale of smaller ministry segments. There may be other reasons to merge, but growth is not one of them. In fact, mergers are generally followed by losses.”37 Reiland is right; merging two or three churches simply to become one church does not produce a healthy growing church to become a Christ-centered New Testament

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church to fulfill the Great Commission to make new disciples and engage in local and global missions. Though Sunday service attendance increased after the merger, very few people were involved in Bible studies; there were no outreach plans and no quick signs of healthy growth.

Two years after the merger of Earle’s Chapel and Charles Wesley United Methodist Churches to NLCUMC, it became apparent that the church was reverting into survival and maintenance mode. The ability for the leaders to encourage the congregation to fulfill long term plans was sharply declining. Instead of focusing on the long-term vision to bring about healthy growth and financial stability, they were making disconnected short-term plans. For example, instead of focusing on leading the congregation to fulfill the five-year annual stewardship plan to help the church meet its financial obligations through tithes, offerings, and planned- giving, leaders were planning on selling fish, chicken, and barbeque ribs dinners to raise funds for the church. There was no effort to reach out to bring people to Jesus Christ. It was not the purpose of the merger to just survive or be on life support mechanism; that is not how God intended for any local church to live. The merger was to create a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church, a church that reaches out to bring people to Jesus Christ and develop them to reach their full potential for God. Making disciples of Jesus Christ and helping them to grow to multiply themselves is what brings glory to God.

Reiland again advises pastors, “Don't settle for life support systems for your church. There are too many churches like that today. They are breathing, but show no signs of life. Determine with conviction, prayer, and faith in the power of God that you will strive to fulfill the Great Commission or close the doors and pull the plug.”

Reiland’s advice was already being practiced. Conviction, prayer, and faith in the power of God were the sources of strength to
enable the author to lead NLCUMC to become a Christ-centered New Testament church to fulfill the Great Commission to make new disciples of Jesus Christ.

As part of his personal development to help lead NLCUMC to become a Christ-centered New Testament church, this writer enrolled in a Doctor of Ministry program in Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Through his studies at Liberty University, the author has had the opportunity to read some of the writings of healthy church growth experts and studied under others like Dr. Elmer Towns, Dr. Rod Dempsey, and Dr. Dave Earley. Therefore, these professors and healthy church growth researchers, authors, and experts have encouraged and added to the decision to lead NLCUMC to greater health to become a Christ-centered New Testament church. The project to develop a healthy church growth plan to lead NLCUMC to become a Christ-centered New Testament church includes prayer, developing godly vision, a personal development plan, small group leadership development, connecting people through small groups, intentional and strategic need-base evangelism, and inspiring God-exalting worship.

Review of the Literature

Books

*The Big Book on Small Groups* by Jeffrey Arnold breaks down small group principles in-depth examination.39 The author focuses on the structure and benefits of a small group ministry and explains how to train a healthy leader and start a group at a time, develop relationships, and launch outreach program. Small groups are crucial to strengthen the community of faith especially in time of crises. In order for any small group to succeed, the members must develop a

loving, caring, and honest atmosphere. The book also explores the basics of Christian community like prayers, worship, Bible study, outreach, mission, and multiplying groups. The book also includes resources for further reading, ideas for coaches and trainers, and curriculum to photocopy for small group sessions. Some of the ideas in this book were used during the merger process to conduct small group Bible study to strengthen the Charge to focus on the benefits of the proposed merger. Furthermore, some information in the book was also used in conjunction with information in other books to train healthy small group leaders to start small groups after the merger.

*Kicking Habits—Welcome Relief for Addicted Churches* by Thomas G. Bandy offers thirty shocking truths that thriving churches have discovered. In this book, the author helps the readers to understand the changing spiritual yearning of the public and presents four basic building block of a thriving church. He presents systems of approach for churches to kick their unhealthy habits that cause them to decline and die. He contrasts the declining church system that enrolls, informs, nominates, supervises, and keeps people to the thriving church system that changes, gifts, calls, equips, and sends disciples in mission. Bandy describes the five stages of transforming congregations from one system to the other as follows: (1) shared vision, (2) congregational spirituality, (3) redefining leadership roles, (4) streamlining organization, and (5) birthing the new system. Bandy also coaches leaders to address the stresses involved in each stage. This book helped the author to identify some of the unhealthy habits that were caused the congregation to decline. He also learned from Bandy’s systems of approach for churches to assist the merged church to reverse the unhealthy habits that cause the decline.

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In *The Power of Vision* George Barna what vision: what it is, where it comes from, how to capture it, how to apply it, how to deal with myths and vision killers, Bible studies on vision, and more.\(^{41}\) The author defines vision as “clear mental image of a preferable future imparted by God to His chosen servants and is based upon an accurate understanding of God, self and circumstances.”\(^{42}\) He also addresses misconceptions about vision and argues that it is the one essential element for a growing church. He says that pastors who have a well-defined vision and are able to communicate it to their congregations will grow their churches. Information from this book was used by this author and the merger taskforce to help develop a well-defined vision for the congregation during and after the merger to help the church to grow healthily.

*Coaching Life-Changing Small Group Leaders* by Bill Donahue and Greg Bowman is a handbook for coaches who minister to the needs of small group leaders. This book provides four essential functions that characterize a small group leader’s ministry. These four essential functions are as follows: (1) coaches should “embrace a vision for transformation,” (2) coaches should “cultivate their love of community,” (3) coaches should “cultivate a passion for developing leaders,” and coaches should “develop the heart of a shepherd.”\(^{43}\) The book includes a “Coach's Toolbox,” a segment filled with practical tips and resources for meeting with small group leaders and encouraging their growth. Another part of this book is designed for those who lead small group ministries in their churches, addressing the “issues related to building a coaching structure and providing the resources and support that coaches need to be effective.”\(^{44}\)

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\(^{42}\) Ibid., 28.


\(^{44}\) Ibid., 9.
In order to reverse the unhealthy practices that caused the merger, more leaders had to be developed to lead small groups to encourage spiritual growth. Information in this book was used by the pastor to coach healthy leaders to start small group ministry to help develop relationships and encourage spiritual growth.

_The Small-Group Leader’s Toolkit_ by Dave Earley gives ten “simple, practical, and powerful tools” to help small group and other ministry leaders to become better leaders. Earley believes that these leaders “hold eternal souls” in their hands. Each of the ten chapters contained in this book introduces a new tool, tells why the tool is important for a small group leader, and how to use the tool successfully in ministry. According to the book, real small group leaders “disciple, develop, equip, and empower” others to reach their God given potential. They do this through modeling, mentoring, motivating, and multiplying. A small group leader must fully partner with God, those above him, those beside him, and other members of the group. Only when they work together to achieve a common goal do small groups and churches become teams. This book was very helpful to the author in developing a plan to lead NLCUMC to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church. He adopted the modeling, mentoring, motivating, and multiplying process found in this book to help him develop other small group leaders.

_The Pocket Guide to Leading a Small Group_ by Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey provides strong doses of encouragement, “high octane equipment, and empowerment” for small group

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45 Dave Earley, _The Small-Group Leader’s Toolkit_ (Houston: TOUCH Publication, 2008), 11.

46 Ibid., 15.

leaders, and it reminds them that Jesus Christ the life giver is the only One who provides the spiritual life of the group. The perspectives, practical suggestions, and fresh ideas provided in this book have been arranged into fifty-two important lessons. According to the authors, when these fifty-two lessons are applied to ministry, they will help small group leaders to experience “a healthy, growing, multiplying small group.” Copies of this book were given to all those who were being mentored by this writer at NLCUMC as small group leaders to help them learn how to lead healthy, growing small group.

*Turning Members into Leaders* by Dave Earley uses “the eight steps Jesus used for developing effective leaders” to give practical advice on how small group leaders can raise up small group members to become effective small group leaders. This book aids small group leaders by empowering them to dream of multiplying effective leaders, identify potential leaders and grow deeper in relationship with them, explain the dream with clarity, develop them through modeling effective leadership, and release them to go and multiply themselves to fulfill the Great Commission. This book helped this writer to identify potential leaders whom he grew deeper in relationship with and developed them by demonstrating effective leadership.

The *8 Habits of Effective Small Group Leaders* by Dave Earle reveals the following eight habits of the great small group leader, which are: (1) dream of leading a healthy, growing, multiplying group, (2) pray for group members daily, (3) invite new people to visit the group weekly, (4) contact group members regularly, (5) prepare for the group meeting, (6) mentor an apprentice leader, (7) plan group fellowship activities, and (8) be committed to personal

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49 Ibid.

growth.\textsuperscript{51} When small group leaders know these habits and practice them, their weekly meetings can be transformed to lead others to Jesus Christ to become fruitful to multiply themselves in their ministries. This book was used in combination with some of the books mentioned in the review of the literature to train small group leaders at NLCUMC. Copies were given to all those who were mentored by this pastor to help them learn how to lead healthy, growing small group.

Church for the Unchurched examines the differences between churches in America that are in serious decline and those experiencing vibrant growth.\textsuperscript{52} Those churches that have adapted better to the cultural paradigm shift from modernity to postmodernism have exhibited tremendous success. Hunter calls these "apostolic" churches. According to Hunter, apostolic churches have the goal of transforming people into kingdom citizens, equipped and energized to reach family and friends with the gospel message while respecting their culture. A key aspect of most apostolic churches is that they seek to connect believers and seekers with small groups. Apostolic churches enable people to connect with several types of groups: nurture, discipleship, support, recovery, and ministry. Within these small groups, believers and seekers alike experience a community of caring and compassion dedicated to mutual support and spiritual growth. The book helped the author to identify some of the unhealthy habits of the church that led to the decline of the churches on CNC to initiate the merger process. He also learned some of the characteristics of churches that transform people into kingdom citizens and develop them to reach others with the gospel message while respecting their culture.

In Becoming a Healthy Church Stephen A. Macchia, recounts his experience following several months of visiting 100 churches to conduct field-testing, and a major computerized, self-

\textsuperscript{51} Dave Earley, The 8 Habits of Effective Small Group Leaders (Houston, TX: Cell Group Resources, 2001), 15.

\textsuperscript{52} George G. Hunter III, Church for the Unchurched (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Pres, 1996).
directed survey of 1,899 Christians. He presents the following ten characteristics of a healthy church: (1) God's empowering presence, (2) God-exalting worship, (3) spiritual disciplines, (4) learning and growing in community, (5) a commitment to loving and caring relationships, (6) servant-leadership development, (7) an outward focus, (8) wise administration and accountability, (9) networking with the body of Christ, and (10) stewardship and generosity. According to Macchia, these ten characteristics of a healthy church give pastors and church leaders serving unhealthy churches an approach that will give their ministries a new lease of life. The survey revealed that “Scripture and prayer” are vital components “for our personal lives and for our community worship, ministry, and life together” and is therefore “at the heart of every healthy church.” In addition to learning about the characteristics of a healthy church, this writer also learned from this book that the healthy church dynamically allows the Holy Spirit to direct and empower the daily life and ministry.

Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson have written *Comeback Churches* to shed new light on plateaued and declining churches to assist these churches in reversing trends to become healthy and grow evangelistically and return to life. In this well-researched book, the authors report on 324 formerly declining and plateaued congregations across ten different denominations and how they were revitalized. The book reveals three foundations of a church. A church should be biblical, missional, and spiritual. Their research showed that leadership was the number one issue of the churches that experienced renewal. Leadership starts with pastors and it “involves

54 Ibid., 23.
55 Ibid., 18-19.
56 Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson, *Comeback Churches* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), x.
57 Ibid., 2-16.
how we interact with ourselves, God, family, friends, coworkers, partners in ministry, and the world around us.\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Comeback Churches} emphasizes that revitalization is possible through simple things like strategic and intentional prayer, outreach, and preaching. This book agrees with some of the books mentioned above concerning the unhealthy characteristics that lead to plateaued and declining churches. It also informed this author about the importance of the pastor’s personal leadership development to help him lead NLCUMC to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.

In \textit{I Can’t Wait for Sunday} Walters understands the importance of the worship experience to the overall health of the church.\textsuperscript{59} The author shares why worship matters and how and why things go wrong. He then gives practical ideas for involving people in the worship service. Walters also challenges the contemporary belief that worship is only the opening act to the sermon. He asserts that the entire service is worship, and it is the responsibility of the senior pastor to coordinate service. Walters challenges pastors and other church leaders to revitalize their churches with a solid Sunday morning worship service. From this book, this author leaned about how the worship experience is important to the overall health of the church and how to involve others in the worship service to help worshipers to be engaged and inspired.

\textit{The Purpose Driven Church} by Rick Warren outlines the principles the author used to establish his church and seeks to apply these principles to all churches, whether they are established or newly planted, large or small.\textsuperscript{60} In order to build a healthy, strong, and growing church, one must spend time laying a firm foundation by making clear to the congregation

\textsuperscript{58} Stetzer and Dodson, 37.


\textsuperscript{60} Rick Warren, \textit{The Purpose Driven Church} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995).
precisely why the church exits and what it is supposed to do. Every church must have a clearly defined purpose. A purpose driven church will be strong and healthier.

Warren’s book emphasizes that the purpose statement should be to the point and result-oriented, and should always fulfill The Great Commission. This purpose statement will be the guide to all decisions about the church. According to the author, “A purpose driven church is committed to fulfilling all five tasks that Christ ordained for the church to accomplish.” First, the church exists to show love to God through worship. Second, through ministry, the church demonstrates the love of God to others as it meets their needs and heals their hurts in the name of Jesus. Third, it is the responsibility and privilege of every Christian to share the Good News with others wherever we go. Therefore, evangelism is the third purpose of the church. Fourth, Christians are called to belong to the family of Christ and become members of His body through baptism which is a symbol of fellowship. Fifth, the church exists to educate God’s people through the process of discipleship to “become more like Christ in their thought, feelings, and actions.” Warren devotes a large portion of the book to the process of moving people from the community (unbelievers) to the crowd (church attendees) and to the congregation (believers) and ultimately to the core of the church where they are leading or participating in one of the church’s ministries.

Again, Warren provides many principles that will help to lead and mentor new believers to grow in their faith and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. This writer agrees with most of the information in this book, including the five purposes Christ has given to His Church. During the merger process, this pastor used some of the information in Warren’s book to lead the merger

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62 Warren, 103.
63 Ibid., 106.
taskforce to understand God’s vision and mission for the proposed merged church. This book also helped this author to understand the characteristics of a healthy church.

In his five parts book *Moving Off the Map*, Thomas G. Bandy provides necessary tools for spiritual leadership to help them grow to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. He also provides some powerful processes and tools to help congregations identify their strengths, weaknesses, and addictions. These tools include ten characteristics of declining churches. The processes and tools presented in this book can help congregations to change attitudes, grow deeper spiritually, cast biblical visions, and shape ministries for healthy church growth. The ten characteristics of declining churches included in this book were being exhibited by the churches on CNC; therefore, reading this book helped this pastor to identify them. Also the tools for spiritual leadership help the pastor to lead the congregations to identify their strengths, weaknesses, and addictions during the merger process.

*The Habits of Highly Effective Churches* by George Barna identifies nine habits of highly-effective churches. His definition of a highly-effective church is based on the six measurements that typified the early church: worship, evangelism, Christian education, community among the believers, stewardship, and serving the needy. He indicates that churches that do an excellent job in each of these elements of ministry are actually being the church Christ had in mind. The nine habits of highly effective churches identified in this book are listed in chapter four of this project. From this book, this author learned about the practices of

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66 Ibid., 17-18.
churches that are extremely effective and the habits of highly effective churches to help him lead NLCUMC to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament congregation.

In *Natural Church Development* Christian A. Schwarz asks the following questions: What makes a church grow? What creates church growth? Are members responsible for growth of the body of Christ? He says when Christians focus on removing the barriers to church growth and reproduction within the church, “then church growth can happen ‘all by itself.’ God will do what he promised to do. He will grant growth (I Corinthians 3:6).”67 Based on his research from more than 1,000 churches in 32 countries, Schwarz identified eight characteristics that must exist in a church to experience healthy growth. In order to provide a quantitative measure for these characteristics, Schwarz developed several questions for each of the eight areas to fulfill two criteria. These two criteria, eight quality characteristics of healthy churches, and more about *Natural Church Development* are recorded in chapter four of the project. This book provides the most evidence for reliability based on the characteristics of a healthy church found in the book of Acts; therefore, the NCD assessment instrument will be used in this research to assess the health of NLCUMC.

**Internet Sources**

2010 State of the Church: Membership. This is part of the official website of the United Methodist Church that reports on membership statistics for the year 2010.68 According to this website, the United Methodist Church has experienced a membership decline of almost 28%.

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68 2010 State of the Church: Membership.
since 1968. Merging some of these declined churches and leading them to become healthy Christ-centered New Testament churches would reverse these forty-four years of decline.

This is Our Story. This is part of the United Methodist Church website that tells the story of how two venerable denominations with long histories came together forty years ago as a new denomination called the United Methodist Church. For many of those forty years, the General Council on Finance and Administration has collected and analyzed the data of local churches. This document presents information on a broad range of topics, including the global church, the local church, United Methodist Church timeline from 1790-2008, clergy, finance, and notes.

The Strategic Financial Positioning Task Force Report. This document contains the report of the Strategic Financial Positioning Task Force appointed by Bishop Peggy Johnson to study the decline in the financial markets and shortfall in expected receipts to the Peninsula Delaware Conference following the dramatic 2008 spike in energy costs. Following the study, the task force was to recommend a more efficient structure and plan of operation for the Conference that would assure long term viability while supporting ministry and growth needs.

The following are some of the Taskforce’s recommendations: (1) provide communications expertise for the Conference office as soon as possible, (2) reduce the overall level of staffing in the Conference and District, (3) reduce the number of District Superintendents from 4 to 3 in July, 2014, (4) provide Information Technology (IT) expertise for the Conference as soon as possible since consolidation and reduction of District and Conference Staffing will require significantly improved IT functionality and expertise, (5) close the existing District Offices and consolidate Administrative Assistant functions into the Conference Office

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69 2010 State of the Church: Membership.
70 This Is Our Story.
71 The Strategic Financial Positioning Task Force Report.
by July 1, 2011, utilizing the upgraded IT and Communications capabilities in place by that time. The total number of District and Conference Administrative Assistants should be reduced from eight to four and half, (6) reduce the number of full time clergy in active service each year by at least the number that is reaching mandatory retirement age. For the years 2010-2015, this will result in a reduction of 29 clergy positions, and (7) reducing the number of active clergy will require some form of consolidation or realignment of charges. Four criteria were identified to assist in identifying churches/charges that should be realigned, or encouraged to take some action to change status.72

“The Need of this Hour.” This is a website that presents the sermon entitled “The Need of this Hour” preached by Dr. Lee Roberson.73 In this sermon, Dr. Roberson outlines four “greatest [needs] of today's churches—large and small,” which are leadership, concern, standards, and inspirational service. It was during this sermon that Dr. Roberson said, "Everything rises or falls on leadership."74 Leaders of the church, especially pastors, are commanded to give spiritual guidance, instruction, and encouragement to their congregation. In addition, they are to practice what they preach and teach so that their congregations will have real example to imitate. Again, godly leaders must develop other godly leaders in order to multiply themselves to fulfill the Great Commission.

“Church Mergers.” This site presents information for struggling churches that are considering merging with another church to understand that with every merger there is closing of some churches, and if the merger is not done correctly, the doors of all churches involve may be

72 The Strategic Financial Positioning Task Force Report.
74 Ibid.
closed. This article also gives information that the churches must carefully consider before they merge. If those churches do decide to merge, this website provides a plan for success.

“What does it measure.” This site belongs to Living Stones Consultants, which have partnered with hundreds of congregations in about 30 denominations throughout the U.S. and Canada to help churches become healthier and more effective in carrying out their missions. This consulting team uses the NCD survey as an important component of church consultations.

“7 Secrets of Healthy Churches.” This site presents Thom Rainer’s “7 Secrets of Healthy Churches” after researching over 2,000 healthy churches in America to find unifying characteristics.

“Marks of a Healthy Church.” This site contains a booklet in which John MacArthur, the pastor-teacher of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, as well as an author, conference speaker, and featured teacher with the Grace to You media ministry, presents the “Marks of a Healthy Church.” These twelve characteristics of healthy church are listed in chapter 4 of this project.

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75 Reiland.

76 The Natural Church Development Survey.


**Thesis Construction**

Merging two or more unhealthy local churches is a sensible option to growing a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church as opposed to closing those declined and dying churches. Since the unhealthy practices that lead to church plateau, decline, and death do not end after church merger without intentional intervention, the author argues that deliberate effort must be made to assist the merged church to reverse the unhealthy trends. In addition, he suggests that a healthy church growth ministry plan be developed and implemented to lead the merged congregation to becoming a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.
CHAPTER TWO

CONGREGATION LIFE CYCLE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AN UNHEALTHY CHURCH

Congregation Life Cycle

Church merger happens because either one or all the churches involved in the merger go through a season where they cease to be vital in ministry. These churches cease to become effective for the reason that they develop unhealthy habits that lead to plateau, decline, and death. These unhealthy habits do not automatically stop after church merger; intentional effort must be made to assist the merged church to reverse the unhealthy trends to grow to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church. However, leading an unhealthy church to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church to fulfill the Great Commission is a difficult task that goes through seasons of joy and sorrow with some success and some setbacks. These cycles of joy and sorrow, success and setbacks are natural part of life and ministry, as Scripture says:

For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to harvest. A time to kill and a time to heal. A time to tear down and a time to build up. A time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance. A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones. A time to embrace and a time to turn away. A time to search and a time to quit searching. A time to keep and a time to throw away. A time to tear and a time to mend. A time to be quiet and a time to speak. A time to love and a time to hate. A time for war and a time for peace.1

Every organism goes through an expected life cycle. After conception, every human being goes through eight life cycles, birth, childhood, adolescence, emerging adult, young adult, middle adult, senior adult, elderly adult, and death. Some human beings may go through life cycle

1 Ecc. 3:1-8
earlier or later than others, or really not go through some cycles at all due to some defects or an early death.²

Just as living organisms have life cycles, organizations also go through life cycles that include usual struggles and difficulties. Every phase of the organizational life cycle is “faced with the transitional problems of moving to the next phase of development.”³ The single most important difference between the human life cycle and the organizational life cycle is that “in human cycle, decline is inevitable,” while “in organizational cycle, decline is not inevitable, only probable. The natural cycle of rise and fall can be reversed, which is good news for those leading any organization in the stage of plateau or decline.”⁴ Since the church is a living organism, the life cycle ideas have been directly applied to local churches by researchers.

According to congregational researcher Gary L. McIntosh, after they are planted, congregations tend to go through a certain life cycle. “A church is prone to rapid growth in the first fifteen to twenty years of its existence, followed by a leveling off of growth onto a plateau for another twenty to forty years. Then follows a slower decline over the next thirty to forty years until the church either closes its doors (dies) or eases into an unhealthy period of stagnation.”⁵ Every church goes through a period of decline that can lead to the closing of its doors. There must be some indicators to help churches that find themselves in an unhealthy stagnation to help decide whether to reverse the cycle of decline or close their doors.

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³ Ibid., 24.
⁴ Ibid., 25.
⁵ Ibid., 30.
Based on his research, McIntosh suggests ten key signs for church closure; however, he advises that a church should never be closed as a result of only one of these signs. Rather, all of the signs must be considered to give church leaders helpful assessment of the church’s future. The following are the ten key signs for church closure: (1) weekly public worship attendance has fewer than forty adults, (2) total giving units is fewer than twenty-five, (3) the lay leadership pool is less than one leader for every ten adult members (junior high and up), less than one leader for every six elementary children, and less than one leader for every two children below school age, (4) the church does not have at least one ministry or a particular ministry for which it is known in the community, (5) the church is only about one-fourth or less of its original size, (6) the church is characterized by a spirit of anger, resentment, and discouragement, (7) average membership tenure of the church is longer than twenty years, (8) the focus of church goals is paying the bills, hanging on, real estate, the past, and membership care, (9) the church cuts budget for evangelism, advertising, and ministry when the budget gets tight, and (10) church people talk about the past, respond pessimistically to visionary statements, and fail to recognize that God is at work in their church.6 A church without vision does not know where it is headed.

When this author was appointed to CNC on July 1, 1999, following seminary, every indication showed that the three churches on the charge had been in decline for many years with Earle’s Chapel, the smallest of the churches with 13 members, in an unhealthy period of stagnation. The other two churches were stuck in maintenance and survival mode. These churches were addicted to habitual, self-destructive behavior patterns which they were not even

6 Ibid., 80-81. Also see Appendix A for sample of McIntosh’s objective evaluation to help determine a possible closure of a church. This instrument was not available during the merger process of CNC; however, in retrospect, the instrument reveals the signs of the health of the churches on CNC that prompted the merger conversation. Therefore, this author agrees with McIntosh that the ten key signs for church closure is very good initial tool that should be considered by unhealthy churches to help them with the assessment of the current conditions and the future of their churches.
able to recognize. When it came to their Annual Days celebrations, some members were sincere and sensitive; however, when it came to spiritual development and discipleship for empowerment for outreach and evangelism, almost nobody was interested. They were in denial; the members of each congregation on the charge were not willing to see their inner addictions that led to the unhealthiness of their church. All three churches exhibited the ten key signs for church closure mentioned above.

The obviousness of Earle’s Chapel’s financial problem, their inability to pay their equal share of the pastor’s salary, benefits, and parsonage expenses to the charge, which caused the District Superintendent to meet with the leaders of the charge on November 8 and December 6, and an unhealthy period of stagnation. They were able to take a hard look and see the signs of inner unhealthiness that had been there for a long time.

**Characteristics of an Unhealthy Church**

Thomas G. Bandy is a church consultant and an acclaimed author of several books, including *Moving off the Map: a Field Guide to Changing the Congregation*, in which he presents the following characteristics of a declining church: (1) *Ambiguous identity*. Core beliefs all tend to be passive and relational, bedrock beliefs tend to be creedal formulas, and there is no motivating vision or key mission. (2) *Low mission emphases*. Survival tends to be uppermost in the minds of church leaders . . . few people are involved in hands-on ways with outreach that is specifically driven by their Christian faith and church experience. (3) *Unwieldy organizations*. The bureaucracies tend to be very large, requiring large numbers of volunteers to serve offices or fewer volunteers to serve multiple offices. As a result, burnout and nomination crises are common among clergy and other leaders. (4) *Informational worship*. Worship services tend to be dry, briefly illuminated by the children's story or other intergenerational event . . . and seek to
deliver ecclesiastical information about the Christian year and the local calendar. (5)

*Demographic homogeneity.* The congregation tends to reflect the race, language, culture, education, and economic background of the oldest church veterans, rather than the diversity of the neighboring community. . . . (6) *Little adult spiritual discipline.* Expectations for adult members are usually limited to financial support; occasional worship participation, and periodic office holding. Few adults are involved in regular Bible study, intercessory prayer, meditation processes, selective reading, or small groups. (7) *Clergy dependency.* The congregation relies upon staff and credentialed clergy to do the ministries of the church—with the heaviest expectations for internal pastoral care among church insiders. Supervision and accountability for clergy are often divisive issues. (8) *Little lay training.* Quality volunteer leadership is not important for these churches . . . (9) *Minimal team mission.* There is little or no provision for joint volunteers for hands-on ministries, and therefore little possibility for mutual mentoring or mutual support . . . Creative ministries tends to rise and fall with distressing regularity. (10) *Poor communications.* These churches tend to rely upon infrequent print newsletters, announcements in worship services, informal "grapevine" gossip, and committee attendance to communicate news within the congregation.7 The author agrees with Bandy on these characteristics of an unhealthy church. During his appointment to CNC, he immediately found out that all the three churches did not have vision and mission, which is one of the characteristics of an unhealthy church, whether the church is in decline or stagnation phase.

In a declined church, the few newcomers who come in do not know the vision or the mission of the church. Third-generation members do not seem to remember the reason why their grandparents established the church. When old members attempt to reinstate the previous vision

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and mission of the church to avoid decline, it does not “seem to work as they hope it will.” The sense of vision and mission in an unhealthy or dying church is more or less completely lost or nonexistent. The only purpose of such a church is to make the minimum budget and survive until the doors are completely closed. They have lost the passion for making disciples.

On the congregational profile sheets given to the pastor by the District Superintendent before his appointment to CNC, one of the churches indicated that they needed a pastor who would go into the community and bring the young adults back to church and God. Another church indicated that they needed a pastor who would go out and check on members who had not been present in worship for a while and encourage their return. These are characteristics of an unhealthy church. In an unhealthy church, few volunteers are available to do ministry. “Most people say quietly, ‘It’s the pastor’s job. After all, isn’t that why we pay him?’ Ten percent of the people are doing about 90 percent of the ministry.” The members of the congregation identify what is needed and expect their pastor to act in response.

Another characteristic of an unhealthy church is low morale. Morale causes a spirit of anger, resentment, discouragement, and division among members; there is no group identity. Members look back to when the church was vital; thus, they “despair that the church will ever be vital again, and many become weary from struggle.” By the time the pastor assumed the appointment on the charge, the morale of Earle’s Chapel was already nonexistent. The leaders indicated on the congregational profile that if they did not get more members in their building, they would not have a church. Yet, they were not willing to reach out to the community to do

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8 McIntosh, 67.
9 Ibid., 76.
10 Ibid., 67.
evangelism to invite people to become believers and join the church. Frustration and despair were evident in the church long before the new pastor’s arrival. There was no hope for the future.

In an unhealthy church, members are threatened by the word “change;” they think it is dangerous to the existence of the church. Therefore, members are not willing to try anything new. “They say, ‘We've never done it that way before,’ or ‘We've tried that before and it didn't work.’ There is low tolerance for anything new. Members are unwilling to risk failure, as that would cause even greater discouragement.”

Instead of dying to self for their church to come back to life, only a few people control the church by holding on to power by assuming all of the leadership positions in the church. At his new appointment, it did not take long for this pastor to notice that in all three churches, only a few groups of people held all the positions; the people were also on all the committees. The same programs and annual days had been held for many years by the same people; yet, the churches were dying. Change was a threat to them.

Further characteristics of an unhealthy church are described below:

If the pastor is an older person, he may be holding on until retirement. In either case churches at this stage normally have part-time pastors serving with meager salaries unless the church operates with an endowment or members have deep financial resources. When seeking a new pastor, people look for someone to save them by a miracle—they hope it will be someone who does not require them to change anything. Often a younger pastor will try hard for a year or two to bring about change but eventually will become discouraged and seek a position in another church. People may watch with joy as the younger pastor leaves, saying, "We expected you to leave. Over the years we've trained and sent out many a younger preacher to other churches.”

The situation McIntosh describes here is what was happening in the charge. The previous pastor was an older part-time local pastor who served the charge for eight years and retired. One of leaders of the charge said to this writer upon his arrived, “You are like a new quarterback, you

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11 McIntosh, 77.

12 Ibid., 67.
are here to get some experience and in a couple of years a better team will hire you and pay you big money.”

When he started serving the charge, this pastor was expected to be a miracle worker. He was expected to go out and bring people to fill up the church buildings, visit all inactive members, bring them back to church, and recognize their return; yet, they did not want to change anything. Before the merger, almost all of the efforts that were made to bring about change to turn things around were eventually met with resistance.

Years of declined worship attendance, lack of newcomers, and outdated worship style that does not engage people are other characteristics of an unhealthy church:

The worship center is uncomfortably empty. Newcomers rarely visit and, when they do, most are so uncomfortable, they never return. The music and style of worship services are so out of touch with [the unchurched] that newcomers find it hard to relate. There are more [information] about funerals and people in nursing homes than about new people being baptized or joining the church. Occasionally a worship service will have a large attendance, but normally that would be one that is a home-coming or anniversary celebration.

Again, McIntosh describes what was occurring at CNC. Even though all three churches in the Charge were worshiping together for twenty years before the merger, the average Sunday worship attendance was 45 since 1999. Newcomers seldom visited any of the churches, and when they did, most were so uncomfortable that they never returned; therefore, newcomers seldom joined any of the churches. Occasionally during homecoming or anniversary celebration, a worship service would have a large attendance; however, almost all the visitors came from other churches. There were no efforts for effective evangelism.

When a church finds itself in the last phase of the congregational lifecycle, which is an unhealthy period of stagnation, the members can choose to let the church die or find a way to

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14 McIntosh, 77.
face the challenges and turn things around to bring health back into the life of the church. If the congregation chooses to turn things around, then members will have to die to themselves and prayerfully seek a visionary leader who will lead them in seeking God’s vision for the church and allow the Holy Spirit to breathe a new life into the church. In that case, McIntosh suggests that the church at least takes the following five steps: (1) the church establishes a new definition and commitment to mission, (2) members and leaders should change their attitude so they look to the future with hope and excitement, (3) the church should change its priorities concerning the use of financial resources, (4) the church’s organization should be reworked to allow for faster decision making, new program development, and greater flexibility in all aspects of church’s life, and (5) new resources, materials, and approaches to ministry should be embraced. In most situations the church needs the assistance of an outside person to see this happen.¹⁵ When a church’s dying situation is less hopeful, members should not stay in denial; they must admit the real condition of the church and empower the leadership to prayerfully make the difficult choice about when and how to close the ministry.

Knowing when and how to close a ministry involves counseling people as they manage their feelings of hurt and loss. Generally, according to McIntosh, the dying process takes place in three steps. First, as a result of declining finances, the church is no longer able to secure a full-time pastor. Second, this leads the church to secure the services of a part-time pastor who may be a layperson with independent financial resources, a retired pastor looking for extra income, a young pastor seeking a first ministry experience, or a pastor who is shared with another congregation. In nearly all of these situations, the church ministry dwindles as people leave for other congregations that provide more adequate ministries. Lastly, the church reaches a point

¹⁵ McIntosh, 76.
when, financially, it can no longer keep the doors open. The church dies and merges with another congregation, simply goes out of business, or turns over control to the denomination.\(^{16}\) McIntosh is absolutely right; as a result of both congregational and financial decline, Charles Wesley, Earle’s Chapel, and New Zion United Methodist Churches became a charge that shared a pastor for thirty years. Sharing a pastor for thirty years did not help any of the churches to grow; rather, it worsened their decline.

Throughout these thirty years, older members were dying, a few people left to join other churches that could minister to their needs, and ministries became ineffective. Moreover, Earle’s Chapel had reached a point where they could not financially continue to be part of the Charge. Instead of waiting for the churches to die one by one, they decided to explore the possibilities and the pain of rebirth by merger to create a healthy church. It was time for the churches to break their addictions and accept the needed changes to allow the Holy Spirit to breathe a new life into them to put them on the path of becoming a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.

\(^{16}\) McIntosh, 76.
CHAPTER THREE

THE MERGER

The Case for the Merger

Earle’s Chapel’s financial situation did not just arise in 2003. During an emergency meeting with the leaders of CNC and seven members of Earle’s Chapel on May 22, 2001, to discuss their financial problem, the treasurer of Earle’s Chapel reported that the church had not been able to meet its budget; hence, it had been operating in deficit since 1998. The church’s trustee chairperson asked if the other two churches would be able to help Earle’s Chapel by absorbing their arrears of $1,595.00 and another $416.50 monthly charge parsonage and other expenses payment for at least three months while they came up with a plan to generate more funds to pay $1,000.00 per month to the charge treasury, which was less than their charge obligations.

Further discussions on the matter prompted another person to suggest the idea of the three churches merging to become one church to cut down building maintenance, utility insurance, and conference apportionment expenses. That suggestion was quickly squashed with another idea to bail out Earle’s Chapel with a portion of CNC certificates of deposit (CD). Earle’s Chapel had about 13 members out of which 7 were somewhat active members. It was obvious that they could not meet their financial responsibilities to the charge.

By early 2003, the issue concerning Earle’s Chapel’s financial obligations to the charge was dominating charge council meetings because they were behind with their $1,000.00 per month obligation to the charge treasury. In an attempt to find a short term solution to the problem, the charge finance committee decided to hold a fund raising banquet to celebrate over thirty years of coming together as a charge and use the funds to cover Earle’s Chapel’s shortfall.
The plan for the banquet included the former Easton District Superintendent, Ronald Bell, Sr., as the speaker and reviewing of the history and the current situation of all the churches on the charge, including the fourth church which closed eight years prior. This proposed banquet was scheduled to be held at Centreville United Methodist Church on Saturday, November 22, 2003, at 6:00 P.M.

On November 8, 2003, the Easton District Superintendent of the Peninsula Delaware Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Rev, Dr. Thomas Donnachie, III, under whose jurisdiction CNC is, met with the leaders of the charge due to Earle’s Chapel’s unhealthy stage of stagnation and financial inability. During the meeting the DS¹ asked Earle’s Chapel representatives where they wanted to be in terms of their church. They responded that they would like to see the church opened but they could not afford to pay $17,000.00 annually as their part of the pastor’s package and parsonage expenses. At that time the DS mentioned that there were several options. First, the church could choose to be on limited service where the church would have special services 2-3 times a year and members of Earle’s Chapel would have to go to one of the other churches on the charge. Members of Earle’s Chapel would have to maintain the building and pay insurance premiums. Second, the church could be closed, but the DS does not want to see the church close. Lastly, each church on the charge could open its doors for worship every Sunday; in that case the charge would have to hire a lay minister who would be compensated to preach at one church every Sunday. The lay minister would be under the pastor’s supervision.

The DS acknowledged that Earle’s Chapel was unhealthy and advised the third option could help the other two churches to become healthier to help to get Earle’s Chapel growing

¹ DS is an abbreviated form of District Superintendent.
again. He then encouraged the charge to do some more praying and reschedule a follow-up meeting on December 6, 2003, at 3:00 P.M. to be held at New Zion. During all this, CNC was in the process of preparing to celebrate over thirty years of coming together as a charge. On November 22, 2003, the banquet was held at Centreville United Methodist Church and a profit of $1,643.00 was raised to pay some of Earle’s Chapel’s underpayments.

On December 6, 2003, the DS came again to meet with the leaders of the charge and four leaders from Earle’ Chapel to discuss options for Earle’s Chapel and the future of the charge. This time the DS presented a four year (2000, 2001, 2002, 2003), chart for total membership, average worship attendance, and new members received for all the three churches. After the DS finished leading the discussion about the chart, he asked, “Why are we here?” To which the people responded that they needed financial help to enable the charge to be effective in ministry and mission. After discussion, those present at the meeting agreed that unless something was done about the charge’s situation, the churches would eventually die and close their doors completely because thirty-three years of being on a charge and fifteen years of worship rotation had not helped them to grow. They decided to prayerfully ask God to help them to discern what to do as far as the situation before them was concerned and the wisdom to solve it. Therefore, before the meeting was adjourned, the DS suggested that four key members from each church be selected and meet the following weeks to prayerfully discuss the above options and come up with a possible solution and report back to him.

After service on the following day, Sunday, December 7, 2003, two leaders from each church were asked to join the Charge Lay Leader and the pastor to form an Exploration Team to meet to prayerfully come up with a possible solution for the charge’s problem. After worship service on Sunday, December 21, 2003, the members of the newly formed Exploration Team met
with the pastor to prayerfully discuss a possible solution for the charge’s problem to help the charge to become effective in ministry to the community. With copies of an honest profile and an accurate picture of each church on the charge in hand at the beginning of the meeting, the Exploration Team was reminded of the length of time over which the problem developed and the two attempts at solving the problem: coming together as a charge and rotation of worship. Thus, any decision made by the charge concerning Earle’s Chapel would affect the future of the other two churches. Also, whatever decision was made during the meeting would be recommended to the charge council for their consideration.

In addition to the three suggestions made by the DS, the pastor added a fourth which was “a merger of all the three churches to become one new church.” After prayerfully discussing all the options, all the members of the Exploration Team unanimously agreed that a merger of all three churches would be the best possible solution that would enable the charge to become effective in ministry to the community. The DS was informed about the Exploration Team’s decision and recommendation before an announcement was made to the members of the charge. On the following Sunday, December 28, 2003, an emergency Charge Council meeting was called to hear the Exploration Team’s recommendation. After listening to the Exploration Team, the Charge Council affirmed proposal and recommended that each church take the time during their respective Church Council meetings to discuss the proposal for possible merger of the three churches on the charge and report their decisions to the Charge Council meeting on February 5, 2004.

During the February Charge Council meeting all three churches reported that they agreed with the Exploration Team’s recommendation to explore the possibility of merging to become one church to create vital ministries to engage the community for God’s Kingdom. At that
meeting, it was agreed that a merger taskforce be formed comprising those who would like to serve from the Exploration Team and additional members selected from each church. By February 15, 2004, the taskforce had been formed and named “Charge Merger Taskforce.” It was now the pastor’s responsibility to lead this taskforce through the merger process, even though he had no experience in merging churches. It was time for him to intensify his research to lead the “Charge Merger Taskforce” to come up with a strategic plan for a successful merger.

Strategic Plan for the Merger

The research to lead the merger taskforce first took the author to the *Book of Discipline* where he discovered the following paragraph:

¶ 2545. Merger of Local United Methodist Churches—Two or more local churches, in order to more effectively fulfill their ministry (¶¶ 201-204), may merge and become a single church by pursuing the following procedure:

1. The merger must be proposed to the charge conference of each of the merging churches by a resolution stating the terms and conditions of the proposed merger.

2. The plan of the merger as proposed to the charge conference of each of the merging churches shall be approved by each of the charge conferences in order for the merger to be effected, except that for a charge conference that includes two or more local churches, the required approval shall be by the church local conference of each local church in accordance with the requirements of ¶ 2526.

3. The merger must be approved by the superintendent or superintendents of the district or districts in which the merging churches are located.

4. The requirements of any and all laws of the state or states in which the merging churches are located affecting or relating to the merger of such churches must be complied with, and in any case where there is a conflict between such laws and the procedure outlined in the Discipline, said laws shall prevail and the procedure outlined in the Discipline shall be modified to the extent necessary to eliminate such conflict.

5. All archives and records of churches involved in a merger shall become the responsibility of the successor church.²

After reading this paragraph, the author called the Peninsula Delaware Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church to ask whether they had a process in place as a guide to help churches exploring the possibilities of merging, to which they answered no. The next step was to visit

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² *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, 700.
libraries to look for books about church mergers, but he found none. He then turned to the internet to search for “Church Merger;” that was when he came across an article entitled “Church Merger” by Dan Reiland.

In his article, Reiland considers three issues that churches must carefully think through considering a merger. First, “A church merger can be successful, but it is not automatic. . . . The truth is that mergers are difficult. It's wise to face this up front. . . . I want you to know what you are getting yourself into so that you have the greatest possible chance for success.”3 Second, have a solid understanding of your motivation for a merger. There are many reasons that mergers take place. . . . If you have an honest grasp on why you want to engage in a merger, it will significantly increase your potential for success. This will allow you to realign the motivation, whatever it may be, to a Great Commission effort to reach people. On the other hand, be honest about the real issues and don't disregard them; ignoring the past will not help you move forward.4

Third, “Do your homework to understand why many mergers fail. There is a nearly endless list of reasons why mergers can fail. I highly recommend that you study several mergers before you pull the trigger on your own. Study both successful and failed mergers. Write down what you learn and put it into practice.”5 Reiland’s advice helped this author to have an idea of what he was getting himself into. He understood that the process of leading a church merger could be difficult. He also learned not to allow survival to drive the merger; instead, he did his research to help realign the financial problems, which was the main motivation for the merger to a mission-driven effort to reach people for Jesus Christ and develop them to reach their full potential in order to multiply themselves. In so doing, the merger would be successful.

3 Reiland.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
Reiland also suggests the following “roadmap to successful mergers.” First, seek a mission-driven merger, not a survival-driven merger. . . Determine with conviction, prayer, and faith in the power of God that you will strive to fulfill the Great Commission or close the doors and pull the plug. Second, establish clarity in pursuit of common values, vision, theology and culture before you start the merger. In my opinion, the mission of all local churches has already been settled. Jesus established it and it's recorded in Matthew 28:18-20. . . Talk about these issues up front. From worship style, to doctrine, to church culture and long-term vision, what do you want the new church to look like? . . . Don’t go for perfection of these concepts. You'll never accomplish the merger. Get the general concepts and big picture agreed upon, then work on the details as you go. Third, make sure you have a profound sense that "God is in it.". . I list the "God check” at this point so that you don't race ahead in the process without knowing that God is blessing your plan. Seek God's heart and will throughout the process. It is also wise to remove any pressure to move too fast. A lengthy courtship is advisable in the process of a merger. Forth, choose your leadership wisely. This is usually where you make or break the merger. . . I recommend that the most visionary, personable, and evangelistic leader who possess strong communication skills be chosen. Not the pastor from the largest church or the pastor who has the most experience. . . It may well be that none are the best choice and a pastor from the outside should be brought in. Fifth, don't operate by "the biggest will rule" principle. Good decision-making will make or break the process. Don't allow the church with the most money, most people and biggest building to make all the decisions. This will kill the spirit of the merger. . . Don't make decisions by fairness or politics; make decisions because they are biblical and right. Sixth, expectations must be clearly defined. Now the layers of detail begin to emerge. Put in writing exactly what the expectations are for the first three, six, twelve and eighteen months
concerning leadership (clergy and lay), property, facilities, finances, and ministry philosophy. Then begin to layer in specific goals so that the expectations become measurable. Lastly, the result of the merger is one new church. A new identity is the goal. Two or three small churches clattering around under one roof like friendly roommates is not the goal. It is not always possible or practical to have a new property and building, although preferable, but you can give the church a new name and declare it a new day and beginning of a new ministry. Kill the sacred cows and think outside the box. This is your chance to make some good changes that will result in a great local church. Start writing the history for the new church as if there were no past. Start fresh!6

The above mentioned plan for a successful merger became like a check list for this writer to help him begin to lead the merger process. Through collective and personal prayers, the Bible and the *Book of Discipline*, he was resolute to help the charge to understand that the main goal for the merger was to become a vital church to make disciples and develop them to fulfill the Great Commission. He also understood that seeking God's heart and will throughout the process was the only way to achieve a Christ-centered merger. Thus, he decided before the beginning of the strategic planning that all decisions would be guided by the Bible, the *Book of Discipline*, research, and the Holy Spirit through prayer. Reiland’s article also educated the pastor to understand that the result of the proposed merger was to become one new church with a new identity. This new church would require the pastor’s willingness to stay in that place of ministry as long as God would require of him to lead the merged church to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.

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6 Reiland.
With this information and understanding, this author began to lead the merger taskforce to develop a strategic plan for the proposed merger. According to Aubrey Malphurs, strategic planning is the “envisioning process that a point leader uses with a team of leaders in a regular basis to think and act so as to design and redesign a specific ministry model that accomplishes the Great Commission in their unique ministry context.” Strategic planning is an ongoing process that continues to shape and direct a ministry to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church to fulfill the Great Commandment. Strategic planning includes defining a common purpose, core values, vision, and culture of strategic thinking. Through strategic planning, the charge merger taskforce members would have access to the same information to help clarify facts and establish collective goals and objectives for the realization of the strategic focus. Strategic planning would help each of the taskforce members to focus on finding a win-win solution for the proposed merger by creating an impartial means of dialogue and negotiation from the beginning. Reading Reiland’s guideline to successful mergers and Aubrey Malphurs’*Advance Strategic Planning* helped this author to begin to conceive of a specific strategic plan to lead the charge in the merger process.

Strategic planning for merging two or more churches must begin with personal and collective prayer. Thus, while he was personally bathing the process in prayer, this pastor also asked the entire membership of the charge to earnestly pray for the merger taskforce and him to seek God's heart and direction in the merger exploration process. On March 6, 2004, the charge merger taskforce held its first meeting at Charles Wesley with seventeen people, including the pastor, present. After the opening prayer, he reminded the group that the purpose was not to determine whether to merge or not to merge, that decision had already been determined by each

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church on the charge after the Exploration Team recommendation. The purpose was to prayerfully, scripturally, and with the help of other resources form a strategic plan for the merger, which included, but was not limited to, developing core values, vision, mission or purpose, resolution, location for worship, and possible date for the possible merger and then to report to the Charge Council. The following were some of the questions used to guide the taskforce members to work through the first meeting. First, what advantages can you see in the merging of the three churches? Second, what tensions and anxieties do you feel as you consider the possibility of these three churches merging? Third, which seems greater to you, the advantages or the tensions? Forth, according to Matthew 28:19-20, what is the mission or purpose of the Church? Lastly, recall your memories of your church: (a) how has your life been shaped by these memories? (b) How might these memories suggest models for ministry in the merging congregation?8

The second meeting was scheduled for March 27, 2004, to be held at New Zion. That meeting began with thirteen people present, including the pastor. The purpose for this meeting was to begin to prayerfully and scripturally discern God’s vision for the proposed merged church. Therefore, the pastor led the taskforce through George Barna’s definition of vision: “Vision for ministry is a clear mental image of a preferable future imparted by God to His chosen servants and is based upon an accurate understanding of God, self and circumstances.”9 After a brief moment of unpacking this definition, the group read Proverbs 29:18, Acts 1:8, and Matthew 28: 18-20, and they considered the following questions relating to God’s vision, His mission, and their church’s identity in the table 1.

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8 For a complete agenda and taskforce members’ answers to these questions see Appendix B-1.

Table 1. God’s vision, His mission, and church’s identity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>God’s Vision and Mission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What does Proverbs 29:18 say about why we need God’s vision for our ministry?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to His church?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What in the world is God up to in our day and community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What is our part in God’s continuing ministry and mission?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How can this vision be realized in the ministry of the church?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church’s Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. With words, symbol, or picture, express your own reality and the reality of your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>church concerning:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Your church. Your church is who you are as a church at this time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The mission of your church. Your mission as a church is what you do as a church at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>this time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The difference your church makes in your community. This is the result you can see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as an outcome of your ministry in the community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For homework, the taskforce members in attendance were asked to prayerfully read Luke 9:1-6, 9:10-17, Acts 2:42-47, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 12, Hebrews 10:23-25, and 1 Peter 4:8-11; meditate and record connections they saw between the scriptures and the merger; and also do the “Activities for Reflection and Interaction” worksheet. One week later, on April 3, 2004, the members of the taskforce met at Earle’s Chapel to prayerfully and scripturally continue to discern God’s vision and mission for the future merged church. This time, they studied Matthew 16:18, 22:37-40, Mark 2:17, and Luke 4:18-19; answered some questions which the pastor had prepared prior to the meeting; and also completed the “Activities for Reflection and

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10 For a complete agenda and taskforce members answers to these questions see Appendix B-1.

11 See Appendix B-2, tables 16 and 17, for complete questions and taskforce members’ answers to the questions found on the “Activities for Reflection and Interaction” worksheet.
Interaction” worksheet to help taskforce members determine what ministry values were important to them.

On April 27, 2004, the taskforce members gathered again to prayerfully and scripturally continue to discern God’s vision and mission for the future merged church. With these scriptures (Matthew 4:10, 28:19-20, Mark 16-15, Luke 24:47-49, John 20:21, Acts 1:8; 2:42-47, Ephesians 1:12, 2:19, 4:12-16, and Psalm 34:3) as a guide, the group worked through the “Connections Between Beliefs And Actions” worksheet to further help discern God’s vision, purpose, and ministries for the proposed future merged church. After studying the above mentioned scriptures and connecting beliefs and action, the members of the merger taskforce identified the following purposes of the church in table 2.

Table 2. God’s purposes for the Church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>God’s Purposes for the Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Membership and Fellowship: Baptizing those who believe the Good News and bring them into the fellowship (Matt. 28:19, Mark 16:16, Eph. 2:19).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Discipleship, Equipping Maturity: Teaching the new believers to obey God’s Word—the process of helping believers to become more like Christ in thoughts, feelings, and action (Matt. 28:20, Eph. 4:12-13.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ministry or Service: Love you neighbor as yourself by ministering to them with your spiritual gifts and showing them God’s love by meeting their needs and healing their hearts in the name of Jesus (Rom. 5:7, Eph. 4:16).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Worship, Exalt, Magnify, or Glorify God: Love the Lord with all your heart, mind, and strength by worshipping and glorifying God (Ps. 34:3, Matt. 4:10, Eph. 1:12).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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12 See Appendix B-2, tables 18 and 19, for complete questions and taskforce members’ answers to the questions found on the “Connections between Beliefs and Actions” worksheet.
The following week, May 1, 2004, the charge merger taskforce members and the pastor met again to refine the vision and purpose God had given to the future merged church. It was decided that the vision of the proposed merged church would be as identified in Table 3.

Table 3. God’s vision for the proposed merged church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>God’s Vision for the Proposed Merged Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  A vision for a house of prayer and a healing station where the abused, addicted, hurting, depressed, and confused can find love, acceptance, hope forgiveness, assurance, help, encouragement, and guidance through the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:18-19, 9:1-6, 10:9, 17-19).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.  A vision for discipleship: to develop members to grow into spiritual maturity, through Bible studies, small groups, workshops, retreats, and Bible school (Matt. 28:20, Acts 2:42, Eph. 4:11-16, 2 Tim. 2:15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.  A vision for equipping and empowering every believer in Jesus Christ for an important ministry by helping them to discover the gifts, talents, and skills God gave them (Rom. 12:6-8, 1Cor. 12:27-30, Eph. 4:11-16).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.  A vision for evangelism: to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the unchurched residents in our communities and throughout the world (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of the merged church would be to love God and love one another and bring people to Jesus Christ to develop them to reach their full potential for Christ and multiply themselves in order to magnify God.13 With all of these accomplished, the next thing to be done was to formulate a resolution for the merger to be read at the upcoming gathering of the

13 The resources used to help discern God’s vision and mission for the proposed merged church are The Power of Vision, 159-165 and The Purpose Drive Church, 95-109.
Peninsula Delaware Annual Conference. The charge Lay Leader, Shirley Walker, and the pastor worked behind the scenes to form a rough idea of the resolution before the next meeting which was scheduled for May 8, 2004. When the taskforce members met that day, the rough idea of the resolution was presented to them as a platform for dialogue on the issue. Before the meeting was over, the merger resolution was developed.

Throughout the strategic planning process, the congregation was kept informed of the taskforce’s progress, while taskforce members kept debriefing their respective churches during church council meetings. In this way, taskforce members had the opportunity to access and address all concerns from churches that came up outside of taskforce meetings. Communication kept flowing regularly throughout the process to Rev. Dr. Donnachie, the DS of the Easton District. When the DS learned that a working merger resolution had been developed and approved by the Charge Council, he scheduled a meeting to hold a Charge Conference for the charge to vote on the merger resolution. This scheduling was done in advance to give the members of the charge enough time to have their concerns addressed in preparation for the merger resolution vote.

On Sunday, May 23, 2004, Rev. Dr. Donnachie, came to worship with the charge and preached the sermon. After the sermon, he called the Charge Conference to order and asked for the merger resolution to be read. Sister Shirley Walker, the Lay Leader of the charge, read the resolution for merger. This resolution was put to motion and seconded. The DS allowed some time for conversation about the resolution after which the call for the vote was made and the resolution was adopted by a vote of 62 in favor and 2 against by the members of the three churches who were present. Rev. Dr. Donnachie, III, said this resolution would be read during

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14 See Appendix B-3 for a copy of the Merger Resolution.
the Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference, which began on June 3, 2004, for the affirmation. He encouraged that as many people as possible from all the three churches should come and celebrate the affirmation during the annual conference. On June 5, 2004, in the presence of the Annual Conference delegates and visitors, four members from CNC, and the pastor, the DS reported on the effort of the CNC to work together to vote on a resolution to merge effective January 1, 2005. The DS then read the resolution to the Annual Conference, after which they erupted into loud applause to affirm CNC’s resolution to merge.

With the merge resolution voted on, the charge merger taskforce began to work on a name for the proposed merged church. After prayerful discussion, it was agreed that the entire congregation be given the opportunity to be part of the process to choose a name for the proposed merged church. All of the members of the charge were encouraged to suggest a name in writing. When all the suggested names came in, a process of elimination was used to narrow down the names. This process of elimination through congregational voting went on for three Sundays until finally on July 11, 2004, Leonard Palmer and Mrs. Willie Pauls, members of the charge merger taskforce announced to the congregation the name selected for the projected merged church, New Life Community United Methodist Church, a fitting name that the pastor prayerfully suggested in writing with nobody’s knowledge.

Since it was not possible or practical for New Life Community United Methodist Church to acquire new property and begin worshiping in a building effective January 1, 2005, the preferable thing to do was to choose one of the three church buildings and use it as the worshiping place for NLCUMC. In order to accomplish this, a process had to be in place to help make that choice as smooth and transparent as possible. A “Church Building Facts Collection
Questionnaire

was developed to help with the process. Working through this questionnaire enabled the charge merger taskforce to recommend to the Charge Council that Charles Wesley’s building would be the best choice for the temporal location of the newly merged NLCUMC. The Charge Council agreed with the taskforce’s recommendation. The recommendation was therefore reported to the members of the charge, with which they agreed overwhelmingly.

After the worship location for NLCUMC was chosen, the Charge Council tasked the charge merger taskforce to work with the trustees of all three churches to bring their assets together to become the assets of NLCUMC; this included deeds for buildings and properties. The taskforce was also to make decisions concerning the buildings and their accompanied lands. The taskforce considered every option possible. Knowing how much sentimental attachment people have to church buildings, the taskforce wanted to be as reasonable as possible to the process. Even though Charles Wesley’s church building had been chosen as the temporal worship site for the merged church, the taskforce members agreed that it would be better to put all three properties on the market for sale at the same time with the proceeds going towards building a new worship center on neutral land.

Included with this suggestion was a plan to help NLCUMC re-locate to one of the other two church buildings should the Charles Wesley building happened to sell first. This plan continued to outline alternate worship locations even if all the three properties were to be sold before a new worship location was built for the merged church. These recommendations from the taskforce were embraced by the Charge Council, as well as the entire membership of the charge. Hence, a realtor was contracted by the Charge Council in October 2004, to assist in

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15 See Appendix C, tables 20-22, for copies of the Church Building Facts Collection Questionnaires.
marketing of the properties and also to find possible land for the future new worship location for
the merged church.

Up until this time, there had not been any sign of trouble in the merger process; all the
churches and their leaders were on board. Since Sunday worship service was on a rotation basis,
plans were in progress to celebrate the last Sunday worship in each church building as the last
Sunday of that church. In addition, the pastor was conducting a spiritual gifts assessment,
leadership workshops, and trainings to help choose the appropriate leaders for the newly merged
NLCUMC wisely. Through the results of the spiritual gifts assessment and prayer, some of the
leaders were selected before the first Sunday worship in January 2005 as NLCUMC.

On Sunday, January 2, 2005, a day after the merger of Charles Wesley, Earle’s Chapel,
and New Zion United Methodist Churches to become NLCUMC took effect, the newly merged
church held its first celebrative worship service at their chosen location in Centreville, Maryland.
All the appropriate measures were taken to give NLCUMC a new identity. Everything was going
smoothly with plans being worked out to put all the properties on the market. With the merger
now in effect, a time was set for the trustees of the three former churches to relinquish all their
assets since they now belonged to NLCUMC. During the meeting, the trustees of Charles Wesley
and New Zion presented all their assets; however, New Zion trustees stated that they were
waiting for an answer from the DS before they could release anything because they had
sentimental attachment to their church building. This was the first time a sign of uneasiness
about the merger was seen from any church.
Unforeseen Problems

Even though New Zion trustees were reluctant to release the deeds to the building and land after the merger took effect, an action was taken to make sure that the money in the church’s account was transferred into the NLCUMC account. Meanwhile the taskforce was working with the chosen realtor to prepare all the properties of the former churches which now belonged to NLCUMC for sale at the same time by following the guidelines set up in the United Methodist Church Book of Discipline.

On February 7, 2005, the DS came to hold a Church Conference to oversee the vote for the resolution authorizing the sale of NLCUMC properties (formerly Charles Wesley, Earle’s Chapel, and New Zion United Methodist Churches’ properties). There were fifty-nine members present at this Church Conference. The resolution was read by the DS, put in motion by Shirley Walker and seconded by Willie Pauls. After the floor was opened up for questions and discussions, the motion was made to call for the vote. Following a short prayer by the pastor, the vote was taken. There were thirty people who voted yes, fifteen voted no, while four people abstained. Since the majority of the members voted yes, the DS declared the resolution authorizing the sale of the properties passed.

On March 9, 2005, New Zion leaders sent a letter to NLCUMC stating, “We . . . request a meeting with the District Superintendent to further discuss our options to continue worshiping at New Zion, our community church. . . We have come to the point that we foresee this decision [to merge] as an inconvenience for the members of New Zion since New Life will be located in another county.”16 The letter was forwarded to the DS for his action, and he addressed their concern in a letter dated April 25, 2005.

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16 See Appendix J for a copy of the letter.
When NLCUMC leaders met with regard to the issue of New Zion’s dissension, it was agreed that advice from an attorney was needed. Thus, a local attorney was retained to review the merger process and advise the church on how to consolidate the three properties. Upon reviewing the information forwarded to him regarding the establishment of NLCUMC, the attorney needed to know if any Articles of Merger were thereafter filed with the Maryland State Department of Assessment because that was necessary to obtain certification as to the merger and to have the property tax records reflect NLCUMC.

Since Articles of Merger had not been filed with the Maryland State Department of Assessment, the lawyer was asked to guide the church through the process. He asked for copies of all the information, minutes, and documents that were available as to the action of each separate church regarding the decision, the plan, and resolutions to merge into one church, including the date and record of the vote of each separate church as to the merger. He added, “Until the Articles of Merger have been filed and approved the real estate titles are going to be on the separate church. This is the question now being raised by the title examiner.”

Since all the properties of the three churches had been advertised for sale at this time, it happened that another independent church looking for a property to purchase for worship was interested in New Zion’s property and wanted to purchase it. Their realtor had worked with NLCUMC’s realtor until it was time for settlement, when the pastor received a letter from an attorney stating that he had been retained by New Zion Trustees to “review and advise them regarding the plan to eliminate their separate identity and close their church.” The attorney also stated that “there has been no formal indication that the Plan has been properly authorized and implemented. Until such time as the trustees are satisfied that they have discharged their duty in

effectuating a properly authorized sale of the church property, they will not sign a deed
conveying the church property to anyone."\(^{18}\) Upon receiving the letter, a copy of it and the one
from NLCUMC’s attorney were forwarded to the DS. The resident Bishop of the Peninsula-
Delaware Annual Conference and his cabinet were made aware of the problem; however, they
could not provide any tangible help. Meanwhile most of the members of New Zion were actively
worshiping, playing their roles, and contributing to NLCUMC.

On Friday, August 11, 2006, the author was informed by the NLCUMC Lay Leader that
members of New Zion did not come to worship service at NLCUMC on Sunday August 6, 2006.
Instead, they held a worship service separately in their church building in Cordova, Maryland. It
was obvious that they were pulling away from the merger. Upon hearing the information, the DS
was immediately contacted and informed about New Zion’s actions. The DS advised the pastor
to wait and see what happened on the following Sunday, August 13, 2006, while he investigated
the reason that they held a separate worship service.

On Sunday, August 13, 2006, only the Lay Leader and another family of six from New
Zion attended worship service with the rest of the NLCUMC members. New Zion members
again held a worship service separately in their church building in Cordova, Maryland. The
rumors were prevalent in the community that New Zion had broken away from the merger
because they did not want their church building to be sold. When a call was made to one of the
leaders to inquire about their absence from NLCUMC worship service, the pastor was informed
that their attorney would answer that question soon.

On August 14, 2006, a copy of a letter addressed to the DS from the Law Office of
Campen & Cornwell, L.L.C., was also sent to the pastor. Part of this letter stated, “No merger

\(^{18}\) Campen & Cornwell, L.L.C., letter to author, Re: Dissolution/Merger of United Methodist Church, May
16, 2005.
documents have been filed in the State of Maryland involving New Zion. As a merger has never occurred under the State law, it is abundantly clear that an ecclesiastical merger, whose process must bow and be subordinate to the state law under the Book of Discipline has not occurred. Members of New Zion, especially those who were part of the charge merge taskforce, became negative and demonstrated characteristics that were very unbecoming of Christians. Now, with the legality of the merger in question, it was obvious that mistakes were made during the merger process. Also, with a threat of lawsuit and negative reactions from New Zion, on Sunday, May 23, 2004, the DS returned to hold Charge Conferences for each church on the charge to vote on the merger resolution separately, something that should have been done at the beginning of the process.

According to the Book of Discipline, (1) the merger must be proposed to the charge conference of each of the merging churches by a resolution stating the terms and conditions of the proposed merger, and (2) the plan of the merger as proposed to the charge conference of each of the merging churches shall be approved by each of the charge conferences in order for the merger to be effected, except that for a charge conference that includes two or more local churches, the required approval shall be by the church local conference of each local church in accordance with the requirements of ¶ 2526. After two weeks of notification, the DS returned on October 7, 2005, to conduct a Charge Conference for each church on the charge to vote on the merger resolution. He first stopped at New Zion at 3:00 P.M. to hold a Charge Conference for them to vote on the merger resolution, which they unanimously voted against. At 4:00 P.M., he held a Charge Conference at Earle’s Chapel for them to vote on the merger resolution. Before the

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19 Campen & Cornwell, L.L.C., letter to author, Re: New Zion United Methodist Church, August 4, 2005.

20 United Methodist Church, 700.
vote, the DS informed the members of Earle’s Chapel that New Zion had already voted against the merger resolution; therefore, the merger could possibly happen only between Charles Wesley and Earle’s Chapel if both churches vote yes. He then gave Earle’s Chapel members the opportunity to ask questions for clarification.

After that, the resolution stating the terms and conditions of the proposed merger between Charles Wesley and Earle’s chapel was read. When the reading was over, Rev. Donnachie, III, asked for the motion for Earle’s Chapel to merge with Charles Wesley to form a new church called New Life Community United Methodist Church. Harry Demby, III made the motion that Earle’s Chapel merge with Charles Wesley to form the new church. Andrea Hawkins seconded the motion, after which the DS asked each member present to stand up and verbalize his or her vote with yes or no. All twelve members present from Earle’s Chapel unanimously voted yes for the merger.

Immediately after the Earle’s Chapel vote, the DS met with the members of Charles Wesley to conduct a Charge Conference for them to vote on the merger resolution. Again, before voting, the DS informed the members of Charles Wesley that New Zion had already voted against the merger resolution; therefore, the merger could possibly happen only between Charles Wesley and Earle’s Chapel if both churches voted yes. He then gave Charles Wesley’s members the opportunity to ask questions for clarification. After that, the resolution stating the terms and conditions of the proposed merger between Charles Wesley and Earle’s chapel was read. When the reading was over, Rev. Donnachie, III, asked for the motion for Charles Wesley to merge with Earle’s Chapel to form a new church called New Life Community United Methodist Church. John F. Andrews made the motion that Charles Wesley merge with Earle’s Chapel to form the new church. Madelyn Hollis seconded the motion, after which the DS asked each
member present to stand up and verbalize his or her vote with yes or no. All twenty-two members present from Charles Wesley unanimously voted yes for the merger.

With each of the merging churches unanimously voting in favor on resolution stating the terms and conditions of the proposed merger, it was time to put “the plan of the merger” together. In order for the merger to be effected, “the plan of the merger” must be approved by the charge conference for each of the merging churches. With the help of the Law Office of Price and Price, L.L.C., the plan of the merger was prepared. The DS again conducted charge conferences for Charles Wesley and Earle’s Chapel separately to approve the proposed plan of the merger. Each of the merging churches unanimously voted in favor of the proposed plan of the merger. All these charge conferences happened in October 2006 in order to enable NLCUMC to remain as merged church.

Post-Merger Evaluation

Until the pastor decided on his thesis project, the church had not thought of evaluating the merger process to find out whether it was successful. Thus, when the pastor decided on the project for his thesis, he informed the PPRC\(^\text{21}\) of NLCUMC about the need to plan for a post-merger evaluation in partnership with his thesis project with the hope that the merger experience would be helpful to other churches. The PPRC agreed to work with the pastor on this endeavor and at the same time be his accountability partner. As a result, the PPRC and the pastor agreed to include the plan for a post-merger evaluation as part of the Church’s Ministry Covenant. The

\(^{21}\text{PPRC is an abbreviation for Pastor Parish Relations Committee. The PPRC is the administrative unit in a local church where staff and congregational interests are integrated to focus on the mission of the church. “The committee shall reflect biblically and theologically on the role and work of the pastor(s) and staff as they carry out their leadership responsibilities. The committee shall assist the pastor(s) and staff in assessing their gifts and setting priorities for leadership and service. It is the responsibility of the committee to communicate with the committee on lay leadership and/or the church council when there is a need for other leaders or for employed staff to perform in areas where utilization of the gifts of the pastor(s) and staff proves an inappropriate stewardship of time” (United Methodist Church, ¶ 259.2 ).}
Ministry Covenant deals with the agreement of goals the pastor and church focus on in a particular church year. It was decided that after the post-merger evaluation the result would be shared with the church council. It was also agreed that the pastor would formulate the post-merger evaluation criteria and questions and share it with the PPRC for feedback, suggestions, revisions, and approval before it was given to respondents. The PPRC and the pastor agreed that between July 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012, the merger process would be evaluated and a healthy church assessment would be completed to determine the healthy growth of NLCUMC.

In June 2011, the pastor presented a draft copy of the post-merger evaluation to the PPRC for feedback and suggestions. The feedback and suggestions for the post-merger evaluation took two meetings; meetings were held monthly. After further revision, the survey questionnaire was approved by both the PPRC and the pastor, and it was ready to be distributed to members of NLCUMC who were actively involved in the churches that merged. The survey questionnaire had to be developed to reflect the stages of the merger process. Seventy-two questions were developed with some having multiple parts.22

These seventy-two questions were divided into six sections. In section one, comprised of questions one through eleven, the respondents had to provide information dealing with demographics. Questions in section two, beginning from twelve through twenty-three, collected information on how and why decisions were made by the churches involved in the merger. In section three, questions twenty-four through forty dealt with information concerning the negotiation of the merger. Section four, comprised of questions forty-one through forty-seven, dealt with the implementation of the merger. Section five, which consisted of questions forty-

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22 See Appendix D-1, for a copy of the post-merger survey questionnaire. Some of the survey questions were adopted from Roger D. Weisner, “Church Renewal by Merging: Developing a Proactive Strategy for Merging Maintenance Churches within the Western North Carolina Conference” (DMin diss, Hood Theological Seminary, 2007), 161-166.
eight through sixty, dealt with district, charge, and pastoral leadership; while section six dealt
with unity and conflict management during and after the merge. Twenty-five questionnaires were
prepared to be given to members who were part of merger process. On Sunday, November 6,
2011, the twenty-five questionnaires were given to respondents to be returned within ten days.
Twenty-two questionnaires were returned within the ten days. The response on each
questionnaire was entered into Kwik Survey until all twenty-two were entered for result and
analysis.  

Analysis of Post-Merger Survey Results

Section One: Demographic of Survey Respondents

As shown in figure 1 below, the demographic information collected in section one reveals
that of the twenty-two respondents, ten were members of formerly Charles Wesley, while both
formerly Earle’s Chapel and New Zion had six respondents each. Again, the figure indicates that
eighteen respondents were women, and four were men; six respondents were between 40 and 59
years of age, fifteen were within 60 and 79 years of age, while one respondent was over 89 years
old. Furthermore, figure 1 disclosed that twenty-one of those who responded to the post-merger
survey were active participants in regular worship services; however, one respondent did not
attend worship services regularly.

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23 Kwik Surveys is an online survey builder, http://legacy.kwiksurveys.com/members.php

24 See Appendix D-2, for the result of the post-merger survey.
When respondents were asked to check the one aspect of the following church activities that they appreciated most about their churches, they indicated the following. (1) *Worship:* Seventeen respondents valued preaching and seven valued singing the most. (2) *Relationship:* Nineteen respondents valued relationship with God and eight valued fellowship the most. (3) *Personal growth:* Ten respondents valued prayer and seven valued both commitment and leadership most. (4) *Programs:* Twelve respondents valued education promoting growth and understanding, while four valued both mission and communication most. (5) *Other:* Sixteen
valued healthy church growth while three listed financial stability/security. The results of activities that survey respondents appreciated most about their churches are shown in the figure 2.

Figure 2. Church activities that survey respondents appreciated most about their churches.

Section Two: Deciding to Merge

Motivations for the Merger

According to the post-merger survey results, there were four main motivations that contributed to the decision for the merger, as indicated by figure 3. First, 92% of respondents
strongly agreed or agreed that growth and effective ministries were the main motivation for the merger. Second, 80% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that to expand effective ministries was main motivation for the merger. Third, 70% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that financial stability was main motivation for the merger. Finally 66% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that becoming a stationary church was main motivation for the merger. Two of the motivations for the merger are shown in the charts below.25

![Growth and Effective Ministries](chart1)

**Figure 3. Motivations for the merger.**

**Benefits of the Merger**

Concerning the main benefits of the merger, the result of the survey reveals four main benefits, as indicates by figure 4. First, 100% of the twenty-one respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they expected the main benefit of the merger to be creating healthy growing church opportunities. Second, 100% of the seventeen respondents agreed or strongly agreed that in the merger they were seeking to become effective in ministry. Third, 82% of the sixteen respondents

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25 For more graphical analysis of motivations for the merger, see Appendix D-3, figure 15.
strongly agreed or agreed that to create a long term financial stability was the main benefit for the merger. Fourth, 75% of the sixteen respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the main benefit of the merger was to increase the ministries offered in the church.²⁶

![Create A Healthy Growing Church Opportunities](image1)

![Become Effective In Ministry](image2)

**Figure 4. Benefits of the merger.**

Again figure 5 reveals that during the decision making process, nineteen of the twenty-two respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they were seeking a focused vision, mission, and more members. Fifteen respondents strongly agreed or agreed that both churches shared a common vision, while sixteen of them strongly agreed or agreed that God's grace was in the merger process. Eleven respondents strongly agreed or agreed that prior to the merger they knew each other well and had a healthy foundation for the merger. When stated “I do not know why we merged,” only two respondents agreed; two remained neutral, while seventeen disagreed or strongly disagreed to that statement.²⁷

²⁶ For more graphical analysis of the Benefits of the Merger, see Appendix D-3, figure 16.

²⁷ For more graphical analysis of the decision making process during the merger, see Appendix D-3, figure 17.
Section Three: Negotiating the Merger

According figure 6, the post-merger survey result further revealed that when stated that the merger was an easy process, eighteen survey respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, while four remained neutral. In other words, the merger was not an easy process. However, twenty respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the decision to merge. Moreover, sixteen respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were excited about the merger. Regarding how decisions were made during the merger negotiation process, thirteen survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that decisions were made based on facts rather than perceptions. When stated, “I really did not care about the merger one way or another,” nineteen of the twenty-two people who participated in the survey disagreed or strongly disagreed. With regard to the compatibility of the churches that merged, only ten survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the churches were compatible; however, sixteen of them disagreed or strongly disagreed that the merger was a takeover.28

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28 For more graphical analysis of negotiating the merger, see Appendix D-3, figures 18.
The survey analysis of merger negotiation further reveals that thirteen respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that it was easy for all churches to give up control or positions; only four respondents agreed to that statement. Nine respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the churches came to the merger as equal partners; only five of them strongly agreed or agreed that the churches came to the merger as equal partners. Only four survey respondents agreed that “there were no attempts to protect the sacred cows (programs, activities, political, and facilities attachments).” Seven respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the same statement, while nine remained neutral. When stated, “we were objective in the merger process by considering what was best for the organization rather than taking a personal stance,” twelve respondent strongly agreed or agreed. The same number of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that time was taken to socialize and get to know one another during the merger process. However, only nine respondents agreed that pockets of resistance were identified and supportive members were used to reduce resistance.

Figure 6. Negotiating the merger.
Concerning openness and honesty of communication during the negotiations of the merger, figure 7 reveals that eighteen respondents agreed or strongly agreed that enough informational sessions were held to help determine if the merger was the right thing to do. Again sixteen respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the lines of communication were opened and honest in the local church. At the same time, seventeen respondents agreed or strongly agreed that a meaningful way to communicate to members that kept them connected and provided input was established and that all churches were heard during the merger process. Fourteen respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there were merger taskforce members representing the positions of each church, while difficult negotiation points were determined by soliciting the support of the majority of people rather than points shared by only a few. Concerning the mission of the proposed merged church, eighteen survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they talked about the mission of the proposed merged church during the merger process.29

![Figure 7. Communication during merger negotiations.](image)

**Section Four: Implementing the Merger**

29 For more graphical analysis of communication during the negotiations, see Appendix D-3, figure 19.
According to figure 8, the survey analysis of implementation of the merger reveals that all the twenty–two people who participated in the survey strongly agreed or agreed that they wanted NLCUMC to grow healthily. Only two respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they were not heard during the merger process, while seventeen disagreed or strongly disagreed to the same statement. When asked whether a pre-merger evaluation would have helped the merger process, seven respondents agreed or strongly agreed, seven were neutral, while seven disagreed. However, figure 8 also indicates that seventeen respondents strongly agreed or agreed that once churches had been identified to merge, the conference and district representative should have come in and explained the situation. Again, seventeen respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the church is able to offer more programs and ministries now as a merged church. Only three survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they felt the district or conference was dictating to them, while twelve disagreed or strongly disagreed.\footnote{For more graphical analysis of merger implementation, see Appendix D-3, figure 20.}
Section Five: Leadership during the Merger

As indicated by figure 9 concerning leadership during the merger process, the analysis of the survey result indicates that fifteen respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they trusted the leadership of the charge and district. Thirteen respondents indicated that they trusted the conference leadership. Furthermore, seventeen respondents strongly agreed or agreed that conference and district leadership should be approachable during a merger. Fifteen of them strongly agreed or agreed that once struggling churches are identified, the conference or district leadership needs to provide early disclosure and decisive leadership. However, figure 9 also indicates that fifteen respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the pastor should have a key leadership role in the merger process.31

![Pie charts showing response distribution]

**Figure 9. District, charge, and pastoral leadership during the merger.**

Concerning current church council leadership, figure 10 indicates that eighteen respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the current church council members were looking out

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31 For more graphical analysis of leadership during the merger process, see Appendix D-3, figure 21.
for the best interest of the vision, mission, organization, and membership. Fourteen respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the current church council members communicated a confident knowledge of the health and condition of the church at all times. Again, figure 10 discloses that seventeen respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the church’s vision, mission, goals, and operations were clearly defined and communicated. However, only ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the current church council represents all churches that merged. Sixteen respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they see a clear track to leadership.32

Figure 10. Church Council leadership during the merger.

Section Six: Unity and Conflict Management

According to figure 11, the post-merger survey analysis again discloses that twenty-one respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the merger process created some conflict among the three churches that initially agreed to merge. However when asked if all conflicts were resolved peacefully over time, eleven respondents agreed or strongly agreed, five were neutral, while six disagreed or strongly disagreed. At the same time, figure 11 reveals that sixteen respondents

32 For more graphical analysis of leadership during the merger process, see Appendix D-3, figure 22.
agreed or strongly agreed that the merger had brought people together. Again, seventeen agreed or strongly agreed that they felt good about the merger; and fifteen disagreed or strongly disagreed that they like things as they were before the merger. Fourteen respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they found it easy to deal with conflict; however, fifteen of them agreed or strongly agreed that they can communicate their feelings to others. Twenty of the twenty-two respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they can share their ideas with others, agreed and disagreed in love, and listen before they spoke. However, only eleven respondents agreed or strongly agreed that everyone in the merger process felt heard, understood, and included.33

**Figure 11. Unity and conflict management.**

After considering the post-merger survey analysis, the PPRC and the pastor agreed that compatibility of the churches should have been explored deeper. New Zion’s decision to back away from the merger caused great disappointment and conflict. Therefore, it is advised that churches considering merger should be honest to put everything on the table and be transparent

33 For more graphical analysis of unity and conflict management, see Appendix D-3, figure 23.
concerning all decisions including properties and programs. As a result of all the legal issues involving in the merger process, an attorney with knowledge about church merger must be consulted to advice on all the legal issues. In addition, retaining an outside consultant to help guide the merger process would be a profitable investment for the church. Since all the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the ultimate goal of the merge was to create a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church, the plan to bring about the healthy church should have been part of the merger conversation process. It is therefore recommended that churches considering merger should also include a plan to lead the church to become healthy during the negotiation process.

The PPRC and the pastor agreed after analyzing the survey result that overall since the merger, the church is vision and mission-minded. The merger of Charles Wesley and Earle’s Chapel United Methodist churches brought people together who can now communicate their feelings to others and share their ideas with each other. There are more effective ministries to give members greater opportunities to become involved in the church. Furthermore, the merger has already achieved three of the motivations that brought about the merger. NLCUMC has been financially stable, the membership has been growing, and the church has more effective ministries for its members. The NLCUMC is a station church whose membership has grown from fifty-three at the time of the merger to about one hundred people on the church’s roll. The average weekly worship attendance is about sixty adults and thirteen youth and children. This progress and these achievements do not mean that NLCUMC is a healthy church. An intentional effort has to be made to lead NLCUMC to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.
CHAPTER FOUR
FACTORS OF CHURCH GROWTH AND CHARACTERISTICS OF HEALTHY CHURCH

Factors of Church Growth

The goal of church merger is not to smash two or three unhealthy churches around under one roof to become friendly cotenants. The unhealthy habits that cause churches to plateau or decline in membership and effective ministry do not automatically end after church merger. In order to reverse these unhealthy tendencies, a newly merged church must deliberately kill the old sacred cows and think outside the box to make some good changes to develop healthy characteristics that will help the merged church to grow to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church. The Lord of the Church, Jesus Christ expects local churches to exhibit characteristics that promote healthy growth.

Assuming from the information presented on the life cycle on a congregation in chapter two, five of the seven churches named in the second and third chapters of Revelation were probably on a plateau or had declined in ministerial vitality. The church in Ephesus did not love Jesus or each other as they did at first.1 The church in Pergamum tolerated false teachers who “taught them to sin by eating food offered to idols and by committing sexual sin”2 The church in Thyatira was permitting a Jezebel-like woman who “calls herself a prophet” to lead them astray by “teaching them to commit sexual sin and to eat food offered to idols.”3 The church in Sardis

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1 Rev. 2:4.
2 Rev. 2:14.
3 Rev. 2:20.
had a “reputation for being alive,” but the church was spiritually dead. The church in Laodicea was “like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold.”

The risen Lord did not directly criticize the other two churches; He encouraged the church in Smyrna to “remain faithful even when facing death” and the church in Philadelphia to take advantage of an “opened door . . . that no one can close.” The stories of these first century churches show that since its foundation, the church has exhibited a tendency to drift toward a plateau, decline, and then enter an unhealthy period of stagnation. These stories also show that throughout history, the Lord who builds His church expects it to grow healthily.

In a class note titled “Spiritual Factors of Church Growth: A Work Text” provided to his church growth class, Elmer Towns, a professor and a well-known expert on church growth at Liberty University, outlines a brief history of popular healthy church growth methods employed over the decades beginning with two forerunners of church growth, Charles Wesley and Arthur Flake. Charles Wesley was the founder of Methodism during the eighteenth century. His innovative pioneering healthy church growth method emphasized holiness, discipline, classes, and societies. Arthur Flake, one of the Southern Baptist leaders, developed a formula built around "scientific" principles intended to grow Sunday schools and churches. His method emphasized the following ten principles: (1) church relationship (offices and pastors), (2) enlargement through visitation, (3) grading (age group classes), (4) Baptist literature, (5) use of the Bible as text, (6) preaching attendance, (7) evangelism (attempts to lead pupils to Christ), (8)  

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4 Rev. 3:1.
5 Rev. 3:16.
6 Rev. 2:10.
7 Rev. 3:8.
8 Elmer L. Towns, "Spiritual Factors of Church Growth: A Work Text" (Lynchburg: Liberty University, 2008).
standard for meetings, equipment, and records, (9) training worker, and (10) stewardship and mission promotion for living. Flake’s principles of effective Sunday school and church growth are still applicable to modern church growth principles.

The modern church growth concepts and principles in the North American context were originally defined by Donald McGavran in the mid to late 1950s and grew in emphasis over the past five decades. According to Towns, McGavran’s method for church growth includes the following: (1) biblical mandate: importance of numerical growth, (2) focus on receptive groups, (3) be aware of people movements, (4) science is a valid tool, and (5) right method guarantees large response. Through this method and others, the modern church growth movement sought to change how missions, evangelism, and church growth were done in North America and all over the world. In order to begin this process, McGavran and the modern church growth movement had to identify the reason(s) why church growth was not happening. They following key problem were discovered in regard to the lack of church growth:

However, engaged in many good activities, Christians often take the growth of the church for granted. They neither pray earnestly for it nor work systematically at it. They assume it will take place automatically as Christians study the Bible, do good to others, and worship God. As a result, in the midst of huge numbers of receptive men and women, many churches stop growing and become static enclaves of comfortable middle-class Christians. These feed the hungry, visit the sick, clothe the naked, and build attractive houses of worship, train leaders, and influence society for good, but they do not grow. The dynamism of the early church does not dwell in them. . . . Church growth has been assumed and is, alas, not occurring.

According the above statement, church growth is more than churches getting busy doing many good things. Church growth happens when churches rediscover the vitality of the early church.

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9 Towns, 4.
10 Ibid., 5.
Though McGavran was the father of the modern church growth movement, the person who developed the principles of church growth in the North American context was Peter Wagner, a disciple of McGavran. According to Wagner, church growth referred to “all that is involved in bringing men and women who do not have a personal relationship to Jesus Christ into fellowship with Him and into responsible church membership.”\(^\text{12}\) While both McGavran and Wagner agreed that churches that wanted to grow had to be committed to be intentionally evangelistic, Wagner believes that if churches are going to grow they must have effective leaders to lead the growth. Wagner identifies seven areas that indicate the level of church health: the pastor, the people of the church, church size, structure and functions, homogeneous unit, methods, and priorities.\(^\text{13}\)

Towns identifies the following pastors and their methods of church growth in the modern decades as the anointed method, as shown in table 4. In addition, he recognizes these pastors and their paradigms of growing churches are shown in table 5. Although these pastors and their churches are known for what they did best to help their churches grow, all these methods and paradigms are components of a healthy church.


\(^\text{13}\) Ibid., 35.
Table 4. Pastors and their methods of church growth in the modern decades as the anointed method.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periods</th>
<th>Pastors</th>
<th>Church Growth Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950’s</td>
<td>Lee Roberson</td>
<td>House-to-house visitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960's</td>
<td>Jack Hyles</td>
<td>Bus ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970's</td>
<td>Jerry Falwell</td>
<td>Saturation Evangelism/media. Saturation Evangelism means “Using every available means to reach every available person at every available time”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980’s</td>
<td>John MacArthur</td>
<td>Preaching evangelism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990’s</td>
<td>Bill Hybels</td>
<td>Seeker-driven church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000’s</td>
<td>Jack Hayford</td>
<td>Praise and worship church. Praise and Worship Methodology is that “If you worship Him, He will come”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010’s</td>
<td>David Yonggi Cho</td>
<td>Small cell groups. Cell Groups Methodology is that “The body grows by the division of cells.”14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Pastors and their paradigms of growing churches.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pastors</th>
<th>Paradigms of Church Growing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill Hybels</td>
<td>Evangelistic—intentional outreach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John MacArthur</td>
<td>Bible expositional—teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Hayford</td>
<td>Renewal—to touch God and be touched by God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Yonggi Cho</td>
<td>Body Life—Kononia fellowship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. James Kennedy</td>
<td>Liturgical—Worship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Maxwell</td>
<td>Congregational—member driven.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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14 Towns, 8-9.

15 Ibid., 9.
Thom Rainer defined church growth as “that discipline which seeks to understand through biblical, sociological, historical, and behavioral study, why churches grow or decline. True church growth takes place when ‘Great Commission’ disciples are added and are evidenced by responsible church membership.” Rainer is right; true church growth happens when those who become believers in Jesus Christ as a result of hearing the gospel are developed to reach their full potential so that they can multiply themselves.

**Characteristics of a Healthy Church**

Over the past fifty years, volumes have been written to determine the foundations and characteristics of church growth. The kingdom of God has benefited greatly from many of these studies. Whereas these volumes have increased growth and spiritual effectiveness of the Church, there are others who believe that church growth is not the essential theme of the teachings of either Jesus or Paul. Those who do not believe this have a different theory. The church growth movement believes that numerical records are a significant feature of the growing church, particularly demonstrated in Acts when the church grew by three thousand in one day, and later increased to five thousand men, excluding women and children.

Since the early 1990s, key writers and leaders within the church growth movement began to question the importance given to church growth theory in the evangelical church. Voices from all denominations began to call the Church to expand its emphasis by rediscovering the biblical Christ-centered church. This call has led to the present shout for “healthy church growth.” The healthy church growth movement proposes that developing healthy churches is the key to growth. As Rick Warren notes, “the key issue for churches in the twenty-first century will be

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church health, not church growth.”\textsuperscript{18} Unlike the church growth movement that believes that numerical records are a significant feature of the growing church, the healthy church growth movement believes that churches that balance the biblical message and mission, and learn from the disciplines of the early church will grow healthily.

Many of these experts on healthy church growth serve as full-time pastors, seminary professors, and church researchers on the subject. Dave Earley, professor of Healthy Church Leadership at Liberty University asserts that “the issue is church health . . . not church growth. If you have church health you will always get church growth. Healthy living organisms grow and multiply. This is true of individuals, groups, and churches.”\textsuperscript{19} Most healthy church growth experts agree with Earley; for example, Warren, assets that “church growth is the natural result of church health.”\textsuperscript{20} Healthy church growth is matter of balanced biblical message and mission, and learning from the early church. Listed below is what some of the experts in healthy church growth say about the characteristics of healthy church.

**George Barna**

George Barna is the founder of Barna Group, “a visionary research and resource company located in Ventura, California. The firm is widely considered to be a leading research organization focused on the intersection of faith and culture.”\textsuperscript{21} In his book, *The Nine Habits of Highly Effective Churches*, Barna defines “highly effective” as “churches that are doing a great

\textsuperscript{18} Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, 17.

\textsuperscript{19} Dave Earley, “Healthy Church Leadership” (Lecture notes, Lynchburg: Liberty University, January 2010).

\textsuperscript{20} Warren, 49.

job in regard to the” six dimensions that “characterized the Early Church: worship, evangelism, Christian education, community among the believers, stewardship, and serving the needy.” He says churches that do an excellent job in each of these elements of ministry are actually being the church Christ planned it to be.

Barna identifies the following nine habits of highly effective churches. First, rely upon strategic leadership. Second, organize to facilitate highly effective ministry. Third, emphasize developing significant relationships within the congregation. Fourth, congregants invest themselves in genuine worship. Fifth, engage in strategic evangelism. Sixth, get people involved in systematic theological growth. Seventh, utilize holistic stewardship practices. Eighth, serve the needy people in their community. Lastly, equip families to minister to themselves. Since this author’s research deals with merging two or more unhealthy churches and leading the merged congregation to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church, he was interested in what Barna had to say to help him learn about the practices of churches that are extremely effective to help him lead NLCUMC to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament congregation.

Stephen A. Macchia

After several months of visiting 100 churches to conduct field-testing, and a major computerized, self-directed survey of 1,899 Christians, Stephen A. Macchia, the president of Vision New England, the largest regional church renewal association in the country writes

Becoming A Healthy Church to present 10 characteristics of a healthy church. According to Macchia, knowing these 10 characteristics of a healthy church will provides pastors and church

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22 Barna, 17-18.

23 Ibid., 24
leaders serving unhealthy churches an approach that will give their ministries a new lease of life.

The 10 characteristics of a healthy church ranked from first to tenth according to the survey are show in table 6.

**Table 6. Macchia’s 10 characteristics of a healthy church.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10 Characteristics of A Healthy Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. God's Empowering Presence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. God-Exalting Worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Spiritual Disciplines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Learning and Growing in Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Commitment to Loving and Caring Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Servant-Leadership Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. An Outward Focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Wise Administration and Accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Networking with the Regional Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Stewardship and Generosity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographics, behaviors, religiosity, and church involvement of those who participated in the survey did not seem to have any impact on how they responded to the ten characteristics.25

Macchia’s survey also revealed that “Scripture and prayer” are vital components for the personal lives of Christians and for their community worship, ministry, and life together. At the heart of every healthy church are Scripture and prayer.26 When Barna and Macchia’s findings are compared, they are very much in agreement with most of their characteristics; their differences are very minor.

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24 Macchia, 23.

25 Ibid., 22.

26 Ibid., 18-19.
John MacArthur

John MacArthur is the pastor-teacher of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, as well as an author, conference speaker, and president of The Master’s College and Seminary. MacArthur is also president and featured teacher with the Grace to You media ministry. In his booklet, *Marks of a Healthy Church*, MacArthur outlines twelve characteristics of a healthy church. These characteristics are listed in table 7.

Table 7. MacArthur’s twelve marks of a healthy church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marks of a Healthy Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. An Emphasis on Godly Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. An Emphasis on Functional Goals and Objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An Emphasis on Discipleship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. An Emphasis on Penetrating the Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. An Emphasis on Active Church Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. An Emphasis on Concern for One Another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. An Emphasis on Devotion to the Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. An Emphasis on Bible Teaching and Preaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. An Emphasis on a Willingness To Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. An Emphasis on Great Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. An Emphasis on Sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. An Emphasis on Worshipping God</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In judging the success of any church, size is not a factor to consider since God has blessed some churches that are very small, while some very large churches have little to no spiritual fruit. A church's spiritual health cannot be measured by its numbers because it is far more difficult to make disciples than attracting people. According to McArthur, God maybe fully honored when the twelve marks of an effective church become the basis of every Christian church.

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27 Marks of a Healthy Church.
Thom Rainer

Thom S. Rainer is the president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources. He was the founding dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Church Growth at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author of many books including *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched*, *The Unexpected Journey*, and *Breakout Churches*. Rainer has researched over 2,000 healthy churches in North America to find unifying features of healthy churches. From his research, he has determined seven major principles that healthy churches pursue. According to Rainer, the North American Church is unhealthy. Thus, his prayer is that God may provide the churches with everything they need to be effective and healthy for God’s glory. Table 8 below shows Rainer’s “Seven Secrets of Healthy Churches.”

Table 8. Rainer’s “Seven Secrets of Healthy Churches.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seven Secrets of Healthy Churches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The church’s leadership and laity have a high view of Scripture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The churches and their leaders seek to be relevant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The church leaders hold to the primacy of preaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The churches have a healthy small group structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Healthy churches emphasize corporate prayer and church prayer ministries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Churches that are healthy take membership seriously.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The healthy churches are highly intentional about evangelism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rick Warren

Rick Warren is a pastor, global strategist, theologian, and philanthropist. In 1980, he founded Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, with one family. Today, Saddleback Church is an evangelical congregation averaging 22,000 weekly attendees, a 120-acre campus, and has more than 300 community ministries to groups such as prisoners, CEOs, addicts, single parents, and those with HIV/AIDS. Recently, the church fed 42,000 homeless people – three

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28 7 Secrets of Healthy Churches.
meals a day – for 40 days. He also leads the Purpose Driven Network of churches, a global coalition of congregations in 162 countries. He is the author of The Purpose Driven Church, which is listed in “100 Christian Books that Changed the 20th Century.” Forbes magazine called it “the best book on entrepreneurship, management, and leadership in print.”

According to Warren, a healthy church will naturally grow. When a church has a biblical message and balanced mission, church health will occur. Warren also asserts that the main issues to consider in the area of Church Health and Growth are the following. First, who is our master? Second, what is our message? Lastly, what is our motive? There is also a secondary issue of Church Health and Growth, which include: (1) who is our market, (2) what are our models, and (3) what are our methods? Referring to Acts 2:42-47, Warren records the following five dimensions of healthy church growth, as shown in table 9.

Table 9. Warren’s five dimensions of healthy church growth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five Dimensions of Healthy Church Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Churches grow warmer through fellowship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Churches grow deeper through discipleship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Churches grow stronger through worship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Churches grow broader through ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Churches grow larger through evangelism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Warren believes that the foundation for a healthy church is a clear purpose that is biblical, specific, transferable, and measurable. Therefore based on the Great Commandment found in Matthew 22:37-40, the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19-20, and other scriptures,

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30 Warren, The Purpose Driven Church, 71.

31 Ibid., 49.
Warren proposes five purposes Christ has given to His Church that, when followed faithfully, will grow a healthy church. Christ’s five purposes for His Church are shown in table 10.

**Table 10. Christ’s five purposes for His Church.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christ’s Five Purposes for His Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Love the Lord with all your heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Love your neighbor as yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Go and make disciples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Baptizing them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Teaching them to obey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hence, table 11 shows five key words used at Saddleback church to summarize Christ’s five purposes for His Church. According to Warren, when churches exhibit the five purposes Christ has given to His Church, they will become healthy and grow the way God has planned.

**Table 11. Five key words used at Saddleback to summarize Christ’s five purposes for His Church.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five Key Words to Summarize Christ’s Five Purposes for His Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Magnify: We celebrate God's presence in Worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mission: We communicate God's Word through Evangelism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Membership: We incorporate God's family into our Fellowship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Maturity: We educate God's people through Discipleship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ministry: We demonstrate God's love through Service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This writer agrees with Warren who started Saddleback church and led the church to apply the above five purposes Christ has given to His Church to the ministries at Saddleback to enable the church to become a healthy growing congregation with an average weekly attendees of 22,000 people. In order to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church, NLCUMC must learn to exhibit the five purposes Christ has given to His Church.

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Leith Anderson

Leith Anderson is an author, conference speaker, and the senior pastor of the Wooddale Church in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. In his book *A Church for the 21st Century*, Anderson proposes six signs of a healthy church in the chapter entitled, “Is This Body Healthy?” These six signs of a healthy church are displayed in table 12.

Table 12. Anderson’s six signs of a healthy church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Six Signs of A Healthy Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Glorify God—is what the church is supposed to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Producing disciples—is what a healthy church seeks to do to obey the commandments of God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Exercising of spiritual gifts—is one of the clearest New Testament characteristics of church health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Relating positively to one’s environment—healthy people do not live in isolation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Reproduction—is an evidence of health in the animal life and in church life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Incorporation of newcomers—may be one of the most identifiable and measurable signs of health in a church. Healthy churches assimilate new people into the life and leadership of the congregation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Openness to change—is more difficult to measure. We should assume that . . . churches are resistant to change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Trusting God—The unhealthy extremes are self-dependence and corporate pessimism.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Christian Schwarz

Christian Schwarz is the author of *Natural Church Development* which discusses eight characteristics for healthy church growth. In this book, Schwarz asks the following: What makes a church grow? What creates church growth? Are members responsible for growth of the body of Christ? He states that when Christians focus on removing the barriers to church growth and reproduction within the church, “then church growth can happen ‘all by itself.’ God will do what

he promised to do. He will grant growth (I Corinthians 3:6).”34 His growth principle is assumed from Jesus’ analogy from farming in Mark 4:26-29, which explains the method by which the kingdom of God grows. Once the farmer sows the seed, it grows by itself. Although fruit comes mysteriously from the planted seed, the farmer has to work hard to prepare the ground for productivity. So, like the farmer, how do Christians plant and water so that God would cause growth in his kingdom? In Natural Church Development, Schwarz helps answer this question based on research from more than 1,000 churches in 32 countries. He identified the following eight characteristics that must exist in a church to experience healthy growth. Table 13 displays these eight quality characteristics.

**Table 13. Schwartz’s eight quality characteristics of a healthy church.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eight Quality Characteristics of A Healthy Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Empowering leadership—church leaders who concentrate on multiplying themselves by preparing others for Christian ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gift-oriented ministry—a ministry where Christians served according to their gifts,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Passionate spirituality—a situation where church members lived committed lives and practiced their faith with joy and enthusiasm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Functional structures—development of structures which promotes an ongoing multiplication of ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Inspiring worship service—the effect of the Holy Spirit has on how a worship service is prepare and conducted which includes the entire atmosphere of a gathering which enable believers to show that it fun to go to church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Holistic small groups—groups that do more than just discussion of Bible passages and apply what they learn to their everyday lives by ministering to the needs of its members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Need-oriented evangelism—Christians using their spiritual gifts to serve unbelievers with whom they have personal relationship whilst sharing the gospel with them and inviting them to church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Loving relationships—church members sincerely spending time with each other outside official church sponsored events, caring, supporting, and laughing with each other.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The above mentioned eight characteristics of a healthy church have been universally found to positively correlate to numerical church growth. In order to provide a quantitative measure for these characteristics, Schwarz developed a number of questions for each of the eight areas to fulfill two criteria: (1) they had to show an empirically demonstrable connection (as determined by factor and time analysis) to the other questions for the same quality characteristic, and (2) they had to show a demonstrably positive connection to the quantitative growth of the church (criteria validity). The combined scores from each set of questions produced an index value for each characteristic. According to the study, an index value of fifty or more would represent the combined score for an “average” (mean) or growing church, while an index value below fifty would represent the combined score for a declining church. Index values for all eight characteristics were used to calculate a quality index.

In order to study the effect of quantity and quality on church growth, Schwarz identified four distinct categories of churches: (1) high growth/ high quality: churches with a growth in worship attendance of 10 percent or more per year for 5 years and a “quality index” (QI) of over 56, (2) high growth/low quality: churches with a growth in worship attendance of 10 percent or more per year for five years and a QI of less than 45, (3) low growth/high quality: churches with declining worship attendance and with a QI of 56 and (4) low growth/low quality: churches with declining worship attendance and a QI below 45. These four different categories of churches were used by Schwarz to test selected questions related to church health.

Based on his studies, Schwarz reported the following conclusions that he thought were important to church health: (1) the variable that has the most significant relationship to church


37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., 20-21.
health is “holistic small groups;”\textsuperscript{39} (2) there is no single factor that leads to healthy church growth because church health depends upon the interaction of all eight characteristics;\textsuperscript{40} (3) church quality is an important factor in church growth; (4) the “65 hypothesis,” which states that when the index values of all eight characteristics go up to sixty-five, the probability that a church is in the process of growing is 99.4 percent;\textsuperscript{41} (5) on the average, small churches win just as many people to Christ as large churches;\textsuperscript{42} (6) the “minimum strategy” that presumes “the growth of a church is blocked by the quality characteristics that are least developed;”\textsuperscript{43} (7) the best way to raise a church’s quality index is to improve the minimum factor;\textsuperscript{44} and (8) contextual, institutional, and spiritual dimensions were all important factors in church health.\textsuperscript{45} According to Schwarz, healthy church growth is only possible as churches focus on qualitative growth within the present membership by investing effort and energy to make sure that the life of the members of the church is in agreement with God’s principles and leaving the quantitative growth to God, according to 1 Corinthians 3:6.

Many other books have been written on the subject; however, for the purpose of this research the above cited characteristics are sufficient. Through their studies, practices, and research, these experts and many others of like mind have promoted their characteristics of healthy church. As much as these characteristics may be biblically based and theologically informed, a careful comparison of these characteristics reveals some similarities and differences.

\textsuperscript{39} Christian A. Schwarz, \textit{Natural Church Development}, 33.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 38.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 40-41.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 46-47.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 50.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 51
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 82-102.
What constitutes a healthy church for one author is different from what is to be a healthy church by another.

However, this author agrees with Schwarz. When members of a local church focus on growing qualitatively by studying the principles God has given in the Scripture and apply those principles to their everyday lives, God would produce the numerical growth. The quantitative growth God would produce would be healthy. Growing a healthy church is not a new concept. The concept of healthy church growth is implied in what Jesus said in Matthew 16:18: “Now I say to you that you are Peter [which means 'rock'], and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it.” Jesus promised to build a Church that the power of Satan could not stop its growth.

The Book of Acts teaches how God brings into being the numerical healthy growth of His Church when believers focus on obeying His Word and applying it to their daily lives. Luke writes:

All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity – all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.46

The challenge is for church leaders and church communities to rediscover the characteristics of such a Christ-centered New Testament church and learn to apply them prayerfully, diligently, and faithfully. As demonstrated in this chapter, this author has researched the characteristic of

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46 Acts 2:42-47.
healthy church from pioneers in healthy church growth to help him lead NLCUMC to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.

Since Scripture must be the primary reference for determining the characteristics of church health, all the characteristics of healthy church mentioned in this chapter must be compared to the characteristics of Christ-centered New Testament church found in the book of Acts. According to the book of Acts, the characteristics of the Christ-centered New Testament church are as follows: (1) obedience to the Lord (1:4-5, 12, 13), (2) commitment to prayer (1:14; 2:42), (3) empowered by the Holy Spirit (2:4), (4), saved and baptized members (41,47), (5) devotion to teaching the Word (42), (6) commitment to community (42, 44, 46), (7) devotion to the ordinances (42), (8), radical generosity (45), (9) large corporate gatherings (46), (10) lifestyle of praise and worship (47), (11) effective evangelism (47), (12), spirit-filled leadership (6:2-4), and (13) natural healthy growth (1:8; 2:47; 6:1, 7).

After comparing all the characteristics of a healthy church noted in this chapter with the aforementioned Christ-centered New Testament characteristics of a healthy church gleaned from the book of Acts, this author noticed that the eight quality characteristics of a healthy church identified by Schwarz and Natural Church Development are the most consistent with the characteristics of a healthy church found in the book of Acts. In his research, the author observed that a number of healthy church researchers have developed assessment tools to help churches of all sizes to evaluate church health. After examining samples of most of these instruments, he concluded that the instrument developed by Schwarz and Natural Church Development provides the most evidence for reliability based on the above-mentioned Christ-centered New Testament characteristics of a healthy church found in the book of Acts. Therefore, this assessment

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47 See Appendix I for a list of Church Health Assessment Tools.
instrument will be used in this research to assess the health of NLCUMC. However, before assessing the health of NLCUMC, the plan to lead the merged church to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church must be examined.
CHAPTER FIVE
A MINISTRY PLAN FOR A HEALTHY CHRIST-CENTERED
NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Introduction

The merger process and the years after the merger have convinced the author that merging two unhealthy churches does not make that church healthy. The healthy growth of a local church is ultimately God’s responsibility as described in one of His parables of the Kingdom:

The Kingdom of God is like a farmer who scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, while he's asleep or awake, the seed sprouts and grows, but he does not understand how it happens. The earth produces the crops on its own. First a leaf blade pushes through, then the heads of wheat are formed, and finally the grain ripens. And as soon as the grain is ready, the farmer comes and harvests it with a sickle, for the harvest time has come.¹

Also, in his assessment of the roles that leaders play in church growth, the Apostle Paul writes, “I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. It's not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow.”² These two scriptural texts plainly show that although healthy growth of a local church is ultimately God’s responsibility, God uses people in the process.

Thus, it is appropriate for NLCUMC to have a plan to nurture the church to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church. Through his research of studying what others have written about the characteristics of a healthy church, this writer concluded that the plan to lead a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church should include strategic prayer, godly vision, the pastor’s personal leadership development plan, small group leaders’ development, an

¹ Mark 4:26-29.
² 1 Cor. 3:6-7.
intentional and need-oriented evangelism plan, connection of people through small groups, gift-based ministry, and engaging and inspiring worship. The author’s research indicates that all of the above mentioned characteristics of a healthy church are agreed upon by most experts, though not all of them are mentioned specifically in their writings. Leading NLCUMC to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church is a spiritual work that demands powerful spiritual tools. Prayer is the key implement that could enable the pastor and the congregation to align their wills and lives with God to lead the church to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.

**Strategic Prayer**

Historically, the Church started while the early disciples of Jesus Christ were praying in the Upper Room at the command of the Lord to wait for the Holy Spirit to come and empower them for ministry. Luke writes:

> Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, a distance of half a mile. When they arrived, they went to the upstairs room of the house where they were staying. . . . They all got together and were constantly united in prayer along with Mary the mother of Jesus, several other women, and the brothers of Jesus. . . . Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.4

Apart from the Word of God, prayer is the most powerful tool available to Christians. Like those early disciples of Jesus Christ, in order for members of NLCUMC to be prepared to be involved in God’s transformational ministry through congregations, they must first pray. Prayer is the only means of communicating with Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church. The necessity of prayer is commanded throughout the New Testament. Christians are commanded to “pray about

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3 See characteristics of healthy church in chapter 4.
4 Act 1:12-14; 2:2-4.
everything.” Jesus, who is one’s example in ministry prayed often before critical events in His life (see Luke 3:21-22, 5:16). He prayed from the beginning of His public ministry to the end. He demonstrated dependence upon His Father by praying before, during, and after He ministered to people. Jesus prayed early in the morning, late at night, and throughout the night (see Mark 1:35, Luke 6:12, Luke 22:39). He prayed during his baptism and at the beginning of His ministry (see Luke 3:21-22). Before He chose the men who would carry on His ministry after His death, resurrection, and ascension, He sought God the Father in prayer (see Luke 6:12-13).

Jesus prayed before Peter’s confession that He was the Christ and before His Transfiguration (see Luke 9:18-20, 28-29). Jesus prayed as He ministered to others. He prayed before healing the crowds, feeding over 5,000 people, healing the man who was deaf and mute, bringing the dead back to life, before going to the cross, and even while He was on the cross (see Mark 6:41, 7:34, John 11:41-43, Luke 22:39-42, 23:34). Jesus prayed for others. He prayed for His friends, His disciples, for all Christians, and for His enemies who nailed Him to the cross (see Luke 22:32; 23:34; John 17:9-16, 20). Jesus instructed and commanded His disciples to pray always and not give up. He still intercedes for us (see Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 18:1; 11:2-4; Hebrews 7:25). Jesus’ prayer life sets as an example for His followers. He started His earthly ministry with prayer, ended with prayer, and commanded those who follow Him to always pray. Thus, a plan to lead NLCUMC to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church must begin with strategic prayer.

It is through deliberate prayer that the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit are released to empower God’s people for ministry. As the angel of the Lord told the prophet Zechariah to tell “Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of

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5 Phil. 4:6.
hosts.\textsuperscript{6} When the early believers in Jesus Christ gathered together to pray, they experienced power, boldness, wisdom and guidance for ministry through the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:14-26, 2:41-47, 4:23-33, 6:3-7). Prayer is the most powerful tool used by spiritual leaders now and through the ages. Therefore, prayer is the vital duty of every Christian spiritual leader. When used faithfully, prayer makes everything work together effectively. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism said, “God will do nothing on earth, except in answer to believing prayer.”\textsuperscript{7} Billy Graham said, “Today the world is being carried on a rushing torrent of history. There is but one power available to redeem the course of events, and that is the power of prayer.”\textsuperscript{8} The examples of the early church, eighteenth century church founders, and current Christian leaders stress the importance of prayer.

Healthy church growth experts like Dave Earley agree that strategic prayer is the most important tool in growing a healthy church.\textsuperscript{9} Thom Rainer writes, "Prayer is the power behind the principles. There simply is no more important principle in church growth than prayer. The prayers of the early church unleashed the power of God to add thousands to the church. It happened then. It is happening in some churches today. And it can happen in your church.”\textsuperscript{10} The same Jesus who sent the Holy Spirit to empower those 120 believers to witness boldly to Him is the One who tells the church to pray to Him, the Lord of the harvest, and He will produce workers for the harvest.

\textsuperscript{6} Zech. 4:7.


\textsuperscript{8} Billy Graham, quoted in Cort Flint, editor, \textit{The Quotable Billy Graham}, (Anderson: Dort House, 1966), 154.

\textsuperscript{9} Earley, \textit{The Small-Group Leader's Toolkit}, 17. Macchia, Stetzer and Dodson, Rainer, and Schwarz, all agree with Earley that prayer is the most important tool in growing a healthy church.

Therefore, to lead the merged church to grow healthy to become a Christ-centered New Testament church, the pastor and members of NLCUMC must follow the prayerful examples of Jesus Christ, the early church, proven effective leaders, and proven research of contemporary healthy churches. Prayer must become the first and most important task for the pastor and members of NLCUMC in their plan to become a healthy church. Through systematic and strategic prayers, the members of NLCUMC and the pastor will receive power, boldness, discernment, and direction to become a healthy Christ-Centered New Testament church.

**Godly Vision**

The prophet Amos relates, “Indeed, the Sovereign LORD never does anything until he reveals his plans to his servants the prophets.”\(^{11}\) In order for a church to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church, it must have godly vision for its ministry. Proverbs 29:18 states, “Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint.” If a leader does not know where he is going, he cannot lead his congregation to get there because they will not know when they have arrived. Thus, having a godly vision helps the leader and his church to know where they are going and how to get there.

In his book, *The Power of Vision*, George Barna defines vision as a “clear mental image of a preferable future imparted by God to His chosen servants and is based upon an accurate understanding of God, self and circumstances.”\(^{12}\) Barna states that pastors grow their churches when they have a well-defined vision and are able to communicate it to their congregations convincingly. When an inspired pastor shares and integrates a clear vision into the effort of those

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\(^{11}\) Amos 3:7.

who are involved in the ministry of the church, the “ministry’s effectiveness is enhanced.”¹³ This is exactly what the pastor of NLCUMC sought to accomplish. Through faithful prayer and careful study of God’s Word, seriously considering the circumstances of the church, and understanding of God, the pastor working with other leaders, has sought God’s vision and painted a clear mental image of that preferable future for the church. A godly vision shared clearly with the members of NLCUMC will enable them to serve God and others as a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.

**Personal Leadership Development**

The healthy growth of a local church is ultimately God’s responsibility. However, God uses prepared and diligent godly leaders to grow a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church. Based on the qualification given by the Apostle Paul in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, it is important that every local church has qualified leaders to teach and set the example for the rest. These leaders must be chosen from the spiritually mature men of the congregation. A pastor must have a blameless reputation in the unbelieving community, even though people there may disagree with his moral and theological stands.

In the same letter, Paul encourages Timothy to work hard, explain the Word of truth correctly to the believers, and train himself to be godly: “If you explain these things to the brothers and sisters, Timothy, you will be a worthy servant of Christ Jesus, one who is nourished by the message of faith and the good teaching you have followed. Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly.”¹⁴ God expects

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¹⁴ 1 Timothy. 4:6-7; also see 2 Timothy. 2:15.
pastors and other Christian leaders to work hard, train themselves to be healthy and godly, and equip others to reach their full potential of what God created them to become.

Lee Roberson, pastor of Highland Park Baptist Church and founder of Tennessee Temple Schools, once said, “Everything rises or falls on leadership.” Leadership ability is the determining factor of every pastor’s ministry. Leadership will determine the size of his ministry, the quality of people produced by that ministry, the number of leaders produced in his ministry, the morale of that ministry, the long term impact of his ministry, and the rate of his ministry multiplication. Leadership will enhance the pastor’s ability to handle changing and challenging times. Leading two unhealthy churches to merge and nurturing the new congregation to become healthy requires patience and the ability to handle demanding situations in changing times.

Following the Apostle Peter’s encouragement to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” the pastor of NLCUMC put together a personal leadership development plan. This plan was to help him sharpen his leadership skills to give the appropriate guidance to the church for healthy growth. This plan included utilizing daily devotion and prayer, engaging in physical exercise and healthy eating, and pursuing continuing education. The continuing education led the pastor to study healthy church growth at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia.

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15 The Need of this Hour.


17 2 Peter 3:18.
Small Group Leaders’ Development

In the process of learning to become a better leader, the pastor came to a real understanding of what it means to be an empowering leader. Pastors who lead healthy growing churches believe that one of the most vital responsibilities is to empower others for ministry. These leaders equip, coach, mentor, motivate, and support potential leaders to become leaders who in turn multiply themselves. Empowering leaders speak life, hope, and truth into the heart of others, which causes the power of the Holy Spirit to be released in them. In his book, Soul Talk, Larry Crabb writes,

Visionaries call us to religious action. Entrepreneurs figure out how to get the action going. Marketing geniuses brand the action till everybody’s talking about it. Gifted performers speak or sing us into action. Again, all good things with [significant] place—but not first place. More important is that each leader be known by someone, not by a crowd or a committee, but by a person, a close friend, an intimate companion. And not merely held accountable, but genuinely known in an intimate, vulnerable, painfully real, long-term relationship.  

Crabb’s comment is not just contemporary; empowering leaders have done so for thousands of years. There are many examples in the Bible that describe leaders who were genuinely known in an intimate way by persons and what happened when these godly leaders spoke life, hope, and truth into the lives of regular people and developing those who showed potential to become leaders.

Moses mentored Joshua by providing on-the-job training that eventually enabled Joshua to lead the people of Israel across the Jordan River into the Promised Land after the death of Moses. Jesus called Peter and the rest of the apostles to become His mentees. Learning from Jesus, a true master of leadership for a period of three years, Peter found encouragement and love from His Master to enable him to overcome his past failures and became the rock-solid foundation of the

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early church. Recruited by Paul in the business of tent-making, Priscilla and Aquila went on to accompany him in his church-planting ministries.¹⁹ Soon Priscilla and Aquila found themselves training the great speaker Apollos, a communicator who taught some questionable doctrine. Even though he was a gifted teacher, Priscilla and Aquila guided and coached Apollos and released him back into ministry.²⁰

After he became a believer in Jesus Christ, Paul took young Timothy under his wings and travelled with him during his second missionary journey. Paul and Timothy “went from town to town, instructing the believers to follow the decisions made by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in their faith and grew larger every day.”²¹ This on-the-job training enabled Timothy to grow and speak boldly as the pastor of the church at Ephesus at the height of cultural disarray and doctrinal confusion. When Paul challenged him, Timothy rose to the occasion to become the leader Paul trained him to become.²² Potential Christian leaders need seasoned mentors to build into their lives; speak life, hope, truth, and encouraging words into their hearts; and support and love them. In so doing, the Holy Spirit works to stir up the potential leader to be motivated to serve and rise to occasions.

According to Earley, the most significant ministry of Jesus Christ was not feeding the multitudes or teaching the crowds; His most significant ministry was training the few to reach the many.²³ Schwarz and Natural Church Development research also agrees with Earley: “Leaders of growing churches consider it one of their most important tasks to empower others.

¹⁹ Acts 18:3, 18.
²¹ Act 16:4-5 NLT
²² Donahue and Bowman, 16-17.
They equip, support, motivate, and mentor individuals to become all that God wants them to be. This is the plan the pastor and members of NLCUMC want to follow to lead the church to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church to fulfill the Great Commission given by Jesus Christ in Matthew 27:19-20, to go and make disciples of Jesus Christ.

In addition to teaching members the Word of God and developing them to reach their full potential for Christ, an intentional effort was made to identify a few potential small group leaders. These leaders were trained to reach those who were moved from the worship service to the small group, Bible studies, or Sunday school. The method of training and developing these potential small group leaders was based on model, mentor, motivate, and multiply steps outlined by Earley. This plan involved actions that must be performed outside the group meetings. For example, envisioning, praying for members of the group, contacting those who did not attend group meetings, inviting new people to join the group, preparing the group meeting, and planning for outreach and social activities. Other activities included leading the actual group, welcoming group members, leading worship, leading Bible study, praying, and witnessing. The pastor effectively trained and developed the potential leaders to do all the aspects of the small group ministry using the following steps.

Modeling Phase

Jesus taught that when modeling is effective, as it should be, the apprentice will eventually become like his teacher: “Students are not greater than their teacher. But the student

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26 Ibid., 121-122.
who is fully trained will become like the teacher.” In his letters to the churches, Paul urged his readers to follow his example. He also told Timothy, “Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.” Furthermore, Paul said to Titus, “And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching.” The above cited scriptures reveal that people do what they see, and since modeling provides the basis of all true pastoral leadership, the pastor of NLCUMC had to set an example for those he trained to become small group leaders.

Like Jesus and all great leaders who came before Him and have come after Him, the pastor must model Christ-likeness “in such a way that no one will stumble because of [him], and no one will find fault with [his] ministry.” The pastor must model spirit-filled leadership as he firmly ground his faith in God’s Word and depend on the power of the Holy Spirit since ministry can only be done through the strength and the power given to by God's Holy Spirit. The pastor must model spiritual fitness through Bible study, prayer, worship, and solitude where he sets aside time alone to commune with God, feeding his soul while God builds into him. In addition,


28 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 2 Thess. 3:7. The teachings of a parent cannot be effective without a good example; therefore, a spiritual father must set the example for his spiritual children. This is what the apostle Paul carefully and confidently does in these scriptural texts. Modeling is more than teaching right principles; it includes living-out those principles before those apprentices. As a successful leader and discipler, the apostle Paul was an example for the Corinthians, Philippians, and the Thessalonians to imitate because he himself imitated the Lord Jesus Christ. Believers have always needed examples of godly living as patterns. Those examples are available through pastors, elders, and other church leaders who show themselves examples of Christlikeness.

29 1 Tim. 4:12

30 Titus 2:7.

31 2 Cor. 6:3.

32 Zech. 4:6.
the pastor must model community by being actively connected to community in a small group to benefit his integrity and personal spiritual health.

*Mentoring Phase*

The next step in small group leaders’ development is mentoring. During Jesus’ development of the twelve disciples, He took on the role of a mentor. As a mentor, Jesus considered His relationship with the twelve to be very important; therefore, He invested in their times together to build stronger relationship with them. Jesus called the twelve his friends: “You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.” As a mentor, the pastor followed Jesus’ example by building a genuine relationship with his apprentices in both one-on-one time and during group times. During conversations, the mentor practiced good listening skills by listening more than he spoke, actively engaging in their stories, asking for clarification, and listening beyond their words. During mentoring, the mentor gave the potential small group leader opportunities to practice leading icebreakers on him first and praying with him as if it were a live meeting. During one-on-one meetings, the potential leader practiced leading Bible discussion first with the mentor, before being given the opportunity to lead part of the actual sessions. The mentoring process took about two months.

*Motivating Phase*

Motivation is the third step in developing small group leaders at New Life Community United Methodist Church. In this phase of small group leadership development, the mentor affirmed and encouraged potential leaders. Examples of godly leaders who modeled

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encouragement in the Bible are Moses who encouraged his apprentice Joshua\textsuperscript{34} and Barnabas who encouraged the churches.\textsuperscript{35} During his missionary journeys and ministry, Paul encouraged the churches he visited.\textsuperscript{36} During the motivation step, the mentor allowed the apprentice to lead the group while he either watched from a distance, or stepped away from the group meeting.

The mentor became an encourager to the potential leader through different life situations and ministry opportunities. He encouraged the apprentice for things he did well, even little things. He praised the potential leader when he attempted difficult issues and challenges, even if he did not complete every detail perfectly. The potential leader was encouraged to continue in the tough times and not get tired of doing the right things because “at just the right time [he] will reap a harvest of blessing if [he doesn't] give up.”\textsuperscript{37} Through his faithfulness and effectiveness, one of the mentees of this author who was leading his own small group was called in July 2012 to become a local pastor of a small United Methodist congregation.

*Multiply Phase*

The final step in developing potential small group leaders is for the potential leaders to multiply themselves. During this process, potential leaders are allowed to lead small groups without the mentor’s direct supervision, making phone calls, visiting homes, nursing homes, and hospitals, leading all the aspects of the group meetings. The mentor’s goal was that all potential leaders would eventually lead their own groups and train their own prospective leaders after one year. He stayed in touch with those who were deployed into leadership by contacting them often,

\textsuperscript{34} Deu.1:38; 3:28.
\textsuperscript{35} Acts 11:23.
\textsuperscript{36} Acts 14:22; 16:40; 20:1-2; 27:36.
\textsuperscript{37} Gal. 6:9.
and he continued to pray for them regularly. He encouraged these leaders to keep the dream of multiplication before their groups and whenever they sought advice, the mentor was ready to advise accordingly.

Developing small group leaders is a process that takes time and several steps, including prayer and cooperation with God. During this process, the mentor meets with potential leaders often to help train and equip them. Whenever they meet, the mentor does at least one step of training development with them. Earley suggests that before every meeting, the mentor must ask himself, “What can I do to help my potential leaders be better prepared to lead a healthy, growing multiplying group?” In his book, *8 Habits of Effective Group Leaders*, Earley suggests eight habits of effective small group leaders, as shown in table 14.

Table 14. Earley’s eight habits of effective small group leaders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eight Habits Of Effective Small Group Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Dream of leading a healthy, growing, multiplying group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pray for group members daily.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Invite new people to visit the group weekly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Contact group members regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Prepare for the group meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Plan group fellowship activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Be committed to personal growth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This book is a good resource to be used in potential small group leaders’ development because it contains some universal, easy to understand and remember, realistic, and doable principles for small group leaders. Some of the other resources available are Earley’s books, *The Small Group Leader’s Toolkit; Turning Members Into Leaders; The Pocket Guide To Leading A Small Group*; and Bill Donahue and Greg Bowman’s book, *Coaching Life-Changing Small*.

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38 Earley, *Turning Members into Leaders*, 87.

Group Leaders. All these resources contain principles and methods that are relevant to small
group leadership development.

**Connecting People through Small Groups**

Studies show that churches that are growing healthily have developed a system of small
groups where their members can find intimate community, genuine help, and passionate spiritual
interaction.\(^{40}\) Also much of the healthy church literature reviewed for this research project agrees
that a healthy small group structure is one of the quality characteristics of a healthy church. Jesus
Christ was a small group leader. In his ministry, He called twelve men, met with them, taught,
equipped, and sent them out to make disciples: “Jesus went up on a mountain and called out the
ones he wanted to go with him. And they came to him. Then he appointed twelve of them and
called them his apostles. They were to accompany him, and he would send them out to preach.”\(^{41}\)

In his plan to lead NLCUMC to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church, the
author followed Jesus’ example and the example of churches that are growing healthily to
develop a system of small groups where members can find intimate community, genuine help,
and passionate spiritual communication.

In small groups, Bible studies, and Sunday school, believers learn how to connect with
each other. They also learn how to develop intentional relationships to enhance their spiritual
growth. Through the study of God’s Word, discussing it, and most importantly applying the
Word to their lives, the group builds on a solid foundation of God’s Word. Since being witnesses
of Jesus Christ is what believers are called to do, the group members learn to witness to each

\(^{40}\) Schwarz, *Color Your World with Natural Church Development*, 116.

\(^{41}\) Mark 3:13-14.
other to help them become skillful at how to communicate the truth of the gospel to reach people for Jesus Christ.

According to Ed Stetzer and Thom S. Rainer, the values that support small groups are that “a small number of people provide a greater opportunity for personal discovery”\(^4^2\) that lead to relationships that provide the environment for transformation. Next, “smaller communities are just that . . . communities. . . . through a variety of expressions.”\(^4^3\) Those who are part of the small community find team spirit in their desire to better experience Jesus Christ. Therefore, they learn together how God connects to every aspect of their lives. Lastly, “small groups are the best way to genuine life change through the local church.”\(^4^4\) Whether the structure is home or church based small group, Sunday school, or Bible study, the key to transformational small groups is relational intentionality. The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy to pass on what he had learned to faithful people who would “be able to teach others also.”\(^4^5\) The goal of small group ministry is the multiplication of leaders. Therefore, in small groups at NLCUMC, members learned to prepare to become group leaders for another small group.

**Intentional and Need-Oriented Evangelism**

A healthy Christ-centered New Testament church must have a strong emphasis on penetrating the community to bring people to Jesus Christ. In His Great Commission, Jesus said to “his disciples, ‘I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy


\(^{4^3}\) Ibid.

\(^{4^4}\) Ibid., 178-179.

\(^{4^5}\) 2 Tim. 2:2.
Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

This is the mandate of the Church. It is unthinkable for a local church to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church without reaching people for Christ by sharing the gospel with them. In fact, all the healthy church experts whose writings were reviewed for this project agree that evangelism is one of the characteristics of a healthy church. However, the styles of evangelism and the words these authors use to promote evangelism are different.

The book of Acts teaches that the 3,000 people who were saved on the Day of Pentecost saturated their community with the gospel. This caused the church to grow so fast that the Jewish leaders said to the apostles, "Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine." The members of the new church did not use manipulative methods to make people commit their lives to Jesus Christ. They used an intentional and need-oriented method to penetrate the community with the gospel. Intentionally, “All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching . . . and to prayer.” They “worshiped together at the Temple each day . . . all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people.” In so doing, the believers were equipped to “do his work [of evangelism] and build up the church, the body of Christ.” An intentional and need-oriented evangelism happens when prayer, caring, and sharing relate to each other strategically.

While being equipped through teaching, praying, worshiping, and praising God, the members of the early church were also fellowshipping, sharing their "meals (including the Lord's
Supper),” and sharing their resources with those in need.\(^{51}\) Even as the members of the early church were learning, praying, worshiping, praising God, caring, and sharing with those in need, “the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved” daily.\(^{52}\) The Lord caused the early church to grow each day through their intentional and need-oriented evangelism. People were drawn to Jesus Christ by an invincible power of prayer, caring, and sharing. The message of the gospel immediately made sense to people the moment they were exposed, because they had already experienced the power of the gospel through the prayer, the caring, and the sharing of the Christian community.

Thus, in order for NLCUMC to fulfill the Great Commission, there needed to be an intentional and need-oriented evangelism process in place to communicate the truth of Jesus Christ and show His love to those who had not yet believed in Him as their Savior and Lord. God has given New Testament believers in Jesus Christ the responsibility to reconcile people to Him:

> And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, ‘Come back to God!’\(^{53}\)

When the congregation of NLCUMC learned to practice intentional and need-oriented evangelism through learning, praying, caring, sharing, and reproducing themselves in their everyday lives, they were successful in penetrating their communities to reconcile people to Christ. Every believer in Jesus Christ is responsible for using spiritual gifts to share the gospel and faith stories with unbelievers to bring them back to God.

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\(^{51}\) Acts 2:42, 44-46.

\(^{52}\) Acts 2:47.

\(^{53}\) 2 Cor. 5:18-20.
Gift-Based Ministry

Some of the healthy church expects agree that the healthy churches are ministering on the basis of gift-based ministry teams. These churches have intentionally put systems in place to help their members to identify and develop their Spiritual Gifts and organize their ministries to function in teams according to those gifts. In those churches, leaders are not just program planners and event coordinators, but true equippers of God’s people. However, a study conducted by Natural Church Development reveals that 80 percent of respondents had no idea what their spiritual gifts were. Only 20 percent of those surveyed agreed that they knew what their spiritual gifts were and used them.54

The New Testament teaches that every believer in Jesus Christ has received at least one spiritual gift. It is assumed that there are some Christians who have received two or more spiritual gifts (see Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:1 7-20 1 Cor. 14:2-5; Eph. 4:12; 1 Pet. 4:10). According to Schwarz, a well-received definition of a spiritual gift by a wide variety of Christian groups is that “a spiritual gift is a special ability that God gives, according to his grace, to each member of the body of Christ to be used for the development of the church.”55 According to all the scriptures that relate to spiritual gifts, the context for possessing a gift is always for the growth and the health of the body of Christ, the church.

The primary purpose of spiritual gifts is to benefit others, not just for the growth of individual believers. For example, in Ephesians 4:11-12 Paul writes, “Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the

55 Ibid.
body of Christ.” Peter also affirms that “God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.”56 The spiritual gifts that Christ has given to every believer to be used to build the church are not for the benefit of the individual with the gift, but the gifts are to be excised in love to benefit other believers in the church.

God does not call believers to ministries for which He has not gifted them with the matching special abilities. Therefore, intentionally NLCUMC put systems in place to help members to identify and develop their spiritual gifts. When they discovered their spiritual gifts, they knew to which areas of ministry God was calling them to best serve. This enabled the pastor to organize the church’s ministries to function in teams according to those gifts for greater effectiveness. Gift-based ministry enabled NLCUMC to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church because it is God's system of operation for His church.

**Engaging and Inspiring Worship**

No church can become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church without valuing worship that exalts God, while engaging and inspiring worshipers. Scripture is full of exhortations to worship God. For example, Paul writes the following:

> But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. . . Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. . . And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles. So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other’s bodies. They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.57

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56 1 Pet. 4:10.

57 Rom. 1:18-25
According to Paul, God has revealed His power and divine nature through the created world, but humanity has disregarded the evidence and turn to worship idols. As a result, God’s anger is against humanity’s wickedness for refusing to honor God by worshiping Him and giving Him thanks. Ignorance of God and worship due Him is the consequence of the human race’s original rebellion. Failure to worship God is the fundamental nature of sin.

Worship is humanity’s appropriate response to God’s self-revelation. It is through worship that believers are able to express their status as created beings in the most truthful of ways. Worship “is an activity God initiates with His creation in order to maintain a relationship with them.” Therefore, Christians worship is a way for believers in Jesus Christ to keep themselves in harmony with God. Through genuine worship, Christians maintain intimacy with God, while facing their sinful condition, confessing, and repenting. As believers worship, they edify the body of Christ, which is the church. Through worship they respond to God for His act of grace; they participate in prayer which is the most direct way of expressing their thanks and praise to God for what He has done and what He is doing.

In the course of worship, Christians respond to God by remembering, anticipating, celebrating, and serving. According to Macchia, “The healthy church gathers regularly as the local expression of the body of Christ to worship God in ways that engage the heart, mind, soul, and strength of the people.” However, the structures of worship in healthy churches can be very different, and yet have a common characteristic. Worship in healthy growing churches exhibits high quality in areas of liturgy, teaching, and praise. In other words, the three components of an inspiring and engaging worship service are liturgy, praise, and teaching.

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58 Walters, 37.
59 Macchia, Becoming a Healthy Church, 41.
60 Schwarz, Color Your World with Natural Church Development 114-115.
Liturgy refers to the form and practice of public worship. Praise can be practiced in countless different ways. Depending on the culture of the church, God can be praised with an organ, piano, trumpet, saxophone, tambourine, guitar, drum, cymbals or with a choir or a band, with clapping of hands or folded hands, with arms lifted up or stretched wide, with heads lifted up or bowed down. Christians can praise God standing up or sitting down and by the classic singing of hymns, contemporary gospel songs, praise songs or worship songs, with upbeat songs, or low beat songs. Whatever a church's style may be, the secret to an inspiring and engaging worship service is that every believer seeks to bring balance between liturgy, teaching, and praise to display a high quality and holistic experience of God in worship.61

The pastor and members of NLCUMC did everything they could to honor God by setting their complete focus on God as they sought to create an environment where worship would be inspiring and engaging. This kind of worship enabled people to experience God intimately to move them from the worship service to the small group or Sunday school. The small group community strengthened the fellowship of the congregation and helped them reach out in ministry to the world. Through an inspiring and engaging worship experience, worship becomes a lifestyle through which believers connect with God for transformation and power for ministry.

Implementation of the Plan

Implementing the Process for a Personal Leadership Development Plan

Just merging two or more churches to become one church does not automatically create a healthy church. Often the result is combining two unhealthy churches to become one unhealthy church, and an unhealthy leader cannot lead an unhealthy church into becoming a healthy

61 Schwarz, Color Your World with Natural Church Development, 114-115.
church. Thus, the author had to initiate a personal leadership development plan to keep him holistically healthy. This plan helped sharpen his skills, refuel his spiritual tank, and re-charge his spiritual batteries to enable him to be healthy to lead NLCUMC to become healthy Christ-centered New Testament Church. Nothing happens without action; thus, the implementation of the pastor’s personal leadership development plan begins with prayer.

As already stated, prayer is the most powerful tool used by a spiritual leader. Jesus Christ, the ultimate example, prayed before and during critical events in His life (see Luke 3:21-22; 5:16). It was through prayer that the early church received power to become a healthy Christ-centered church (see Acts 4:23-32; Eph. 6:18-19). The pastor is, therefore, following that same model in his effort to lead NLCUMC become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church today.

The author’s daily devotional life for many years has begun with a time of Bible reading, usually from the *MacArthur Daily Bible*62 which is arranged to help readers to read through the Bible in a year or two. After reading the Word of God, he also reads other devotional books, for example, *Experiencing God Day-By-Day* by Henry T. and Richard Blackaby63 or *GRACE FOR TODAY: DAILY READINGS from the Life of CHRIST*.64 After these readings, he spends some time to meditate and reflect on them before entering into a time of prayer. The pastor usually spends an hour or more daily praying for his church members and their specific needs, ministries of the church, healthy growth of the church, church and small group leaders, the sick and shut-

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ins, national, state and local leaders, family, personal, and spiritual needs, and other prayer requests. During his daily activities, he continues to be in an attitude of prayer.

Leading a fairly newly merged unhealthy church to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church is an increasing challenge. It requires the combined strength of mind, body, and spirit to meet the changing demands of the ministry in a challenging world. Therefore, improving the physical health of the pastor is very important to maintaining the strength and energy to fulfill the mission and ministry of the church. According to research on clergy health conducted by the United Methodist Church, “Clergy members reflect the lack of healthy disciplines in the general U.S. population. . . . the prevalence of disease and obesity in UMC clergy exceeds the national averages.”65 The same research reports that “there is growing evidence that when a clergyperson is healthy, the congregation also benefits. Clergy members have demanding and complex jobs—they need to make a commitment to balance the demands of work and personal life and to demonstrate healthy lifestyles.”66 A leader must remain physically healthy in order to continue to lead others to become healthy.

Another study shows that those who are involved in physical activities are 55% less likely to develop Type 2 diabetes and 35% less likely to develop heart disease. Those who eat a healthy diet are 30% less likely to develop Type 2 diabetes and 28% less likely to develop heart disease.67 Therefore, in addition to his devotion and prayer life, the author has also been engaging in physical exercise and healthy eating for the past three years. His physical exercise

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66 Ibid., 8.

plan consists of four to five days of forty-five to sixty minutes of workout per week. During this exercise routine, he spends some time to walk and run on a treadmill, ride a stationary bike, and do some strength training. The strength training consists of light weight training, sit-ups, and push-ups. The pastor has also improved his eating habits; he stays away from high fatty and high calorie food and eats a healthy diet instead.

In order to continue to improve his health, the pastor takes his quarterly, bi-annual and annual doctor’s appointments and follow-ups seriously and follows doctor’s orders. To keep him accountable, the pastor has for the past two years enrolled as a member of Virgin HealthMiles. Virgin HealthMiles is a company that provides the means for people to actually measure the quantifiable impact of their physical activities on their health. Members of Virgin HealthMiles can track their daily physical activities with GoZone activity tracker or other compatible devices such as Polar heart rate monitors for swimming, cycling, running, or other sports. These devices are plugged into a computer or a personal program portal, the LifeZone, to monitor their validated physical activities. As a result of putting a higher priority on his time with God through His Word and prayer, and improving his physical health through physical activities, healthy diet, and keeping his doctor’s appointments, the pastor has lost over forty pounds and feels healthier to face daily challenges in ministry.

In addition to this doctoral study, this author attends conference trainings, seminars, and workshops to keep him abreast on contemporary trends, energize his ministry, and enable him to grow healthily, spiritually, and intellectually. He also reads books pertaining to life and ministry to acquire information that is essential for the effectiveness of his life, leadership, and ministry. This leader strives to love his wife, children, and grandchildren by telling them he loves them and showing it in action. This personal leadership development plan outlined above is not just for
a season; it is a lifelong developmental plan to enable him to serve God effectively and bring people into His kingdom.

Implementing Strategic Prayer

While the pastor privately devotes himself to prayer and the Word, he also models prayer and living out his faith before the congregation of NLCUMC. Strategically, prayer is woven through the Sunday worship service, small group ministries, and Bible study groups. There are opportunities during Sunday worship service for everyone to pray, for the worship leader to pray, and for the pastor to pray. The pastor often teaches and preaches about prayer and encourages members to practice praying for themselves, each other, and others. Since 2009, all the members of NLCUMC have been encouraged to pray the same prayer points in addition to their personal daily prayers to enable the members to pray specifically on the same issues concerning the church.

The following are the prayer points NLCUMC members are encourage to pray daily. First, pray that the pastor will keep on speaking boldly for God (Ephesians 6:20) and proclaiming the message as clearly as he should (Colossians 4:4). Second, pray for the pastor and his family that God will sustain them and supply their every need. Third, pray and ask God to raise potential small group leaders to be trained and empowered to make disciples of Jesus Christ by leading other small groups. Fourth, pray that “the Lord's message will spread rapidly and be honored” by the congregation (see 2Thessalonians 3:1). Fifth, “pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest [and] ask him to send more workers into His fields” (Luke 10:2). Sixth, pray and ask God to open the eyes of the members of the church to see the harvest and the needs He is calling us to fulfill in our community. Seventh, “pray that [we] will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe Him” (Ephesians 1:19). Eighth, “pray that from
[God’s] glorious, unlimited resources He will empower [us] with inner strength through His Spirit” (Ephesians 3:16). Ninth, pray that all the members of the congregation will renew their “belief in Jesus Christ and the mission of the church,” and gain a “renewed attitude for servanthood,” and strategic prayer effort.”68 Lastly, pray for the salvation of the unchurched and unbelievers in the community, especially the ones you know.

These prayer points have become a regular Sunday worship service bulletin insert to encourage the members of NLCUMC to pray together. The insert also contains a space for those who attend worship to write their names and specific prayer request(s) if so desired and put it in the basket during the offering time. After the offering, ushers bring these prayer requests around in a basket for people to pick one and pray for the requests throughout the week.69

In addition, through the process of spiritual inventory, the pastor has recruited about twenty members to whom God has given the gift of prayer. Their responsibilities are to pray regularly for the pastor, intercede on behalf of the church, and pray for specific prayer requests whenever they are called upon. During the season of Lent, the pastor leads the whole church in 40 days of fasting and prayer to pray for specific church wide requests. Since 2007, there has been an active prayer ministry at NLCUMC that meets bi-weekly to pray for most of the things mentioned above and more. The pastor is actively involved in the church’s prayer ministry; he attends almost every meeting. With prayer strategically woven through the Sunday worship service, small group ministries, and Bible study groups, it is the hope of the pastor that the Holy Spirit through the Word and prayer enable members of NLCUMC to live Christ-like lives in the word with passion and enthusiasm. The degree of spiritual passion of members of NLCUMC

68 Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 55.

69 See Appendix F for a sample of the prayer points bulletin insert.
will evidently be the point that sets the church apart as a healthy growing Christ-centered New Testament church.

Implementing Godly Vision

As already stated in Chapter 3, the vision of the church was developed during the strategic planning phase of the merger. The following is the mission, which is always printed on the church’s Sunday service and other bulletins to help those who attend services and programs at NLCUMC to remember and receive direction: “To love God and love one another, and bring people to Jesus Christ, develop them to reach their full potential for Christ and multiply themselves in order to magnify God.” God’s vision for NLCUMC was first cast in January 2005. This vision is already stated in chapter three of this thesis.

In order not to get sidetracked from the vision, the pastor and other leaders of the church constantly communicate the vision during church business and team meetings to encourage people to continue to buy into it. Small group leaders, Sunday school teachers, the choir director, and worship leaders are encouraged to communicate the church’s vision at every opportunity to help members of their groups to buy into it. The pastor constantly clarifies this vision and shares it with the congregation. He also encouraged those who are involved in the ministry of the church to integrate the vision into their individual ministries to enhance effectiveness and health. Thus, NLCUMC is becoming a Christ-centered New Testament church to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.

Implementing Gift-Based Ministry

God does not call believers to ministries for which He has not gifted them with the matching special abilities. In order to put systems in place to help members of NLCUMC to
identify and develop their spiritual gifts for service, the pastor has led the church community in several spiritual gift assessment workshops. In addition to the gift assessment done in 2005, the pastor has since 2008 conducted spiritual gifts assessment workshops every year for the congregation. Through *Network*, the pastor has taken most of the members of NLCUMC through a wonderful journey that helped them to discover their spiritual gifts, their style, and their passion for ministry. 70

As a result of spiritual gifts assessments, most of the members of the church have an idea of how God has wired and gifted them for service. For instance, there are members with gifts of faith and intercession who are involved in prayer ministry, while there are others with gifts of encouragement, mercy, and hospitality serving in care ministry. There are members with gifts of leadership, administration, teaching, and shepherding serving as small group leaders. There are others with gift of evangelism serving in outreach ministries.

Engaging the congregation in spiritual gifts assessments has enabled the pastor to organize the church’s ministries to function in teams according to those gifts for greater effectiveness. For example, the hospitality team of the church comprises of members with gifts of helps and hospitality who serve by entertaining, preparing, and serving meals. The lay speaking ministry team is made up of members with gifts of teaching, creative communication, or encouragements who lead worship, give announcements, lead in prayer, read Scripture, preach sermons, or teach Bible study groups. The care ministry team sends cards and flowers for special occasions; they visit sick and shut-ins, and make telephone contacts to members.

Spiritual gifts assessment has also helped to identify, recruit, coach, and develop potential leaders for leadership positions, including small group leaders in the church. Implementing a

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70 Bruce Bugbee and Don Cousine, *Network* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005)
gift-based ministry by placing the right team members with the right gifts, skills, and passion in the right ministry enable people to serve with confidence. Thus, in this season of seeking to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church, it is vital for NLCUMC to help its entire membership to identify their spiritual gifts and encourage every member to use their gifts in service. Gift-based ministry allows the church to continue to breathe and grow and reach people for Jesus Christ.

Implementing the Process for Small Group Leaders Development

Learning from Jesus’ ministry method of training a few disciples to reach many people for the Kingdom, the author began the implementation of the small group leaders development plan with prayer. Before he asked the church to pray and ask God to raise potential small group leaders to be trained and empowered to make disciples of Jesus Christ by leading other small groups, the pastor was already praying for God to raise up leaders in the church, including small group leaders. Immediately after the merger in 2005 until 2011, the pastor conducted spiritual gifts assessment workshops every year for the congregation to help them identify how God had wired and gifted them for service. While this process was to help the members to identify and develop their spiritual gifts for ministry, it was also to help identify and recruit potential small group leaders and other leaders for the church.

Through prayer, results of spiritual gifts assessment, and participation in small group meetings, six potential small group leaders (two men and four women) were identified and recruited by the pastor. These potential small group leaders were coached to gain an accurate picture of their gifts and abilities. They were helped to understand their strengths, growth points, their God-given potential as leaders, and what God could do through them in their groups. Each of these leaders received copies of The Pocket Guide to Leading a Small Group and 8 Habits of
Effective Small Group Leaders by Earley to read. Following Earley’s “four steps for developing others,” the pastor trained these six small group leaders.  

During the modeling process, the pastor gave the potential leaders opportunities to observe him lead the group icebreaker, prayer time, songs, planning and running a small group Bible study. Some of the apprentices were given the opportunity to accompany the pastor during nursing home visitations. He created opportunities for apprentices to develop conversation and ministry questions for a small group meeting and share them with him as if they were in an actual meeting. This modeling phase took about three months.

After the modeling phase, the pastor shifted to the mentoring stage of the training. This stage included building a genuine relationship with his apprentices on both one-on-one time and during group times. While the pastor had more one-on-one relational building time with the two male apprentices, mentoring trainings with the four female apprentices were mostly done in group settings. This was done to protect the reputation and the integrity of the pastor and potential leaders. In order to pursue purity and loyalty in the leadership training process, Paul’s advice to Timothy was followed: “Never speak harshly to an older man, but appeal to him respectfully as you would to your own father. Talk to younger men as you would to your own brothers. Treat older women as you would your mother, and treat younger women with all purity as you would your own sisters.” During our conversations, the pastor practiced good listening skills by listening more than he spoke. He also actively engaged in the apprentices’ stories by asking for clarification and listening beyond their words. People feel loved when they know they are being heard.

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71 Earley, The Small-Group Leader's Toolkit, 120-123.
72 Ibid., 121.
73 1 Tim. 5:1-2.
The mentoring process included giving the potential leaders opportunities to practice leading icebreakers and prayer during one-on-one times with the pastor or during leadership gatherings. Apprentices were giving opportunities to select worship and praise songs as if they were live meetings and practice leading Bible discussions first with the pastor. Potential leaders practiced making phone calls to absent group members by doing role-plays. They also role-played hospital, nursing home, and home visitations with the pastor. Apprentices were given opportunities to lead part of the sessions live. They started with leading the icebreaker one time, prayer another time, and then leading the Bible discussion while the pastor was present. Some apprentices were taken as a group to the nursing home and allowed to carry on with the visitation. During group leadership gatherings, the *Pocket Guide to Leading a Small Group* and *8 Habits of Effective Small Group Leaders* by Earley were used to guide conversations. The mentoring process took about three months.

Motivating the apprentices was the third step employed to develop them to become small group leaders at NLCUMC. Motivation included encouraging potential leaders, seeing their potential, pointing it out to them, affirming it, and applauding it. During the motivate it step, apprentices were allowed to take over and lead the group while the pastor either watched from a distance or step away. The pastor encouraged his apprentices through different life situations and ministry opportunities. He encouraged them for things they did well, even little things. He praised them when they attempted difficult issues and challenges, even if they did not complete every detail perfectly. Apprentices were encouraged to continue in the tough times and not get tired of doing the right things because “at just the right time [they] will reap a harvest of blessing if [they] don't give up.”74 The motivating steps also took about three months.

74 Gal. 6:9.
During leadership training gathering, the pastor did at least one step of training development with the apprentices. He often asked the potential leaders to tell him the role they most needed him to play for them at any given time. Every week the author asked what could help potential leaders be better prepare to lead a healthy and growing multiplying group. The pastor’s goal was that all potential leaders would eventually lead their own groups and train their own prospective leaders one year later.

The final step taken to develop the potential small group leaders at NLCUMC was *multiply it*. During this process, potential leaders were allowed to practice everything they were trained to do, making phone calls, visiting homes, nursing homes, and hospitals, and leading all the aspects of the group meetings without the pastor’s direct supervision. Currently all four women who were trained are leading small groups. Two of them are teaching Sunday school for primary and middle school students. Another one is leading a reading circle small group. This is a group for some of the women in the church who like to read. They meet bi-weekly to discuss a book they are reading together. The fourth woman is leading a bi-weekly small group Bible study for some women of the church who live in her community. One of the trained men is also leading a weekly small group Bible study for church members in his community. The second trained man though has not begun a small group; he helps the pastor to lead a men’s small group.

When these leaders were initially deployed into leadership, the pastor stayed in touch with them by contacting them every week during the first few months, called on the new small group meetings a time or two in the first few months, and continued to pray for them regularly. With these small group leaders, the pastor celebrates every success the small groups experience. He also challenges these leaders to keep the dream of multiplication before their groups. The pastor is available to consult the issue whenever the leaders seek advice. Through the small
group leaders’ development, the pastor has multiplied himself in other leaders who are leading their own small groups. These leaders are also developing their potential leaders to enable NLCUMC become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.

*Implementing the Process to Connect People through Small Groups*

Before the small group leaders development began in 2009, there was only one Adults Bible study and children’s Sunday School. The pastor’s goal was to encourage at least 50% of the adult church membership to get involved in a small group or a Bible study group by the end of his research study. In order to fulfill this goal of connecting people through small groups, they must be moved from the worship service to the small group, Bible study, or Sunday school. Since it was also the pastor’s goal that all potential leaders would eventually lead their own groups, he helped the apprentices to dream about the kind of small group they would like to lead. Prayerfully and scripturally, the pastor coached the apprentices to clarify their vision and align them with the overall vision and mission for the small groups in the church. In order to keep each potential leader’s small group vision alive and translate it into action, the pastor helped them to cast their vision and encouraged church members to sign up to join a small group of their choice. Bulletin inserts and sermons were used to help promote the formation of new small groups in the church.

Two of the groups that were formed were based upon the geographical area where people lived. This model enabled people to get to know fellow church members near where they lived and study God’s Word together. There were two other small groups that were formed based on common interest. One of these groups was the Men’s Bible study group. Most of the members of this group are also members of the Men’s Choir; therefore, every Wednesday they met at 6:00

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5 Stetzer and Dodson, *Comeback Churches*, 119.
P.M. and had a Bible study for one hour, followed by choir practice. The other common interest small group was made up of women who like to read; therefore, every other week they met to have devotions and discuss the book they read together. There were three other Bible study groups the met weekly at the church on different days and different times. Therefore, in addition to the one small group that was in place before the beginning of this research, there were six other adult small groups or Bible study groups at NLCUMC that help people to receive love and care from one another, form a community, and build friendship to enhance their spiritual growth. There are also primary, middle, and high school Sunday school classes at the church.

In every small group meeting there is worship. Through worship, members experience the life changing power of the presence of God. In small group meetings there is witness to participants to learn how to reach people for Christ. There is the Word of God in every group meeting; group members study the word and discuss it. Most importantly, group members are always encouraged to apply the Word to their lives; thereby, the group will be built on a “firm foundation of the Word of God.” Small group members are encouraged to engage in works of ministry. A work of ministry is the service the group members give in their group to each other, and through their group to others. Since the goal of a small group is multiplication of leaders, small group activities are designed to help members to prepare to be group leaders for another small group. Currently, there are ninety-nine adult members on the membership roll at NLCUMC; out of that number, fifty are participants in small group ministries. This translates to 50.5% of the current adult membership who are involved in small group ministries.

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77 Ibid., 61.
Implementing the Process for Intentional and Need-Oriented Evangelism

Thus, in order for NLCUMC to gain greater health to be a Christ-centered New Testament church, there must be an intentional and need-oriented evangelism process in place to communicate the truth of Jesus Christ and show His love to those who have not yet accepted Him as their Savior and Lord. In order to put a high priority on intentional and need-oriented evangelism, the leadership had to continually re-cast the church vision to encourage and persuade leaders and the congregation to seriously buy into it. In the process, the vision for evangelism had to emphasize, to enable, and to empower the congregation to organize for it. Since 2008, the church had been reaching out to the community through a five night outdoor tent revival service where the community is invited to attend. The congregation had been taught and provided with resources to encourage them to invest in the unchurched and unbelievers by praying for them, showing care to them, and sharing with them when possible. In the process, they should intentionally establish relationships with them, share the gospel story and their own faith stories with them, and invite them to church.

The church also engaged in need-oriented evangelism by caring and sharing with people. Sometimes people would come to the church’s office to ask for help with their rents, utility bills, groceries, gas, and other issues. Upon assessing the situation to make sure of the legitimacy, usually the church helps to take care of the situation. In most cases, the pastor had the opportunity to share the gospel message or words of encouragements with the people in need. Some people have been led to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior through this need-oriented evangelism. Others have been invited to worship service at the church, while most were prayed with and for, depending on their circumstances.
The church’s evangelism team partnered with the Department of Social Service and the Department of Aging for the past two years to host workshops to educate senior citizens about Medicare, Medicaid, and the resources available to them. During Christmas seasons, members of NLCUMC sponsor a toy drive to collect toys and other gifts for the children in the community. On Christmas Eve, the church invites the community to attend a candlelight service after which all the children are invited to pick up toys and other donated gifts. Also for the past two years, the United Methodist Men’s Ministry of the church has been providing a free monthly hot breakfast to the community as outreach ministry. The average attendance of this free breakfast is about 75 people. During these free community outreach breakfasts, the gospel is shared, people are encouraged to make requests, and prayers are offered for those requests, for the community, and those present. Through an invincible power of prayer, caring, and sharing, people are drawn to Jesus Christ. Those who visit the church are made to feel welcome and comfortable by the church’s usher’s ministry who welcome and encourage guests to connect with the church family to become disciples and, eventually, leaders.

Implementing Engaging and Inspiring Worship

As the overall worship leader of the church, the pastor has the responsibility to protect worship against the hijacking of service by an individual or cliques within the church. Therefore, in order to lead NLCUMC to gain greater health to be a Christ-centered New Testament church, the pastor was involved in planning of the entire worship service. According to Schwarz, worship in healthy growing churches exhibits a high quality of liturgy, teaching, and praise. Hence, the pastor with the worship leaders, choir, and musicians discovered the best ways to plan inspiring worship to enhance liturgy, praise, teaching, and preaching to engage the people and help them cope with their everyday lives.
Based on the spiritual gift assessment, some people have been selected and trained to help the pastor as worship leaders. These people have gone through the lay academy courses offered by the Easton District Board of Laity. These courses are designed to equip the laity of the United Methodist Church to serve in the areas of their call. During worship services on Sundays at NLCUMC, these trained worship leaders lead the congregation to follow the liturgy through which the Holy Spirit and the love of God are experienced to inspire the worship community. During the preparation for worship, every effort is made to make sure that all the liturgical elements that surround the message prepare the hearts and minds of the congregation for God’s Word. In so doing, it is hoped that people will hear the message and at the same time experience it with their emotions. The goal is to engage and inspire the congregation.

In his effort to lead the church into greater health, the pastor preaches prophetically, biblically, practically, and in culturally relevant ways to appeal to people’s hearts and minds. During his preaching, the pastor focuses on the questions and needs of the congregation and offers practical help that comes from the Word of God. He also encourages the congregation to understand that the corporate worship on Sunday is a continuation of praise, thanksgiving, worship, adoration, submission, humility, and obedience that should characterize the everyday lives of all genuine followers of Jesus Christ. This kind of worship is what God seeks.

Through the implementation of the plan that includes strategic prayer, godly vision, the pastor’s personal leadership development plan, small group leaders’ development, intentional and need-oriented evangelism plan, connecting people through small groups, gift-based ministry, and engaging and inspiring worship, he would entrust ministry into the hands of the congregation of NLCUMC. In so doing, the congregation would be placed on the front line of effective ministry where they can reproduce themselves. When reproduction begins to occur, then this
project will be deemed successfully completed. Thus, this author’s goal to lead a healthy church growth through merging by developing a practical strategy for merging two unhealthy churches and leading the merged congregations to a Christ-centered New Testament church would also be achieved.

**Healthy Church Assessment**

After the implementation of the plan to lead the merged churches to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church, an assessment had to be done to determine whether NLCUMC is a healthy growing church. Several healthy church researchers have developed assessment instruments to help churches of all sizes to evaluate church health. After examining samples of most of these instruments, this writer believes that the instrument developed by Christian Schwarz and Natural Church Development provides the most evidence for reliability based on the above mentioned Christ-centered New Testament characteristics of a healthy church. Therefore, this assessment instrument was chosen to be used in this research to assess the health of NLCUMC.

The Pastor Parish Relations Committee of NLUMC had been aware of their pastor’s doctoral studies since 2008 and the project for his thesis ever since 2010. Therefore, for accountability purposes, parts of this thesis project, especially the ministry plan for leading a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church became part of the Church’s Ministry Covenant. The Ministry Covenant deals with the agreement of goals the pastor and church focus on in a particular church year. The Pastor Parish Relations Committee and the pastor agreed that between July 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012, the merger process would be evaluated and a healthy

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78 See Appendix I for descriptions of church health assessment tools.
church assessment would be completed to determine the healthy growth of NLCUMC. Therefore, when the decision was made in December 2011 to use and Natural Church Development survey to evaluate the health of NLCUMC, the pastor explained the benefit of the profile to the Pastor Parish Relations Committee. The Natural Church Development church profile is used to accomplish the following: (1) help the church discover its critical factor for the growth of the church and its current situation, (2) focus limited resources (human, financial, etc.) at the critical points, (3) identify the church's strengths and the weaknesses, (4) save time and eliminate the risk of an inaccurate analysis, (5) apply a scientific and exact process developed by social scientists, and (6) provide the church with an outside perspective—how does NLCUMC compare with other churches?79

On December 20, 2011, an order was placed to purchase the Natural Church Development survey questionnaires from ChurchSmart Resources. ChurchSmart is an independent Christian publishing company and training organization whose focus is on church planting, church health, and leadership development. This company is the national partner for Natural Church Development (NCD) in the USA.80 The survey package arrived two weeks later.

In order to inform the congregation about the church’s decision to complete the survey and help those who would be chosen to fill out the questionnaire, the pastor preached a series of three sermons on “Quality Characteristics of a Healthy Church” on January 8, 15, and 22, 2012. During the sermon series, the pastor summarized the most important principles of natural church development, the importance of a church profile, the reason, purpose, and the process of the survey, and the congregation’s responsibility in fulfilling each of the eight “Quality

79 Christian A. Schwarz and Christoph Schalk, Implementation Guide to Natural Church Development (St. Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1998), 11.

Characteristics of a Healthy Church.” One week after the sermon series, the surveys were given out to twenty-nine members of the church to be completed and given to the pastor by February 5, 2012. The survey consisted of thirty green questionnaires to be filled out by thirty members of the church including the pastor, and one purple pastor’s survey form to be filled out by the pastor. The twenty-nine members who filled out the questionnaires were considered by the pastor to be actively involved in the life of the church. Most of these members were either in lay leadership positions, members of small groups or Bible study groups, or on a ministry team in the church.

When all twenty-nine completed questionnaires were received, the pastor mailed them together with his survey questionnaire and the pastor’s form to ChurchSmart Resources for results of the survey, the interpretation, and the profile. Three weeks later the church profile including answers from the pastor’s form, survey participants’ answers, calculations, totals, codes, results, comparisons summary, and recommendations for improving the minimum factor was received by the pastor. The profile of the eight quality characteristics of NLCUMC have been plotted on the graph shown in figure 12.

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81 See Appendix E-1 and E-3 for samples of pastor and church members’ survey questionnaires.
82 See Appendix E-2 and E-4 for the analysis of pastor questionnaire, survey participant's answers, calculations, totals, and codes.
Figure 12. The profile of the eight quality characteristics of NLCUMC.

In order to understand what the profile reveals about the health of the church, the issues behind the minimum factor must be explored by understanding what the numbers on the graph mean. According to the NCD, the minimum factor is the weakest quality characteristic(s) of the eight quality characteristics, which a church needs to focus attention on the most in order to achieve balance to restore health to the church. Each profile score on the graph in figure 1 has been calculated on the basis of a number of questions contained in the questionnaire. These numbers on the graph are not percentages but standardized scores, which are based on a mean of
50 with a standard deviation of 15. The standardization itself is built on a national database of churches to give the profile greater contextual accuracy. The average score of a quality characteristic for an average church is 50, but a deviation of plus or minus 15 is common. Scoring less than 50 is not a failure for that quality characteristic. The health of NLCUMC was measured against other churches in this country. This database covers a wide range of churches—different denominations and movements, traditions, liturgical styles, theological positions, locations, leadership, etc. The Natural Church Development Institute's software has three main categories for scoring each of the Quality Characteristics, as shown in table 15.

**Table 15. NCD’s three main categories for scoring each of the Quality Characteristics.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three Main Categories for Scoring Each of The Quality Characteristics by NCD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 70% of churches will score between 35 and 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 15% of churches will score less than 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 15% of churches will score more than 65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the scoring of each of the eight quality characteristics of NLCUMC by the NCD’s software, the quality characteristic of inspiring worship service with a score of 49 is the minimum factor of the church. The fact that NLCUMC has a minimum factor does not suggest that the church is unhealthy. Even the best churches have a minimum factor. The minimum factor only shows that the quality characteristic of inspiring worship service with a score of 49 should receive special attention in the church’s efforts to continue to strengthen its growth to become a healthy Christ-centered New testament church.

**Radical Quality Balance/The Octagon Diagram**

The quality balance means that not only the absolute height of a church's quality is an indicator of its health, but also the balance of the eight quality characteristics indicates health. A

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83 Bob Rummel “NLCUMC NDC Profile, 5-Result 1,” [personal e-mail] 26 April 2012.
church with huge differences between the Minimum and Maximum Factors shows less sustainable health and growth potential than a church that has both at basically the same level. The degree of quality balance is shown in two different ways. First, according to the octagon diagram shown in figure 13, the more the qualities of a church are balanced, the more the diagram looks like a perfect octagon, not like a star or any other form. It is possible, however, to get a balanced diagram, but with low results in the eight qualities. That is why a healthy church does not only have an octagon in this diagram, but an octagon that covers as much of the diagram area as possible.84

The shaded octagon in figure 13 representing the health of NLCUMC is not perfect. In order to increase the church’s health by making the octagon perfect, the quality characteristic of inspiring worship service must be increased. Since all the individual quality characteristics are connected to each other in a larger system, increasing inspiring worship service will affect the quality characteristics of other ministries in the church; therefore, balancing the octagon to cover as much of the diagram area as possible.

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84 Rummel, 6-Result 2.
Figure 13. The octagon diagram.

The RQBI (Radical Quality Balance Index)

The Radical Quality Balance Index is another way, which the degree of quality balance is displayed. The Radical Quality Balance Index is the quotient of Minimum Factor to Maximum Factor, related to the absolute quality level of a church. It cannot be lower than zero or higher than the average of the eight quality characteristics. RQIB shows the level of balance and at the same time the level of quality. In other words, this one figure is like a summary of all the information a church profile has. A lower number means that more energy is required to sustain growth over the long term. A trend upwards is desirable, because higher numbers mean less...
energy to sustain any growth being achieved. A good RQBI starts at 50. As shown in figure 14, The Radical Quality Balance Index for NLCUMC is 42. Since a good RQBI starts at 50, more energy is required at NLCUMC to sustain growth over the long term as the church becomes a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.

![Figure 14. The RQBI (Radical Quality Balance Index).](image)

**Analysis of Healthy Church Assessment Results**

On May 14, 2012, the pastor, PPRC, and the Church Council met together to analyze the results and determine the root causes of the minimum factor to develop a plan that will increase the church’s health (and score) by addressing the root causes and not just the symptoms. The team read through the NDC profile of the eight quality characteristics of NLCUMC to understand the church’s minimum factor. The minimum factor shows that the quality characteristic of inspiring worship service scored 49, which is less than the average score of 50. After reviewing the NCD process (profile) and what the score in the minimum factor area meant,

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85 Rummel, 6-Result 2.
the team agreed to form a church health team that involved people in different ministries of the church in the process of diagnosis by reading through the minimum factor and identifying strengths, concerns, or weaknesses, in the minimum factor area and discerning the major issues that needed to be addressed. The church health team agreed that inspiring worship should receive special attention in the church’s efforts to strengthen its growth to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church; therefore, listening to the experiences of the members of the church health team can help recognize key topics and issues contributing to the minimum factor area.

According to Natural Church Development, an inspiring worship service is described as “a personal and corporate encounter with the living God. Both personal and corporate worship must be infused with the presence of God resulting in times of joyous exultation and times of quiet reverence. Inspiring worship is not driven by a particular style or ministry focus group . . . but rather the shared experience of God's awesome presence.” There are four main areas of inspiring worship services: (1) personal transformation in worship—services that transform and personal transformation, (2) visitor friendly church—logistical considerations, relational issues and relevant communication, (3) anticipation for worship—individual anticipation and corporate anticipation, and (4), relevance of message—style and content of preaching, and preparation for preaching. In order for NLCUMC to make worship more inspirational, these four main areas and the sub-parts of the church’s worship service, from how the seats are arranged to the music,

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86 See Appendix G for action guide to help identify strengths, concerns, or weaknesses, in the minimum factor area.

87 Bob Rummel “Natural Church Development Minimum Factor Analysis: Inspiring Worship Service Questions for Reflection, Interaction and Discovery,” 3 [personal e-mail] 26 April 2012. This was used with permission from Natural Church Development and ChurchSmart Resources.

88 Ibid., 4

89 Ibid.
welcome, and the sermon, should become increasingly the media through which the Holy Spirit of God and the love God can be experienced in the faith community.\textsuperscript{90}

The church health team and the pastor will take the following necessary practical steps to enable the worship service at NLCUMC to become more inspiring and engaging. First, the church health team will use the “summary evaluation questions”\textsuperscript{91} to evaluate each of the above four major areas and sub-areas of inspiring worship to help address which of the four major areas and sub-areas contributing to a minimum factor. Then, after evaluating each of the four major areas and sub-areas of inspiring worship, the results will be used to help the church to take decisive action to address issues to increase healthy growth and release greater potentials for discipleship.

The following three questions will be used to guide the action process. First, what are the strengths that you have in inspiring worship services? Second, what are the key issues to address in order to increase health and release greater potential? Lastly, who needs to be involved in the action planning process? How will we move forward?\textsuperscript{92} Answers to above questions will be used to take action steps to increase the quality characteristic of inspiring worship service from 49 to 50 or better. For example, if the action process reveals that the church is weak in the major area of “visitor friendly church,” then, people with appropriate gifts and skills will be chosen to take part in the action planning process to help increase the minimum factor. A sample inspiring worship checklist has been developed to help in the implementation of action steps.\textsuperscript{93} While all

\textsuperscript{90} Schwarz and Christoph Schalk, 86.

\textsuperscript{91} Bob Rummel “Natural Church Development Minimum Factor Analysis: Inspiring Worship Service Questions for Reflection, Interaction and Discovery,” 5-9. Refer to Appendix G for the complete questions.

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid., 12. Also refer to Appendix G for a sample Action Guide Worksheet.

\textsuperscript{93} See Appendix G for a sample Action Steps Worksheet.
action plans are being taken, the church health team and the pastor will keep a holistic perspective throughout implementation to strengthen the future healthy growth of the church. In order to monitor the steps towards improving the minimum factor, the church will take another NDC survey after about 10-12 months.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Through research, biblical faithfulness, and discernment, this writer has learned from experts, leaders, and thinkers who care about healthy church growth and applied the outcome to his local context. While there are many struggling and declining small churches in the Peninsula-Delaware United Methodist Annual Conference, there is little or nothing being done to help these declined and dying churches to become healthy. A strategic plan to help merge two or more of these local churches and lead the merged congregations to a Christ-centered New Testament church may be a more practical option to grow healthy churches than to close those declined and dying churches. The author does not advocate that every small church in the Conference should merge with another church, but those declined, unhealthy, and dying churches should consider merging to help them become healthy and better fulfill the biblically driven mission to better extend God’s kingdom in their communities. Merging two or more unhealthy dying churches to create a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church is a more effective way to use the resources God has provided.

Church mergers must not be used as an approach for maintaining the status quo or as a means of survival. Mergers that are motivated by self-interest, maintaining the status quo or as a means of survival would not be effective to produce a healthy growth of the church. Churches considering merging would benefit from a well thought out strategic plan intentionally developed to help in the process. At the time this writer was leading a merger process that initially consisted of three churches in the Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference, the Conference did not have any well thought out strategic plan intentionally developed to help in the process. He had to do
his own research in order to lead Charles Wesley United Methodist Church and Earle’s Chapel United Methodist Church to merge in 2005.

This project examined and evaluated the merger process of Charles Wesley United Methodist Church and Earle’s Chapel United Methodist Church to become a new congregation called New Life Community United Methodist Church. The evaluation of the merger process was done to find out whether the merger was successful to help solve the problems that initiated the merger. This merger process examination and evaluation was achieved through a post-merger questionnaire that was used to conduct surveys of church members of NLCUMC. The following three questions posted in the “Statement of Purpose,” to help determine the success of the merger were among the survey questions. First, are there vital ministries in the church to engage the community for God’s kingdom? Second, are church members growing spiritually? Lastly, has the church grown numerically and financially?

According to the post-merger evaluation, NLCUMC has been financially stable. Since the merger the church has been able to pay its apportionment in full to support missions, the District, Annual, and General Conferences. The church also supports local missions and pays all its bills on time with reserved saved for future expenses. The church’s financial support comes mainly through tithes and offering given by members and those who regularly attend worship service and special day’s programs. NLCUMC has also remained a station church whose membership has doubled from fifty-three at the time of the merger to over one hundred members on the church’s role. The average weekly worship attendance is about sixty adults and thirteen youth and children. Since the merger, more effective ministries give members greater opportunities to become involved. The post-merger evaluation also revealed that people are
better able to communicate their feelings to others and share their ideas with each other for the cause of God’s kingdom.

This project also used Natural Church Development survey questionnaires to evaluate a ministry plan developed to help lead the merged church to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church. A healthy Christ-centered New Testament church is a church whose foundation is Jesus Christ, in whom alone is salvation of humankind (see 1 Corinthians 3:11; Acts 4:12). The apostle Paul affirms this in Ephesians 2:20 when he writes, “Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself.” In order to continue building on this foundation, there must be a functional leadership structure that guides the development of vision and goals and promotes an ongoing multiplication of ministry to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

The leadership in a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church models Christ-centered life from the pulpit and in small group ministries. They teach the members of the congregation to understand that the church is not the building or a place where people go. Rather, together, they are the church in flesh whose mission fields are their homes, workplaces, schools, and neighborhoods where the good news about Christ is share both in deeds and in words. The membership is taught to understand that the main purpose of the church is evangelism that happens through multiplication of authentic disciples who worship Christ in “spirit and in truth.”\(^1\) With this understanding, these believers have the desire to be developed to reach their full potential for Christ, driven to multiply themselves in all levels of miniseries and give all the glory to Christ. This multiplication of disciples happens in a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.

\(^{1}\) John 4:23.
Testament church as leaders identify potential leaders and mentor them so that they will in turn do the same through small groups, Bible studies, or Sunday school.

A healthy Christ-centered New Testament church has a vision that guides the leadership and the membership to fulfill the Great Commission. What happened on the Day of Pentecost and throughout the early church teaches that prayer is the key tool that unleashed the power of God to draw thousands of people to believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and become members of the Church. Thus, in a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church, Holy Spirit empowered prayer is the key instrument that makes all other tools work effectively to produce growth. Prayer enables the pastor and the congregation to align their wills and lives with God’s plan for the church.

In a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church, members are taught and encouraged to discover their spiritual gifts, their style, and their passion for ministry. Knowing their gifts, styles, and passions for service, members engage in ministries designed to reach inside and outside the church to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Inspiring worship that exalts God, celebrates salvation, while engaging worshipers is valued in a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.

The healthy church survey questionnaires developed by Christian Schwarz and Natural Church Development provides the most evidence for reliability based on the above mentioned Christ-centered New Testament characteristics of a healthy church. After using this instrument to assess the eight quality characteristics of healthy church growth identified by NDC, it was discovered that the quality characteristic of inspiring worship is the only minimum factor for NLCUMC. The average score of a quality characteristic for an average church is 50 with a deviation of plus or minus 15. The quality characteristic of inspiring worship service at
NLCUMC scored 49. This minimum factor does not suggest that NLCUMC is unhealthy. Again, according to the survey analysis, the Radical Quality Balance Index (RQBI) for NLCUMC is 42; a good RQBI starts at 50. RQBI is like a summary of all the information a church profile has. The quality characteristic of inspiring worship service score of 49 and RQBI of 42 does not imply that NLCUMC is unhealthy. These numbers mean that more energy is required by NLCUMC to sustain a healthy growth over the long term.

Therefore, considering the analysis of the results of the post-merger and healthy church survey questionnaires, the hypothesis of this project, which is merging two local churches is a practical option to grow a healthy church than to close those declined and dying churches and leading the merged church to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church has been proved to be valid. However, more energy is required to sustain a healthy growth over the long term. Leading two or more churches to merge and nurturing the merged church to health requires the pastor to invest many years, energy, and willingness to learn and grow with the congregation. This project has developed a practical strategic plan for merging two or more declined, unhealthy, and dying churches and leading the merged church to becoming a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.

After spending about a year to lead three unhealthy churches in a merger process that eventually ended with a merger of two of the churches, this writer has learned much about what it takes to develop a strategic plan to merge two or more churches together. Merging two or more churches does not necessary make the merged church a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church. Therefore, he has spent almost five years since the merger leading NLCUMC to becoming a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church. While he is not an expert on merging two or more churches and leading the newly merged church to become a healthy Christ-
centered New Testament church, this author has learned through the process information that would benefit other unhealthy churches seeking to start conversation on how to merge with another church or other churches to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.

Based on his experience and research, this writer suggests that churches considering merger must first prayerfully consider McIntosh’s ten key signs for church closure to objectively evaluate the church’s conditions to give church leaders helpful assessment of the church’s future. This resource will help church leaders to decide whether to consider merger talk with another church, to close the church, or to find another means to help the congregation take the necessary steps to be healthy and to do vital ministry. If a merger conversation is considered after the assessment, a Merger Exploration Team consisting of an equal number of representatives from each church considering the merger must be formed. This team’s responsibility should be to explore the possibility of the churches entering into a merger conversation. This team must prayerfully consider the problems of each church and honestly examining their motives to discern whether merging would be truly a mission-driven merger. The Merger Exploration Team’s recommendations should be made to the council or the decision making body of each church for their consideration. Church merger is a very difficult venture that possesses so many challenges. However, with God merger is possible among some churches to fulfill Christ’s Great Commission (see Matt. 18:19–20) to bring glory to God.

Once the Merger Exploration Team recommends merger conversation, each church must vote on the recommendation. If all the churches involved agree to begin a merger conversation, they should not rush the process. Instead, they should prayerfully spend enough time in conversation about things they have in common and how to take care of their differences. One of

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2 See appendix A for a sample of McIntosh’s assessment for church closure.
the pastors of the churches, or if the churches are already on a charge, the pastor must be
knowledgeable about the merger process in order to lead a successful, effective, and healthy
merger. Otherwise, all churches involved in the merger must agree to consider a consultant to
guide them through the process. Under the leadership of a knowledgeable pastor or consultant,
there must be a formation of a Merger Team or Taskforce made up of an equal number of
members from each congregation. The churches can choose to use the members of the Merger
Exploration Team to form the Merger Team/Taskforce. The pastor or consultant should guide the
team to develop shared core values, mission mind-set, godly vision, shared goals, a strategic plan
for leading the proposed merged church to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament
church, and a process for evaluating the anticipated measurable results.

During the merger conversation process educating the church members to ensure the
unity of the proposed newly merged church will be vital. This unity will not depend on sacred
cows, memories of the past or sentimental attachments to properties and traditions. Churches
considering merger must understand that unity of the proposed merged church depends on the
foundation of God’s Word, absolute trust and love for God and each other, as well as the
commitment of the pastor, staff, volunteer leaders, and congregation. This unity will empower
and motivate all future ministries and advances.

Churches considering a merger should understand that during the negotiation process
there are no win-lose situations, no trade-offs and no exclusions. Everything must be laid on the$table by all churches involved. Negotiations would not be about preservation of glory days,
survival, former churches’ names, church buildings, bank accounts, programs, and annual days
no matter how valuable they might be emotionally or economically to people in any given
congregation. Decisions about properties, finances, and programs must be prayerfully made to
enhance the fulfillment of the mission and God’s vision for the proposed new faith community to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church. Merger negotiations should be about creating a single new healthy faith community with a new name. The new name of the church must be different from the previous names. The chosen new name should reflect the new identity and emerging mission of the church.

The Merger Team/Taskforce must create a process to help them maintain a regular communication with all the churches involved in the merger conversation. Preferably, Merger Team/Taskforce representatives from each church must be tasked with this responsibility. If these churches are not already fellowshipping and worshipping together, effort must be made to create opportunities for all of them to get to know one another. This can be done through joint worship services, special events, and celebrations that are not related to the discussion of the proposed merger.

The Merger Team/Taskforce must develop a Merger Document that explains in detail the future of the new church. The Merger Document should include but is not limited to a brief history and future intent of the proposed merged church; new vision and mission statements of the proposed merged church; a timeline and process for executing the proposed merger; and a resolution identifying the merging churches and outlining the intents and conditions of the proposed merger. The document must include who may vote for the proposed merger and the percent of vote required for passage of the resolution. Each of the churches involved in the proposed merger must be given enough time to study the Merger Document and separately vote on the resolution. In the United Methodist Church, the voting takes place during a charge conference of each of the churches involved in the proposed merger conducted by the District
Superintendent. The deliberations of all meetings involving the merger must be officially recorded by designated secretaries of each church.

Once the churches involved in the proposed merger have voted to approve the resolution for merger, the Plan of Merger must be completed by the Merger Team/Taskforce. The Plan of Merger should include but is not limited to a new name for the proposed merged church; a process for leadership structure and staffing for the proposed merged congregation; plans for the location of the new church; and a plan for the transfer of all current property, real and personal. If one or all of the churches’ properties will be sold, the denomination’s guidelines must be followed in the sale of the property. The Plan of Merger must include a process for financial review involving an internal audit of all accounting, statements, and contents of safety deposit boxes of all churches involved in the merger. The audit should also include all outstanding obligations to ascertain whether there are any liens or unsettled items against the assets of the merged church. It is advised that the Merger Team/Taskforce seeks legal help to ensure compliance with all the conditions of any and all laws of the state in which the churches involved in the merger are located.

Upon the completion of the Plan of Merger, copies must be given to each church involved in the merger to study before voting on it. In the United Methodist Church, a copy of the Plan of the Merger must also be given to the District Superintendent who will authorize a church or charge conference for each church involved in the merger to separately vote on the Plan of Merger. Once the Plan of Merger has been approved by all the churches involved, the merger has legally taken place. The leadership of the newly merged church must immediately

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3 United Methodist Church, ¶2545
begin the process of incorporating the newly merged church’s name, obtaining a new tax identification number, selling buildings, and purchasing a new site for construction, if applicable.

Finally, before the newly merged church holds its first service, each church involved in the merger should hold a final service to celebrate the ministry of the church. The first service of the newly merged church should be a celebration of the merger and inauguration of the new church. The pastor and the leadership should immediately begin to implement the strategic plan for leading the newly merged church to becoming a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church. They should also implement a process for evaluating the anticipated measurable results between the second and the third year after the merger.\footnote{See Appendix H for steps for a practical strategic plan for merging two or more declined, unhealthy, and dying churches and steps for leading the merged church to becoming a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church.}
McIntosh’s Ten Key Signs for Church Closure

Evaluation

If you are faced with a declined church you think should possibly be closed, the following questionnaire may prove helpful in giving you an objective evaluation.

Circle Yes or No for each question.

1. Does this church have an average public worship attendance of over 50 adults? Yes No
2. Does this church have twenty-five faithful giving units? Yes No
3. Does this church have at least one competent lay leader for every ten adults? Yes No
4. Does this church have at least one ministry for which it is known in the community? Yes No
5. Does this church have a positive growth rate over the past ten years? Yes No
6. Does this church demonstrate a healthy spiritual life? Yes No
7. Does this church have an average membership tenure of less than twenty years? Yes No
8. Does this church talk about its future goals of ministry? Yes No
9. Does this church actively spend 5% of its budget on outreach to the local community? Yes No
10. Does this church have hope that God can renew its growth and vitality? Yes No

Tally the Yes answers

7-10: excellent—this is a church with great potential.
4-6: fair—this is a church with unclear direction. It may grow or may decline.
1-3: poor—this is a church with a limited future. ¹

¹ McIntosh, 80-81.
APPENDIX B

Appendix B-1

Charge Merger Taskforce Meeting Agendas

Devotion  
EPHESIANS 4:11-16
- Take a few minutes to meditate on these verses
- What do these verses say to you about the value of coming together as one church?
- What action might you take to increase the power of this merger as a result of meditating on this passage from Ephesians?

Prayer

Reason for the Meeting: Our purpose is to talk about the proposed merger, come up with a strategic plan, and help work out the details of the merger. This may include the following:
- Developing a vision
- Mission, or purpose
- Resolution
- Plan of merger
- Location for worship
- Possible date for the merger for the proposed merged church and report to the Charge Council.

Question for Reflection
- What advantages can you see in the merging of the three churches?
- What tensions and anxieties do you feel as you consider the possibility of these three churches merging?
- Which seems greater to you, the advantages or the tensions?

What Is the Mission of the Church?
- To make disciples of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20). As United Methodists, the way we fulfill this mission is to do the following:
  o Reach out to people in the name of Jesus
  o To relate people to God
  o To nurture and strengthen people in their journey of discipleship
  o To send people into the world to be the church and live transformed lives, and
  o To invite and receive others in the name of Jesus Christ.

Recall Your Memories of Your Church
- How has your life been shaped by these memories?
- How might these memories affect your decision about the merger?
Answers to the Question for Reflection

What advantages can you see in the merging of the three churches?

- Focus one goal—one church.
- Utility expenses and everything else will decrease.
- Everyone will be traveling in one direction not three different locations.
- Do away with confusion where we are to worship.
- Increase growth of members.
- One set of officers and will reduce having so many meetings.
- Easier to plan programs for calendar.
- More to draw from in order to follow the guidelines because the same people are wearing so many hats.
- Free us to minister to the unchurched—free us to do ministry.
- One apportionment whether positive or negative.

What tensions do you feel as you consider the possibility of these three churches merging?

- Loss of power for those who have served for a long time.
- Giving up a historical landmark.
- Old versus New (instead of working together).
- Fear of confusion because of the unknown.
- Don’t want to step outside the box, fear of letting go of the past.
- Commitment through to the end (Following through with it).
- Financial burdens for rebuilding.
- Location for the new church.
- Won’t listen to people’s opinions because we don’t agree.
- Fear of changing of pastoral leadership during this transformation.

Which seems greater to you, the advantages or the tensions?

- If we allow God to lead, the advantages will be greater.
- If we allow ourselves to lead, the tension will be greater.

According to Matthew 28:19-20, what is the Mission of the Church?

- Help bring the unchurched to church and spread the Word.
- Show the unchurched how to have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
- Church people to be an example.
- Saving souls.
- Making disciples for Jesus Christ.
- Share the good news.
- Establish ministry to conform to the mission of the church.

Recall your memories of the church. How has your life been shaped by these memories?

- Foundation was formed; we are products of the church
- Greater determination to stay connected to God
- Christian education, Sunday school, Vacation Bible School
Older gave guidance and encouragement
Help go through difficult trials with determination
Elderly would correct the young and offer encouragement
There was commitment and lots of encouragement
Church taught history lesson
Church shape relationship with God
Church was center of attraction, socially and spiritually
Church and school interconnected

How might these memories suggest models for ministry in the merging congregation?
Use as the background foundation; as a footing and model to go where we want to go
Financially we are better than our ancestors
Elders & younger people complimenting each other and working together
We want a church to teach and educate us about life of who we are
We should concentrate on educating the children and younger people
We want a family ministry because that’s where our background started.
Seeing younger people fellowship with others and participate more in the ministry
Have positive impact in the community

Defining the concept of Vision: Vision for ministry is “a clear mental image of a preferable future imparted by God to His chosen servants and is based upon an accurate understanding of God, self and circumstances.”¹

God’s Vision and Mission

1. What does Proverb 29:18 say about why we need God’s vision for our ministry?
2. According to Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:18, what vision or mission for ministry does God gives to His church?
3. What in the world is God up to in our day and community?
4. What is our part in God’s continuing ministry and mission?
5. How can this vision be realized in the ministry of the church?

Our Identity

With words, symbol, or picture, express your own reality and reality your church.

1. Words or a symbol of our church is who we are as a church at this time,
2. Words or a symbol of our mission as a church is what we do as a church at this time.
3. Words or a symbol about the difference we make in our community is the result we can see as an outcome.

For a homework, taskforce members were asked to prayerfully read Luke 9:1-6, 9:10-17, Acts 2:42-47, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Corinthians 12, Hebrews 10:23-25, and 1 Peter 4:8-11, then meditate and record connections they see between the scriptures and the merger and also do the “Activities for Reflection and Interaction” worksheet.

Answers to Question Relating to God’s Vision and Mission for the Proposed Merged Church

1. What does Proverb 29:18 say about why we need God’s vision for our ministry?
   - Where there is no vision, the people will perish.
   - If the proposed merger does not follow God’s vision, it won’t work.
   - If we don’t know where we are going, how are we going to get there?
   - If we don’t receive God’s guidance, we will go wild!

   - We must be taught first, then go into the world and teach others all that and make disciples, and baptize them.
   - Don’t go into the world until you have received the power from Him.
   - We must be empowered by the Spirit before we go and make disciples and baptize them.

3. What in the world is God up to in our day and community?
   - He is giving us a wakeup call to show us that we can do what others have been holding on to.
   - Reminding us of what is important and that we need to come and do his will
   - We need to get out of saying “that’s how we use to do it’”
   - Paradigm shift
   - Explore new ways of doing things
   - Know our obligations and make changes

4. What is our part in God’s continuing ministry and mission?
   - Buy into God’s mission
   - Availability and commitment
   - Be in close relationship with God in order to be equipped; not by our own strength
   - Develop more ministries for young adults and youth (children).
   - Make the ministries be more interesting and attractive to them so they will want to become involved
   - Be loving to them and to one another
5. How can this vision be realized in the ministry of the church?
   - Praise dancing services for young and old
   - Singing for youth
   - Gospel Café Night- consisting of games, fellowship, videos, discussions
   - Step Groups, Ushering, Acolyte training
   - Children participating in service to help learn church protocol
   - Youth Sundays (let them run Sunday service)
   - Be more part of community involvement not just on a faith based issue
   - Being a light and salt to people in the community
   - Need to make friends in the community and be more neighborly, get to know them
   - We need to show more love among ourselves in the church, community
   - Be more nurturing to one another because if we don’t, others will not want to be part of us

Answers to Question Relating to Our Identity

With words, symbol, or picture, express your own reality and reality your church?

1. Words or a symbol of our church is who we are as a church at this time.
   - We are a light under a bushel but the light is only showing on the inside
   - Waiting for someone to come in, instead of going out to bring people in
   - We are inwardly maintaining our ministry
   - Church that is dying and divided (locally)
   - A church who is serving God and acknowledging God (locally & Charge)
   - We are like the children of Egypt lost in the wilderness, lost our focus and waiting for someone or something to lead us
   - Afraid to step out on faith
   - Afraid to have a closer relationship with each other
   - Struggling and striving to become one church and doing this in faith

2. Words or a symbol of our mission as a church is what we do as a church at this time
   - A church that is making efforts in the community but we are partially committed to go and do what God has called us to do
   - We host several programs to help financially for different things that are needed in the church
   - Been able to sit at the table to eat
   - We procrastinate, shrug responsibilities, have no commitment, rarely cooperate and support
   - Community activities are dwindling because of lack of commitment, support, planning and people are clutching their purses
3. Words or a symbol about the difference we make in our community is the result we can see as an outcome.

- We are a church that is wearing a mask. We need to be more relaxed within ourselves and let the Lord lead us.

**Scriptures:** Matthew 16:18; 22:37-40; Mark 2:17; Luke 4:18-19

**According to Matthew 16:18, who owns the church?**
- Jesus owns the church.

**Has the owner already established the purpose/mission of the church?**
- Yes, Jesus has already given us the purpose.

**What then is our responsibility?**
- Understand that purpose and implement that purpose for the church and encourage each other to obey.

**What does Mark 2:17 says about Jesus’ ministry?**
- Jesus did not come to call the righteous; He came not to call those who are whole. Jesus came to save sinners and heal them from spiritual sickness.

**According to Matthew 22:37-40, what commandment does Jesus give to His followers?**
- Love the Lord God with all your soul, all your heart, and all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.

**According to Luke 4:18-19, what did Jesus came to do?**
- Jesus came to preach the Good News to the poor, to release captives, and to heal.

**According to John 14:12 what did Jesus came to do?**
- Jesus came to do certain works and anyone who believes him will do the same works, and even greater works.

**Answers for Questions Relating to Activities for Reflection and Interaction**

**The Ministry values that were important to the members of Merger Taskforce are:**
- Good pastor, Making disciples, Faith formation, Spiritual nurture, Active laity, Open decision-making, Trust, Ability to change, Sharing responsibilities, Clear vision, and Unity.
What have we learned from one another?

- We have learned that we have different opinions; we place values and importance on things differently; we accept and respect each other’s opinions; there is no right or wrong but there are some essentials we have to follow.

What do our word choices say about our understanding of God?

- We know it takes faith to please him, we understand his mission and what he requires us to do.

What do our word choices say about our understanding of ourselves?

- We know God’s word speaks to us and carries power. It encourages us to look at everything we do within the church form our vision and mission statement point of view.

What do our word choices say about our understanding of the church?

- We need to be a healthy church that attracts other people to God.

What do our word choices reveal about the identity of our group?

- Our group has different identities
## Appendix B-2

### Activities for Reflection and Interaction

#### Table 16. Activities for reflection and interaction

Review the list in the left column; they are names and things that are important in an effective ministry. Use this process to determine which things are most important to you. Do not expect the choices to be easy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry Values</th>
<th>Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good pastor</td>
<td>1. Cross off ten words that are not as important to you as the others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making disciples</td>
<td>2. Of the words that are left, circle the ten words that are most important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>3. Cross through five of the circled words to remove the least important of those ten from the list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurate information</td>
<td>4. Place a star beside the two most important circled words that remain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith formation</td>
<td>5. Eliminate one word; circle the other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual nurture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affordability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach to community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being of service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survival</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active laity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A family feeling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More people attending</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear vision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong relationships</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate finances</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team approach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open decision-making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Questions

1. What have we learned from one another?

2. What do our word choices say about our understanding of God? of ourselves? of the church?

3. What do our word choices reveal about the identity of our group?

4. Point out that the words that guide us have power and meaning—even though we have chosen some different words.

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Connections between Beliefs and Actions

Based on what we scripturally believe about God, what we believe as disciples of Jesus Christ, and how we respond to these beliefs, we can come up with a biblical purpose and ministries for the proposed merged church. With these scriptures (Matthew 4:10, 28:19-20, Mark 16-15, Luke 24:47-49, John 20:21, Acts 1:8, 2:42-47, Ephesians 1:12, 2:19, 4:12-16, Psalm 34:3) connect between your beliefs and actions.

Table 17. Connections between beliefs and actions.³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>GOD</th>
<th>BEING A DISCIPLE</th>
<th>PURPOSE OF CHURCH</th>
<th>MINISTRY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WE BELIEVE ABOUT GOD AND HOW I RESPOND (Practice, Action, and so forth)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Connections between Beliefs and Actions

Based on what we scripturally believe about God, what we believe as disciples of Jesus Christ, and how we respond to these beliefs, we can come up with a biblical purpose and ministries for the future merged church. With these scriptures (Matthew 4:10, 28:19-20, Mark 16-15, Luke 24:47-49, John 20:21, Acts 1:8, 2:42-47, Ephesians 1:12, 2:19, 4:12-16, Psalm 34:3) connect between your beliefs and actions.

Table 18. Connections between beliefs and actions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT GOD</th>
<th>BEING A DISCIPLE</th>
<th>PURPOSE OF CHURCH</th>
<th>MINISTRY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Everlasting life through his Son  
• Go to God through Jesus  
• All things come from God; He is the source of all resources  
• God is beyond our understanding  
• God works in mysterious ways  
• He is the supernatural  
• He guides our footsteps  
• He is the light and the source of our faith  
• We are all God’s children  
• He is in control whether good or bad  
• He is beyond our understanding  
• God has a purpose for all of us | • To reach out to the unchurched  
• Work in obedience to God’s Word  
• To make more disciples  
• Trust God in all situations  
• Do God’s will: loving, giving, worship, trusting, following Jesus Christ, Unity, and obeying  
• Strong and encouraged (those who believe in him) | • To share the good news and new life with others  
• Bring together people of God  
• Strengthen and encourage them  
• Gathering children of God  
• Unify talents for discipleship  
• Be a positive influence in society. Salt in the world  
• Prepare us for all situations  
• To reach out to those in need  
• To go and make disciples | • Show examples of the teaching of God  
• Volunteer our talents, time, and energy to help others  
• Teach God’s word  
• Be a listeners to others  
• Prayer & Intervention  
• Making Disciples  
• Singing in the choir  
• Leadership positions, committees  
• Being a worship leader, speaking to the young  
• Anything we do in the church; we are ministering |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOW DO WE RESPOND (Practice, Action, and so forth)</th>
<th>GOD</th>
<th>BEING A DISCIPLE</th>
<th>PURPOSE OF CHURCH</th>
<th>MINISTRY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Do God’s will</td>
<td>• Witnessing</td>
<td>• Fellowship with God</td>
<td>• Homebound and Nursing Home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fellowship with God</td>
<td>• Invite people to worship with you</td>
<td>• Love God</td>
<td>• Seniors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Love God</td>
<td>• Tell others what you know about Christ</td>
<td>• Prayer to God</td>
<td>• Adults</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prayer to God</td>
<td>• Share your story</td>
<td>• Praise God</td>
<td>• Young Adults</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Praise &amp; Worship God</td>
<td>• Faithfulness to his teaching</td>
<td>• Bible Reading</td>
<td>• Youth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reading God’s Word</td>
<td>• Showing love to others</td>
<td>• Giving to God’s work</td>
<td>• Children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Giving to God’s work</td>
<td>• Study the Word</td>
<td>• Meditation on the word of God</td>
<td>• Family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meditation on the word of God through how we live our lives</td>
<td>• Pray always</td>
<td>• Give thanks to God for all things</td>
<td>• Singles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Loving others as God has loved me</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Loving others as God has loved me</td>
<td>• Prison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Give thanks to God for all things</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Singing in choir</td>
<td>• Counseling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WORSHIP
- Witnessing
- Invite people to worship with you
- Tell others what you know about Christ
- Share your story
- Faithfulness to his teaching
- Showing love to others
- Study the Word
- Pray always

EVANGELIZE/OUTREACH
- Witnessing
- Invite people to worship with you
- Tell others what you know about Christ
- Share His & your story
- Pray always

FELLOWSHIP
- Showing love to others
- Encourage others
- Live in unity

NUTURE/DISCIPLESHIP
- Study the Word
- Use gifts, talents & skills to serve
- Pray always
- Faithfulness to his teaching

MINISTRY
- Music
- Ushering
- Acolyte
- Outreach
- Parking lot
- Greeters
- Hospitality
- Care
- Visitation
- Drama
- Praise Dance & Stepping
- After School
- Men’s
- Women’s
- E-mail
- Mission Area
- Prayer
Appendix B-3

Resolution for Merger

Whereas: We the members of Charles Wesley, Earle’s Chapel, and New Zion United Methodist Churches have been on the same charge (The Centreville-Newtown Charge) for the past 30 years sharing one pastor, and

Whereas: We the members of Charles Wesley, Earle’s Chapel, and New Zion United Methodist Churches have been worshiping together by rotation for the past 20 years, and Whereas: This rotation has negatively affected the spiritual, physical, and economic growth of our churches and the ministries in our communities, and

Whereas: We are called to be in effective ministry in Christ, and

Whereas: We must prepare ourselves to respond to this the call,

Therefore be it resolved: That starting January 1, 2005, Charles Wesley, Earle’s Chapel, and New Zion United Methodist Churches will merge to become one church to be named later.
Table 20. Site and exterior facility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site and Exterior Facility</th>
<th>Charles Wesley</th>
<th>Earle’s Chapel</th>
<th>New Zion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Where are the church signs in the neighborhood or area located?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are the church signs visible from a vehicle traveling the speed limit and from a distance sufficient for a driver to adjust direction toward the church?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Are they well maintained and updated?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How much land is owned by the congregation at the site of the church building?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is there room to expand the building without basement if needed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Is there other land owned by the congregation in another location?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Can vehicles discharge and pick up passengers directly at a church door that has no steps?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Is parking adequate?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How much on-street parking is available within a 3-minute walk of the church?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Are handicapped spaces clearly marked and located nearest to the door?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. In the opinion of guests and newcomers, are the exterior grounds and building well maintained?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Is the building secure?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Are parking areas and doorways well lighted?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Is the entire building accessible by ramp or elevator?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Church Building Facts Collection Questionnaire

### Table 21. Building facility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Facility</th>
<th>Charles Wesley</th>
<th>Earle’s Chapel</th>
<th>New Zion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does the vestibule (or narthex) area allow room for greetings and conversations before and after worship?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are all rooms, including washrooms, handicap accessible?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is there a large room for refreshments (fellowship hall) near the sanctuary that does not require access by elevator or stairways?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If not, where is it located, and how do people get there?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What percentage of a full worshiping congregation can comfortably share fellowship standing in this room?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Describe the sanctuary and furnishings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Does the chancel area allow room for drama, projection screens, dance, and so forth?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Is the chancel area accessible for the physically challenged?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Will the electrical supply sustain extra audio amplification or video equipment?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Church Building Facts Collection Questionnaire

**Table 22. Interior facility.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Interior Facility</em></th>
<th>Charles Wesley</th>
<th>Earle’s Chapel</th>
<th>New Zion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is the lighting for both day and nights sufficiently and bright?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is there a quality flow of air?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Can the sound system be used by people with soft voices and heard by people with hearing loss in all parts of the room?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Are there at least two cordless microphones available?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are all parts of the sanctuary accessible?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Can people enter late or leave early without calling attention to themselves?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Are there Christian education rooms and furnishings?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Are the rooms and furnishings equal in quality to the public school space in your community?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Are rooms adequately heated or cooled, with adequate flow of clean air?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post-Merger Questionnaire

Instructions: This questionnaire requests feedback about the Centreville-Newtown Charge merger. Read each statement and mark the corresponding circle according to how strongly you agree or disagree with it. There are no right or wrong answers, and all responses will be anonymous and strictly confidential. Only statistical information about all respondents will be shared with the Church Council. Please return your questionnaire by May 23.

Section One:
Demographic Information

1. I was a member of:
   - [ ] Charles Wesley
   - [ ] Earle's Chapel
   - [ ] New Zion

2. Gender:
   - [ ] Male
   - [ ] Female
3. Age Range:
- 14-19 years
- 20-29 years
- 30-39 years
- 40-50 years
- 50-59 years
- 60-69 years
- 70-79 years
- 80+ years

4. I attended/participated in Worship service in my church?
- Yes
- No

5. I attended/participated in church events?
- Yes
- No

6. I attended/participated in Sunday School/Bible study in my church?
- Yes
- No

7. Please check the box of the one thing about worship you value the most in your church.
- Singing
- Reverence
- Preaching
- Communion/The Lord's Supper
- Baptism
- Wedding
- Confirmation
- Funerals
8. Please check the box of the one thing about relationships you value the most in your church.
- Relationship with God
- Fellowship
- Friends
- Family
- Friendliness

9. Please check the box of the one thing about personal growth you value the most in your church.
- Leadership
- Commitment
- Prayer
- Acceptance
- Tithing
- Respect
- Unity and spirit
- Honesty
- Support
- Belonging
- Conflict Management
- Flexibility

10. Please check the box of the one thing about programs you value the most in your church.
- Fund raisers
- Education promoting growth/understanding
- Youth
- Clear Mission and expectations
- Trust
- Communication
11. Please check the box of the one other thing you value the most in your church.

- Tradition
- Church building
- Financial security/stability
- Humor
- History
- Healthy church growth

12. My motivation for merging was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deciding to Merge

Section Two:
13. My motivation for merging was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. To please the conference leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Financial considerations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Change in Community (age, different ethnic groups)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Growth and Effective Ministries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Expand effective ministries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Going station (Pastor serving only one church)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. The merger was mandated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. I expected the main benefit(s) of the merger to be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Increase the ministries we offer</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Create long term financial stability</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Create new growth opportunities</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Improve our fundraising</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Increased excitement and energy</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. I expected the disadvantage(s) of the merger:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Lose our identity</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Lose my job or council position</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Lose touch with my community</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Loss of our facilities</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Reduce the quality of our ministries</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. In our merger we were seeking financial stability.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

17. In our merger, we were seeking more members.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

18. In our merger, we were seeking more leadership.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

19. In our merger, we were seeking a focused vision/mission.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
20. I believe both churches shared a common vision.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

21. Prior to our merger, we knew each other well.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

22. We had a healthy foundation for our merger.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

23. I do not know why we merged.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
24. I believe God's grace was in our merger.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Section Three:

Negotiating the Merger

25. The merger was an easy process.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

26. I was excited about the merger.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
27. I agreed with the council's decision to merge.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

28. I really did not care about the merger one way or another.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

29. The lines of communication were open and honest in the:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. In the church</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. In the district</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. In the conference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
30. We held enough informational sessions to help determine if the merger was the right thing to do.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

31. During the negotiations, we talked about the mission of the newly merged church.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

32. We had a merger taskforce representing the positions of each church.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

33. It was easy for all churches to give up control/positions.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
34.
We came to the merger as equal partners.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

35.
I saw the merger as a takeover.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

36.
There were no attempts to protect the sacred cows (programs, activities, political/facilities attachments).

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

37.
We took time to socialize and get to know one another.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
38. We were objective in the merger process by considering what was best for the organization rather than taking a personal stance.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

39. We determined difficult negotiation points by soliciting the support of the majority of people rather than points shared by only a few.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

40. We made negotiation decisions based on facts rather than perceptions.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
41. We identified pockets of resistance and use supportive members to reduce resistance.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Section Four:
Implementing the Merger

42. We established a meaningful way to communicate to members that kept them connected and provided input to the newly merged entity.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
43.  
Our churches were compatible.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

44.  
We are able to offer more programs after the merger.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

45.  
I felt the district/ conference was dictating to us.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

46.  
We were not heard during the merger process.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
47. A pre-merger evaluation would have helped the merger process?
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

48. Once churches have been identified to merge, the conference and district should come in and explain the situation.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

Section Five:

Leadership during the Merger

49. During the merger, I trusted our leadership on the charge.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
50. During the merger, I trusted the leadership in the district.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

51. During the merger, I trusted our leadership in the conference.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

52. Once struggling churches are identified, the conference/district leadership needs to provide early disclosure and decisive leadership.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

53. I feel the conference and district leadership should be approachable during a merger.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
54. The minister/pastor should have a key leadership role in the merger process
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

55. Our current church council represents all churches.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

56. Our church council members are looking out for the best interest of the vision, mission, origination, and membership.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

57. Our church council communicates a confident knowledge of the health and condition of the church at all times.
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
58. Our church vision, mission, goals, and operations are clearly defined and communicated.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

59. I see a clear track to leadership.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

60. I know I will be selected one day to provide leadership for this church.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

61. I want my church to grow healthy.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
Section Six:
Unity and Conflict Management

62. I like things as they were before the merger.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

63. I feel good about the merger.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

64. The merger has brought people together.
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
65. I believe that everyone in the merger process felt heard, understood, and included.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

66. The merger process created some conflict among the three churches who initially agreed to merge.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

67. All conflicts were resolved peacefully over time.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

68. I find it easy to deal with conflict.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
69. I can communicate my feelings to others.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

70. I can share my ideas with others.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

71. I can agree and disagree in love.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

72. I listen before I speak.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
Post-Merger Questionnaire

Instructions: This questionnaire requests feedback about the Centreville-Newtown Charge merger. Read each statement and mark the corresponding square according to how strongly you agree or disagree with it. There are no right or wrong answers, and all responses will be anonymous and strictly confidential. Only statistical information about all respondents will be shared with the Church Council. Please return your questionnaire by next week.

Section One:

Question 1
I was a member of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles Wesley</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earle's Chapel</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Question 2
Gender:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>81.82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 3
Age Range:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14-19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 4
I attended/participated in Worship service regularly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>95.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Question 5**
I attended/participated in church events.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>95.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 6**
I attended/participated in Bible study.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>86.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 7**
Please check the box of the one thing about worship you value the most in your church.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preaching</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>58.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communion/The Lord's Supper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wedding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funerals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 8**
Please check the box of the one thing about relationships you value the most in your church.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with God</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>51.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellowship</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendliness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 9**
Please check the box of the one thing about personal growth you value the most in your church.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tithing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity and spirit</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Management</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 10

Please check the box of the one thing about programs you value the most in your church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fund raisers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education promoting growth/understanding</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Mission and expectations</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 11

Please check the box of the one other thing you value the most in your church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church building</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial security/stability</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy church growth</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Page: 2/6

Section Two:

Deciding to Merge

Question 12

My motivation for merging was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. To please the District/Conference leadership</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
<td>41.18%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Financial Problems in one or more churches</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Change in Community (age, different ethnic groups)</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
<td>35.29%</td>
<td>35.29%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Growth and Effective Ministries</td>
<td>30.77%</td>
<td>61.54%</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Expand effective ministries</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>46.67%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Going station (Pastor serving only one church)</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. The merger was mandated</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>31.25%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>31.25%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 13

I expected the main benefit(s) of the merger to be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Increase the ministries we offer</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Create long term financial stability</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
<td>62.50%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Create a healthy growing church opportunities</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Improve our fundraising</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
<td>46.67%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Become effective in ministry</td>
<td>47.06%</td>
<td>52.94%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 14

I expected the disadvantage (s) of the merger:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Lose our identity</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Lose my job or council position</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Lose touch with my community</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
<td>15.79%</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
<td>47.37%</td>
<td>26.32%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Loss of our facilities</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>41.18%</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Reduce the quality of our ministries</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
<td>42.11%</td>
<td>36.84%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Question 15

In our merger we were seeking financial stability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40.91%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 16

In our merger, we were seeking more members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31.82%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54.55%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>54.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 17

In our merger, we were seeking more leadership.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40.91%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40.91%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 18

In our merger, we were seeking a focused vision/mission.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63.64%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>63.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 19
I believe both churches shared a common vision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>61.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 20
Prior to our merger, we knew each other well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 21
We had a healthy foundation for our merger.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>47.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 22
I do not know why we merged.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 23
I believe God's grace was in our merger.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Section Three:** Negotiating the Merger

**Question 24**

The merger was an easy process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>59.09%</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 25**

I was excited about the merger.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>59.09%</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 26**

I agreed with the decision to merge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>54.55%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 27**

I really did not care about the merger one way or another.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 28
The lines of communication were open and honest in the:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. In the church</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. In the district</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
<td>46.67%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. In the conference</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>31.25%</td>
<td>31.25%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 29
We held enough informational sessions to help determine if the merger was the right thing to do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 30
During the negotiations, we talked about the mission of the newly merged church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.05%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 31
We had a merger taskforce representing the positions of each church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 32
It was easy for all churches to give up control/positions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 33

We came to the merger as equal partners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 34

I saw the merger as a takeover.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Count</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>54.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 35

There were no attempts to protect the sacred cows (programs, activities, political/ facilities attachments).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 36

We took time to socialize and get to know one another.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 37

We were objective in the merger process by considering what was best for the organization rather than taking a personal stance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 38
We determined difficult negotiation points by soliciting the support of the majority of people rather than points shared by only a few.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 39
We made negotiation decisions based on facts rather than perceptions.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 40
We identified pockets of resistance and use supportive members to reduce resistance.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 41
We established a meaningful way to communicate to members that kept them connected and provided input to the newly merged church.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Page: 4/6
Section Four:
Implementing the Merger
Question 42
Our churches were compatible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinions</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2 (9.52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>8 (38.10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>7 (33.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3 (14.29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1 (4.76%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 43
We are able to offer more programs and ministries now as a merged church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinions</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>2 (9.09%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>15 (68.18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5 (22.73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 44
I felt the district/conference was dictating to us.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinions</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1 (4.76%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2 (9.52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>6 (28.57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8 (38.10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>4 (19.05%)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Question 45
We were not heard during the merger process.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Opinions</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1 (4.55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>1 (4.55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3 (13.64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>13 (59.09%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>4 (18.18%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 46
A pre-merger evaluation would have helped the merger process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinions</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2 (9.52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>5 (23.81%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>7 (33.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7 (33.33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0 (0.00%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 47
Once churches have been identified to merge, the conference and district should come in and explain the situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Page: 5/6

Section Five:

Leadership

Question 48
During the merger, I trusted our leadership on the charge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<td>4</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 49
During the merger, I trusted the leadership in the district.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>63.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 50
During the merger, I trusted our leadership in the conference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 51
Once struggling churches are identified, the conference/district leadership needs to provide early disclosure and decisive leadership.

| Agree | 12 | 57.14% |
| Neutral | 5 | 23.81% |
| Disagree | 1 | 4.76% |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0.00% |

Question 52
I feel the conference and district leadership should be approachable during a merger.

| Agree | 13 | 61.90% |
| Neutral | 3 | 14.29% |
| Disagree | 1 | 4.76% |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0.00% |

Question 53
The minister/pastor should have a key leadership role in the merger process

| Agree | 10 | 47.62% |
| Neutral | 5 | 23.81% |
| Disagree | 0 | 0.00% |
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 4.76% |

Question 54
Our current church council represents all churches.

| Agree | 6 | 27.27% |
| Neutral | 7 | 31.82% |
| Disagree | 4 | 18.18% |
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 4.55% |

Question 55
Our church council members are looking out for the best interest of the vision, mission, origination, and membership.

| Agree | 15 | 68.18% |
| Neutral | 3 | 13.64% |
| Disagree | 1 | 4.55% |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 | 0.00% |
Question 56
Our church council communicates a confident knowledge of the health and condition of the church at all times.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement Level</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 57
Our church vision, mission, goals, and operations are clearly defined and communicated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement Level</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 58
I see a clear track to leadership.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement Level</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 59
I know I will be selected one day to provide leadership for this church.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement Level</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 60
I want my church to grow healthy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement Level</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>72.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Section Six: Unity and Conflict Management

#### Question 61

I like things as they were before the merger.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>54.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Question 62

I feel good about the merger.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Question 63

The merger has brought people together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>63.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Question 64

I believe that everyone in the merger process felt heard, understood, and included.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 65
The merger process created some conflict among the three churches who initially agreed to merge.

- **Strongly Agree**: 12 (57.14%)
- **Agree**: 9 (42.86%)
- **Neutral**: 0 (0.00%)
- **Disagree**: 0 (0.00%)
- **Strongly Disagree**: 0 (0.00%)

Question 66
All conflicts were resolved peacefully over time.

- **Strongly Agree**: 1 (4.55%)
- **Agree**: 10 (45.45%)
- **Neutral**: 5 (22.73%)
- **Disagree**: 5 (22.73%)
- **Strongly Disagree**: 1 (4.55%)

Question 67
I find it easy to deal with conflict.

- **Strongly Agree**: 0 (0.00%)
- **Agree**: 2 (9.09%)
- **Neutral**: 6 (27.27%)
- **Disagree**: 13 (59.09%)
- **Strongly Disagree**: 1 (4.55%)

Question 68
I can communicate my feelings to others.

- **Strongly Agree**: 2 (9.52%)
- **Agree**: 13 (61.90%)
- **Neutral**: 5 (23.81%)
- **Disagree**: 1 (4.76%)
- **Strongly Disagree**: 0 (0.00%)

Question 69
I can share my ideas with others.

- **Strongly Agree**: 2 (9.52%)
- **Agree**: 18 (85.71%)
- **Neutral**: 0 (0.00%)
- **Disagree**: 1 (4.76%)
- **Strongly Disagree**: 0 (0.00%)
### Question 70
I can agree and disagree in love.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question 71
I listen before I speak.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>80.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3-D

Analysis of Post-Merger Evaluation Survey Results

Figure 15. Motivations for the merger.

Figure 16. Main benefits of the merger.
Figure 17. Deciding to merge.
The merger was an easy process
Agreed with the decision to merge
Excited about the merger
I really did not care about the merger one way or another
The churches were compatible
Decisions were made bases on facts rather than perceptions
The merger was not a takeover

Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

---

The churches were compatible
Decisions were made bases on facts rather than perceptions
The merger was not a takeover

Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree

---

Figure 18. Negotiating the Merger.
Figure 19. Communication during merger negotiations.
Figure 20. Merger implementation.

Figure 21. District, charge, and pastoral leadership during the merger.
Figure 22. Church Council leadership during the merger.
Figure 23. Unity and Conflict Management.
Instructions — Please read carefully

- This form is to be answered by the pastor in addition to a copy of the questionnaire.
- If the church does not have a pastor, a member of the church leadership should complete the “Pastor’s Form.” (In this case, some questions will not be relevant and should be left blank.)
- If the church has several pastors, only the Senior Pastor will answer the Pastor’s Form and a copy of the questionnaire. If your church has no Senior Pastor, randomly select one of the pastors to answer the Pastor’s Form.

- Most of the questions are mandatory because they provide basic contact and demographic information. It will not be possible to process the survey data without this information.
- Please keep a copy of this form for your records. It will be a helpful reference when completing the next NCD Survey.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Church**

1. Church name

2. Church address
   a. Address 1
   b. Address 2
   c. City
   d. State or Province
   e. Postal Code
   f. Country United States of America

3. Church website

- **Pastor**

4. Your name

5. Pastor’s phone number

6. Pastor’s fax number

7. Pastor’s cell/mobile phone number

8. Pastor’s e-mail address

- **Contact (if different from pastor, e.g. survey administrator, otherwise optional)**

9. Contact name

10. Contact address:
    a. Address 1
    b. Address 2
    c. City
    d. State or Province
    e. Postal Code
    f. Country United States of America

11. Contact phone number

12. Contact fax number

13. Contact cell/mobile phone number

14. Contact e-mail address
SIZE & GROWTH OF YOUR CHURCH

21. Number on church membership roll:

22. At present, the average number of adults attending church services (in most churches this would be the primary worship services) each week is (according to your own way of counting):

23. At present, the average number of children attending church services (in most churches this would be the primary worship services) each week is (according to your own way of counting):

24. During the past five years the average number of adults attending church services (in most churches this would be the primary worship services) each week was (according to your own way of counting):
   A. (one year ago)
   B. (two years ago)
   C. (three years ago)
   D. (four years ago)
   E. (five years ago)

25. How do you count your worship service attendance? (Multiple answers possible.)
   A. We don’t count, the figures above are guessed.
   B. If someone attends 2 or more worship services per week, we only count him or her once.
   C. If someone attends 2 or more worship services per week, we count him or her each time.
   D. We only count the attendance at the main worship service.
   E. We don’t count every week, only on regular special occasions.
   F. Other

26. How many worship services does your church have each week?

27. How many small groups (home groups, cell groups, prayer groups, etc.) are there in your church?
28. Over the last 10 years, how many daughter churches were planted by your church?

29. If any of your daughter churches have completed an NCD Survey, please indicate each of their account names (from their NCD Survey website account).

30. Over the last five years (including this year), how many members has your church given to daughter churches?

   A. (this year)
   B. (one year ago)
   C. (two years ago)
   D. (three years ago)
   E. (four years ago)
   F. (five years ago)

31. Denomination:

32. Founding year of this church (if known)

33. Location of church: What type of community best describes the location of your church?

   [ ] Inner city
   [ ] Suburb
   [ ] Town
   [ ] Village
   [ ] Rural
   [ ] Other

34. What age groups are predominant in your church? (Mark all that apply)

   [ ] Children (ages 1-12)
   [ ] Youth (ages 13-18)
   [ ] Young adults (ages 19-25)
   [ ] Young families (ages 20-35)
   [ ] Middle age (ages 35-64)
   [ ] Senior citizens (ages 65 and up)

35. How would you best describe the music style of your church? (Mark all that apply)

   [ ] Liturgical
   [ ] Celebration
   [ ] Organ music
   [ ] Contemporary instruments
   [ ] Spontaneous
   [ ] Planned

36. Which of the following terms best describe your church’s theology? (Mark all that apply)

   [ ] Liberal
   [ ] Fundamentalist
   [ ] Politically engaged
   [ ] Charismatic
   [ ] Pentecostal
   [ ] Evangelical
   [ ] 3 Color / Trinitarian

37. Does your church follow any of these approaches? (Mark all that apply)

   [ ] Cell church
   [ ] House church
   [ ] Willow Creek
   [ ] Purpose-driven church
   [ ] Emerging church
   [ ] G12
   [ ] Natural Church Development
**OTHER SURVEYS**

38. How many NCD Surveys (including this one) has your church completed? 

39. Is your church doing this NCD survey as the last survey before or first survey after an NCD Campaign?  
   - [ ] Neither  
   - [ ] Last survey before  
   - [ ] First survey after

**COACHING**

41. Will your church be assisted by a coach during this NCD cycle?  
   - [ ] Yes, we have a coach  
   - [ ] Yes, we will look for a coach  
   - [ ] No

42. Was your church assisted by a coach during previous NCD cycles?  
   - [ ] Yes, frequently  
   - [ ] Yes, sometimes  
   - [ ] No

43. Do you want to receive regular information about NCD by e-mail (from NCD International and/or the national NCD partner)?  
   - [ ] Yes  
   - [ ] No

44. If NCD International or the national NCD partner was interested in using the results of your church’s NCD Survey in one of their publications – would you allow us to contact you to get your permission?  
   - [ ] Yes  
   - [ ] No

Please do not forget to answer the survey questionnaire as well.
## Appendix E-2

**Pastor’s Survey Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please fill in your answers in the light-colored fields.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I would like to order the following items:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic NCD Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The basic NCD Profile shows you the strengths and the weaknesses of your church by using 2 diagrams: A bar diagram helps you identify the minimum factor, which is the key area for future growth. A Quality Balance diagram helps you determine the degree of balance between the eight quality characteristics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile Plus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Profile Plus gives you a breakdown of your church's results at the level of the individual survey questions. Each question is compared with national benchmarks and, if available, previous survey results. Please ask your national NCD partner for pricing information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>▪ Profile Plus example on the web</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NCD Insights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCD Insights helps you analyze subcategories of each quality characteristic. Subcategories are compared with national benchmarks and, if available, previous survey results. Please ask your national NCD partner for pricing information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>▪ NCD Insights example on the web</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Information:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date (M/D/YYYY -- e.g., 10/2/2007)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/5/2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Church name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Life Community UMC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Church address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. Address 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>423 S. Liberty St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Address 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. State or Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Postal/zip Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Church website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pastor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Pastor's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pastor’s phone number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Pastor’s fax number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Pastor’s cell phone number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Pastor’s e-mail address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact (if different from pastor)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Contact name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Contact address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Address 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Address 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. State or Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Postal/zip Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Contact phone number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Contact fax number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Contact cell phone number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Contact e-mail address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Background Information</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Pastor's age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Pastor's gender (choose from the menu):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Pastor's highest level of education (choose from the menu):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. How many years have you been the pastor of this church?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. If you have completed the &quot;3-Color-Gift-Test&quot;, please indicate your 5 highest manifest gifts:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First gift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second gift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third gift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth gift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth gift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. My leadership style can be described best as (Mark all that apply):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size &amp; growth of your church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Number on church membership roll:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. At present, the average number of adults attending primary worship service each week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. At present, the average number of children attending primary worship service each week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. During the past five years the average number of adults attending church services each week was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. (one year ago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. (two years ago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. (three years ago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. (four years ago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. (five years ago)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
25. How do you count your worship service attendance? (Multiple answers possible.)  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. We don't count, the figures above are guessed.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. If someone attends 2 or more worship services per week, we only count him or her once.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. If someone attends 2 or more worship services per week, we count him or her each time.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. We only count the attendance at the main worship service.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. We don't count every week, only on special occasions.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26. How many worship services does your church have each week? 1

27. How many small groups are there in your church? 7

Church Planting

28. Over the last 10 years, how many daughter churches were planted by your church? 0

29. If any of your daughter churches have completed an NCD Survey, please indicate each of their account names (from their NCD Survey website account). Use commas to delimit several names.

30. Over the last five years (including this year), how many members has your church given to daughter churches?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. (this year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. (one year ago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. (two years ago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. (three years ago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. (four years ago)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. (five years ago)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Information

31. Denomination: (Choose from the menu) United Methodist

   If you selected "Other", please specify:

32. Founding year of this church (if known) 2006
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33. Location of church: What type of community best describes the location of your church? (Choose from the menu)</td>
<td>Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. What age groups are predominant in your church? (Mark all that apply)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (ages 1-12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth (ages 13-18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young adults (ages 19-25)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young families (ages 20-35)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle age (ages 35-64)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior citizens (ages 65 and up)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. How would you best describe the music style of your church? (Mark all that apply)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liturgical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organ music (former survey version)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional (current survey version)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary instruments</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(former survey version)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary (current survey version)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you selected &quot;Other&quot;, please specify:</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Which of the following terms best describe your church's theology? (Mark all that apply)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamentalist</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politically engaged</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charismatic</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Color / Trinitarian</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Does your church follow any of these approaches? (Mark all that apply)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell church</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House church</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Willow Creek</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose-driven church</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emerging church</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>G12</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural Church Development</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Other Surveys**

| Q38. How many NCD Surveys (including this one) has your church completed? | 1 |
| Q39. Is your church doing this NCD survey as the last survey before or first survey after an NCD Campaign? (Choose from the menu) | Neither |

**NCD Color Profile Results**

If your church has completed the NCD Color Profile (from the book "Color Your World With Natural Church Development" by Christian A. Schwarz), please write down the most recent results of your church's NCD Color Profile:

- Green
- Red
- Blue

**Coaching**

| Q41. Will your church be assisted by a coach during this NCD cycle? (Choose from the menu) | Yes, we have a coach |
| Q42. Was your church assisted by a coach during previous NCD cycles? (Choose from the menu; leave blank if this is your first NCD Survey) | No |
| Q43. Do you want to receive regular information about NCD by e-mail (from NCD International and/or the national NCD partner)? (Choose from the menu) | Yes |
| Q44. If NCD International or the NCD National Partner was interested in using the results of your church's NCD Survey in one of their publications – would you allow us to contact you to get your permission? (Choose from the menu) | Yes |
Appendix E-3  NEW NCD SURVEY

Instructions — Please read carefully

• This questionnaire will help to discover the strengths and weaknesses of your church. It is important that you answer all of the questions by marking one of the indicated boxes. When you come to a question in which none of the responses match your opinion, please choose the response that corresponds as closely as possible to your opinion. Think about your church and how it currently looks from your point of view.

• If you feel that a question is not applicable to your church’s situation, leave it blank.

• This questionnaire is used worldwide in a wide variety of denominations. As a consequence, you may not be used to some of the vocabulary in the questions. Answer each question based on what you think it means.

• If a question refers to leaders (e.g. #13), it refers to pastors, priests, elders, deacons, board members, and similar positions.

• If a question refers to “small groups” or “groups” (e.g. #78), it includes all kind of groups from 3-20 people (e.g. Bible study groups, home groups, prayer groups, ministry teams, cell groups, leadership teams, etc.)

• If a question refers to worship service, in your church this may be called mass, church service, divine service, service, celebration, etc.

• Whenever the term church is used, it relates to your local church.

• The questionnaires are evaluated anonymously. Your answers will be treated absolutely confidentially. Do not write your name on the questionnaire.

• Please return the completed questionnaire to the person from whom you received it. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

• Before you start with the questionnaire on the next page, please answer the following questions:

1. Gender:
   - Male
   - Female

2. Age:
   - <20
   - 21-30
   - 31-40
   - 41-50
   - 51-60
   - 61-70
   - >70

3. How long have you been a Christian?
   - years
   - Can’t say

4. How long have you been a part of this church?
   - years

5. Have you been involved in another local church before this one?
   - Yes
   - No

6. If “yes”, please indicate the reason for moving to this church:
   6a Relocated to this area
      - Yes
      - No
   6b Current church provides more effective ministry to children/young adults
      - Yes
      - No
   6c Style of worship service
      - Yes
      - No
   6d Leadership of current church
      - Yes
      - No
   6e Conflict in previous church
      - Yes
      - No
   6f Dissatisfaction with previous church
      - Yes
      - No
The following statement is true...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Degree of Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel my task in our church is a positive challenge that stretches my faith.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is my experience that God obviously uses my work for building the church.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tasks I perform in our church match my gifts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel the sermon in the worship service speaks to my personal situation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My small group helps me with the challenges of my life.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I connect with God in a meaningful way during the worship service.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our leaders seem to enjoy their ministry in our church.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it easy to tell other Christians about my feelings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that the worship service has a positive influence on me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know what value my work has in the overall work of our church.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know that someone in our church will hold me accountable for meeting the commitments I make.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The leaders of the ministries of our church meet regularly for planning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We encourage new Christians in our church to get involved in evangelism immediately.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our leaders actively seek to remove barriers that limit my ministry.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The evangelistic activities of our church are relevant for my friends and family who do not yet know Jesus Christ.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our leaders are clearly concerned for people who do not know Jesus Christ.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our leaders actively support church development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My contributions to church life are reviewed regularly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy listening to the sermons in the worship service.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that my church supports me in my ministry.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my small group we spend lots of time on things which are irrelevant to me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our pastor(s) have too much work to do.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know that other church members pray for me regularly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In our church it is possible to talk with other people about personal problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our leaders are good at explaining things.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a lot of joy and laughter in our church.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I pray for my friends, colleagues and relatives who do not yet know Jesus Christ, that they will come to faith.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My small group helps me to grow in my spiritual life.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The atmosphere of our church is strongly influenced by praise and compliments.  

Our church tries to help those in need (food, clothing, education, counsel, etc.).  

Our church regularly offers help for people to discover their gifts.  

Many people are given the opportunity to actively participate in our worship services.  

I can rely upon my friends at church.  

The volunteers of our church are trained frequently.  

I often tell other Christians when I have experienced something from God.  

I experience the transforming influences faith has in the different areas of my life (profession, family, spare time, etc).  

I know of people in our church with bitterness toward others.  

New Christians find friends in our church quickly.  

Our leaders clearly believe that God wants our church to grow.  

I know my gifts.  

Attending the worship service is an inspiring experience for me.  

When someone in our church does a good job, I tell them.  

I am a member of a group in our church where it is possible to talk about personal problems.  

I can easily explain why I come to the worship service.  

The leaders of our church prefer to do the work themselves rather than collaborate with others.  

I am enthusiastic about our church.  

The music in the worship service helps me worship God.  

In the groups I belong to it is easy for newcomers to be integrated.  

I am a member of a group in our church where others will pray with me if I need it.  

I'm often bored during the worship service.  

I understand clearly how the different parts of our church work together.  

The volunteers of our church are trained for their ministries.  

I share with various people in our church about my spiritual journey.  

It is my impression that the organizational structure of our church hinders church life rather than promotes it.  

Our leaders show concern for the personal problems of those in ministry.  

I enjoy the tasks I do in our church.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>to a very great extent</th>
<th>to a great extent</th>
<th>to an average extent</th>
<th>hardly</th>
<th>not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>In our church we often try new things.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>The small group and ministry leaders in our church each mentor at least one other person.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>I am a member of a small group in which I feel at home.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>I experience the benefits of working on a team in our church.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>I know the goals we are working towards as a church.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>I firmly believe that God will work even more powerfully in our church in the coming years.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>There is a lot of creativity in the evangelistic activities of our church.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>I know of a number of individuals in our church who have the gift of evangelism.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>I experience God's work in my life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>The Bible is a powerful guide for me in the decisions of everyday life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>The leaders of our church concentrate on the tasks for which they are gifted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Our leaders are spiritual examples to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>I try to deepen my relationships with people who do not yet know Jesus Christ.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>The leaders of our small groups are trained for their tasks.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Times of prayer are an inspiring experience for me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Our small groups actively seek to multiply themselves.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>I clearly understand what is expected from me when fulfilling my task in our church.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>If I have a disagreement with a member of our church, I will go to them in order to resolve it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Our leaders regularly receive assistance from an outside person (e.g. coach, church consultant, other pastor, etc.) on how to develop our church.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>The leaders of our church support individual Christians in their evangelistic endeavors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Our leaders regularly praise and acknowledge volunteers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>I enjoy reading the Bible on my own.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Our worship service attracts unchurched visitors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>When new people come to church events, we approach them openly and lovingly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Our church provides practical help for new Christians to grow in their faith.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>I always look forward to the worship service.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>I prepare myself to participate in the worship service.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>In my small group we trust each other.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>The activities of our church are well planned and organized.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E-4

Profile of Quality Characteristics of New Life Community UMC

Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>New Life Community UMC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church No.:</td>
<td>2012-072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>3/5/2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pastor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pastor’s Name:</th>
<th>Samuel Holdbrook-Smith</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church Address:</td>
<td>423 S. Liberty St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate Shipping:</td>
<td>New Life Community UMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samuel Holdbrook-Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>113 Holton St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone:</td>
<td>410-758-3285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell Phone:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax:</td>
<td>410-758-3285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sholdbrooksmith@atlanticbb.net">sholdbrooksmith@atlanticbb.net</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Quality Characteristics of New Life Community UMC**

### Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Characteristic</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Worship Attendance</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering Leadership</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift-Based Ministry</td>
<td>71 MAX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passionate Spirituality</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Structures</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiring Worship Service</td>
<td>49 MIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holistic Small Groups</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need-Oriented Evangelism</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loving Relationships</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five years ago:</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four years ago:</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three years ago:</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two years ago:</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One year ago:</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today:</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total 1</th>
<th>Total 2</th>
<th>Total 3</th>
<th>Total 4</th>
<th>Total 5</th>
<th>Total 6</th>
<th>Total 7</th>
<th>Total 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F

New Life Community UMC—Partners In Prayer

The Ministry of Intercessory Prayer

INSTRUCTION: Write your name and your specific prayer request(s) at the back of this sheet and put it in the basket during the offering time. After the offering ushers will bring these baskets around; please pick one of the prayer requests up from the basket. PLEASE, TAKE ONE OUT ONLY IF YOU PUT ONE IN. Remember to pray daily for the request(s) written on the back of this sheet and the requests already printed on the sheet, even if it is only a brief prayer. All members, even if you did not put a request in the basket are encouraged to pray for one another, and for the following requests already printed on the Partners in Prayer sheet.

Why Do We Have To Pray For The Pastor, Church, And Each Other?

Because God’s Word commands us to: “Keep on praying” (1 Thessalonians 5:17); “Confess [our] sins to each other and pray for each other so that [we] may be healed” (James 5:16); “Pray for all people” (1 Timothy 2:1); “Pray about everything” (Philippians 4:6); “Pray for our enemies and those who hurt [us]” (Luke 6:28 NLT); “Pray in the power of the Holy Spirit” (Jude 1:20) because “the earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results” (Jam 5:16), and that “[We] can pray for anything, and if [we] have faith, [we] will receive it” (Matthew 21:22). Therefore, we covenant together to obey God’s Word to pray for the following:

- Pray for our pastor, Rev. Samuel Holdbrook-Smith so that he will keep on speaking boldly for God, as he should (Ephesians 6:20); to proclaim the message as clearly as he should (Colossians 4:4); to identify and train willing members to become leaders to lead small group Bible studies to make disciples of Jesus Christ; pray for his family that God will sustain them and supply their every need.
- “Pray that the Lord's message will be received and be honored by members of New Life community (see 2 Thessalonians 3:1); “pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest [and] ask Him to make all of us willing workers in His fields; pray to the Lord to open our eyes to see the harvest and the needs He is calling us to fulfill in our community (see Luke 10:2); “pray that [every member of New Life community] will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe Him” (Ephesians 1:19); “pray that from [God’s] glorious, unlimited resources He will empower [us] with inner strength through His Spirit” (Ephesians 3:16).
- Pray that every New Life Community member will give financially through tithes, offering, and capital campaign to meet the church’s budget.
- Pray for your personal spiritual growth, the spiritual growth of all the members, and the church’s healthy growth.
- Pray that members of New Life will intentionally develop relationships.
- Pray that God will do transformational in work the members of New Life Community.
THE MINISTRY OF INTERCESSIONARY PRAYER

Name: ______________________________________________________________

Prayer Request(s): _________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Pray For Our Known Sick & Shut-Ins

Pray For Our Church, Spiritual, Community and National Leaders

Pray for Our President, Our Nation and Community

Pray For Educators, Law Enforcement officer, Fire Fighter, Paramedics

PRAYER EVANGELISM

Please pray for all the Unsaved, Unchurched, and Unbelievers You Know That God Will
Draw Them to Have a Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ.

• **H**—Pray for their receptive heart to the gospel.
• **E**—Pray for their spiritual eyes, ears, and minds to be opened.
• **A**—Pray for them to have God’s attitude toward sin.
• **R**—Pray that they are released from spiritual bondage to believe.
• **T**—Pray for their transformed lives.
Inspiring Worship Summary Evaluation Questions

Inspiring worship is a personal and corporate encounter with the living God. Both personal and corporate worship must be infused with the presence of God resulting in times of joyous exultation and times of quiet reverence. Inspiring worship is not driven by a particular style or ministry focus group—but rather the shared experience of God’s awesome presence.

Personal transformation in worship
1. What are the indicators to us that people who come to our worship service(s) have the sense of connecting with God during that time?
2. To what extent are church attendees carrying positive influences from the worship service into their everyday life?
3. How are we assessing the inspirational impact of our services?
4. What parts of the worship service are most inspiring to people? What parts are boring?

Visitor friendly church
1. How does our style of music relate to the people we are reaching and those we want to reach? What is the difference?
2. How have we helped church members become aware of newcomers and visitors?
3. What procedures have we put in place to make it easy for the newcomer to locate the nursery, children’s ministry, adult classes and restrooms?
4. How do you encourage or invite new people to do more than come for the worship service?

Anticipation for worship
1. What are the indicators to us that people look forward to coming to church?
2. In what ways do we heighten anticipation for the upcoming services?
3. How do we communicate the value of each person’s preparation for participating in the worship service?
4. How are small group activities linked to the worship service?

Relevance of message
1. What are the indicators that people are engaged with the sermons?
2. What opportunities do people have to interact with the sermon content?
3. How are sermon topics decided? How are they assessed for relevance?
4. What feedback loops are in place to assess sermon quality?
5. What ongoing training and resourcing are teaching pastors engaged in?

Personal Transformation in Worship

Key Question: As you consider your worship service, what aspects of the service seem to be most inspiring for the people and which aspects need adjustments? Why is this?


Services that transform

While techniques and structures cannot substitute for inspiration, they can aid in the transmission of inspiration.

- What aspects of your worship service lack vitality? Which ones energize people?
- What aspects of your worship service can be enhanced for more effectiveness?
- How does the music portion of the worship service help people to have a sense of God's presence?
- How are people invited to be active participants in worship rather than spectators?
- What consistent intercession and prayer goes into the worship service?

Personal transformation

If you usually sit with your back to the people during the service, you may want to experiment with sitting on the side where you can observe the people's response to various aspects of the worship service. Consider the expressions on people's faces during the service. Though people in some cultures do not display their interest on their faces, in most cultures you will have some indication of inspiration from what you read on their facial expressions. Consider the way people participate in each aspect of the service, whether they pay attention or find other things to amuse themselves during the service.

- What are the indicators to you that people who come to your worship services have the sense of being touched by God during that time?
- Tell of a time when you specifically felt the presence of the Lord touching you or others in the service.
- To what extent do you feel that this experience of feeling the presence of the Lord is a regular occurrence in your church?

Visitor-friendly church

Describe the experience of a first time unchurched visitor to your worship service.

Logistical considerations

It is difficult for you, as an insider, to experience your church as a visitor would. Visiting a new church from time to time will help you understand how a newcomer might feel. If you visit, choose a church that is very different from yours to increase your discomfort with the strange surroundings. This most closely approximates a visitor's experience at your church.

- How have you helped your congregation become aware of newcomers and visitors?
- As newcomers drive onto your property and make their way toward the sanctuary, what process do you have in place to ensure that people feel welcomed? How far do people get before they are met by a friendly face?
• Are there designated parking spaces saved near the building for visitors?
• How easy or difficult is it for the newcomers to locate the nursery, children’s ministry rooms, and the restrooms? Do they have to ask or are there signs or greeters volunteering information?
• What process do you have in place to get in touch with the parents during the service as needed if they have left their children in children’s ministry? Are the parents informed of this process?

**Relational issues**

People come to church to connect with God. They also come to connect with people. Consider the opportunities a newcomer has to connect with people and how well you advertise those opportunities to someone coming to the service. What information and relationships help people take the next steps?

• How do you create a safe environment that encourages people to build relationships?
• How do you make friends rather than be friendly?
• What opportunities are available for new people to build relationships with others in the church?
• How do you encourage or invite new people to do more than come for the worship service (where it is difficult to develop authentic relationships or use their gifts)?

**Anticipation for worship**

**Key Question:** What aspects of the worship services are most appreciated by attenders and why do you think this is so?

*Individual anticipation*

Corporate worship must be an overflow of one's personal worship.

• How do you prepare yourself to worship God? Do you spend time waiting on God for what he desires to do during the service?
• What are the indicators to you that people look forward to coming to the worship service?
• How do you communicate the value of personal preparation to participate in the worship service?

*Corporate anticipation*

Both spiritual and logistical preparations are needed for the worship service. Those churches on the spiritualistic side of the paradigm will mobilize much prayer but may do little logistical preparation. The opposite may be true for those on the technocratic side of the equation.
What kind of planning and preparation is done by the worship team and worship leader to make the worship service smooth, flowing and inspirational?

In what ways do you heighten anticipation for the upcoming services?

How are small group activities linked to the worship service?

What changes have you made in your worship service in the last 2-3 years?

How do you evaluate your worship services for improvement?

Relevance of message

Describe how you develop a relevant message.

Preparation for preaching

What priority does preparation for your sermons have in your week? In light of your other responsibilities, does this feel about right?

What percentage of your prep time is prayer, study of the Bible and extracurricular research?

What aids do you use on a regular basis for sermon prep?

Style and content of preaching

The important thing is not that you support one style or another but that your style is compatible with the people you desire to reach.

How would you describe your style of preaching? Does it vary?

As you reflect on the style and content of your sermons, what aspects would draw in seekers and what aspects would be difficult for them to understand or identify with (use last week’s sermon as an example)?

To what extent do you open the pulpit to others from within the church or guest speakers?

Relevant communication

"Christianese" refers to our use of words and phrases that make sense only to someone who has been a Christian for some time. “Insider lingo” only makes sense to longtime church members.

To what extent do “up front” leaders demonstrate sensitivity to newcomers? (Do they use “insider lingo,” do they explain what is going on, or do they make assumptions about what people know?)

How would you rate your use of “Christianese” at your worship service?
Action Guide

After spending time evaluating various aspects of inspiring worship services in your ministry setting, spend some time in the presence of the Lord with what you have discovered. Repent for areas you have neglected and ask for God's empowerment for the journey ahead. Keep in mind that these score are indicators of health. They should inform your ministry but God is the one who leads you forward.

What are the strengths that you have in inspiring worship services?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What are the key issues to address in order to increase health and release greater potential?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Who needs to be involved in the action planning process? How will we move forward?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

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APPENDIX H

Steps for Leading a Healthy Merger Process and Healthy Christ-Centered New Testament Church

1. The whole merger process, from beginning through the end must be bathed in prayer, seeking God’s will, guidance, honesty, and transparency. All congregations involved in the merger must regularly engage in a time of corporate prayer for the process.

2. First consider McIntosh’s ten key signs for church closure\(^{277}\) to objectively evaluate the church’s health to give church leaders helpful assessment of the church’s future.

3. Form a Merger Exploration Team consisting of equal number of representatives from each church considering the merger to prayerfully explore the possibility of the merger and present recommendation to each church for their consideration to vote to engage in the merger process. Below are some questions to be considered during this process:

   - What are some of the problems that have contributed to the decline and the current state of your congregation?
   - What advantages can you see in the merging of these churches?
   - What tensions and anxieties do you feel as you consider the possibility of these churches merging?
   - Which seems greater to you, the advantages or the tensions?
   - Recall your memories of your church:
     - i. How has your life been shaped by these memories?
     - ii. How might these memories suggest models for ministry in the merging congregation?

4. All the local churches considering a merger must follow their denomination’s protocol concerning merger. United Methodist Church congregations must contact the District Superintendent to inform him or her about their intention to merge with another congregation.

5. Upon declaration of intention to begin a merge conversation, the District Superintendent must schedule an initial meeting with key leadership from all churches involved to affirm their intentions.

6. Under the leadership of a knowledgeable pastor or consultant, form a merger team or taskforce made up of equal members for the each congregation to develop a strategic plan for the merger:
   - Shared core values
   - Mission mind-set

\(^{277}\) See Appendix A.
7. Negotiate the merger

- Everything must be laid on the table by all churches involved
- Creating a single new healthy faith community with a new name.
- The new name of the church must be different from the previous names.
- Sales of all church buildings and properties and relocate to a new location.

8. The Merger Team/Taskforce must create a process to help them maintain a regular communication with all the churches involved in the merger conversation.

9. Create opportunities for the churches to get to know one another through joint worship services, fellowships, and special events celebrations that are not related to the discussion of the proposed merger.

10. The Merger Team/Taskforce must develop a “Merger Document” that explains in detail the future of the new church. The Merger Document should include but not limited to:

   A. A brief history and future intent of the proposed merged church
   B. New Vision and Mission Statements of the proposed merged church
   C. A timeline and process for executing the proposed merger
   D. A resolution identifying the merging churches and outlining the intents and conditions of the proposed merger
   E. Who may vote for the proposed merger,
   F. The percent of vote required for passage of the resolution
   G. A strategic plan for leading the proposed merged church to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church, clearly defining expectations for clergy and laity
   H. A process for evaluating the anticipated measurable results

11. Each church votes on the resolution identifying the merging churches and outlining the intents and conditions of the proposed merger through a church of charge conference.

12. The Merger Team/Taskforce must complete the Plan of Merger that include but not limited to:

   D. A new name for the proposed merged church
   E. A process for leadership structure and staffing
   F. Plans for the location of the new church
   G. A plan for the transfer of all current property, real and personal
   H. A process for financial review
13. Each church separately votes on the Plan of Merger

14. Once the Plan of Merger has been accepted, begin the process of incorporation, tax identification numbers, gaining new postal permits, selling buildings, and purchasing a new site for construction.

15. Each church involved in the merger holds a final service to celebrate the ministry of the church.

16. Hold a first service of the newly merged church to celebration of the merger and inauguration of the new church.

17. Immediately begin to implement the strategic plan for leading the newly merged church to become a healthy Christ-centered New Testament church:
   • Strategic Prayer
   • Godly Vision
   • Personal Leadership Development
   • Small Group Leaders’ Development
   • Connecting People through Small Group
   • Intentional and Need-Oriented Evangelism
   • Gift-Based Ministry
   • Engaging and Inspiring Worship

18. Implement a process for evaluating the anticipated measurable results.
APPENDIX I

Church Health Assessment Tools

**The Vital Signs Church Health Assessment Tool**
This assessment tool was developed for Missouri Baptist Churches to help congregations find out what they are doing well and areas where they could be doing better.

**Natural Church Development Survey**
This tool is developed around Christian Schwarz’s eight characteristics of a healthy church. Over 3,000 churches have used this survey.

**Congregation Assessment Tool**
This instrument was constructed to evaluate church health using Macchia’s ten characteristics of church health.

**Highly Effective Church Inventory**
This survey was perfected by George Barna. It is designed to measure twelve characteristics of effective churches.

**Congregational Wellness Inventory**
This is a systems based testing instrument developed by Organizational Health Associates.

**Church Health Survey**
This survey was developed by Thom Rainer at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. This instrument uses a 160-item instrument to evaluate six major areas: worship, evangelism, discipleship, prayer, ministry, and fellowship.

**Transformational Church Assessment Tool**
This assessment tool provides churches with the ability to assess their health so they can celebrate areas of strength, and address areas of concern through a congregation wide survey.
March 9, 2005

Willie Pauls, Chairperson
PPRC Committee
New Life United Methodist Church
Centreville, MD 21617

Dear Chairperson Pauls:

We, serving as chairpersons of the Trustees, Finance, and Administrative Committees, and on the behalf of the members of New Zion United Methodist Church hereby request a meeting with the District Superintendent to further discuss our options to continue worship at New Zion, our community church.

We are well aware that a vote was passed to merge the three churches into one church and operate under the new name of New Life United Methodist Church. New Life would then be the sole place of worship for the members of the Centreville-Newtown Charge. We have come to the point that we foresee this decision as an inconvenience for the members of New Zion since New Life will be located in another county.

Currently, we, the members of New Zion feel that the plans to construct a new building are being performed improperly. At this time, no particular plan is in place, and we believe we need more direction and guidance before we agree to continue our efforts in the planning stages.

We look forward to receiving a favorable reply from you soon regarding a scheduled meeting with the District Superintendent. Please let either of us know if we can address any questions/concerns before this meeting can be scheduled. Thank you in advance for the opportunity to voice our concerns.

Best regards,

John Harris
Trustee Chairperson

Hilda Groce
Finance Chairperson

Gloria Harris
Administrative Chairperson
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Earley, Dave. "Healthy Church Leadership". Lynchburg: Liberty University.


VITA

Samuel Holdbrook-Smith

PERSONAL
  Born: January 2, 1959
  Married: Marjorie Rose Crawford, March 26, 1986.
     Christopher, born October 1, 1979.
     Samuel, born September 1, 1986.

EDUCATION
  D.Min., Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012.

MINISTERIAL
  License: July 1, 1999, Easton District, Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference of
  The United Methodist Church, Centreville, Maryland.
  Commissioned: June 16, 2000, Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United
  Methodist Church, Washington, DC.
  Ordination: June 19, 2003, Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist
  Church, Washington, DC.

PROFESSIONAL
  Pastor, New Life Community United Methodist Church, 2006 to Present.