OVERCOMING CHURCH EUTHANASIA: A PLAN TO REVITALIZE DEAD AND DYING CHURCHES WITHIN THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

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February 2015
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ABSTRACT

OVERCOMING CHURCH EUTHANASIA: A PLAN TO REVITALIZE DEAD AND DYING CHURCHES WITHIN THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

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Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014

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This thesis will examine the problem of dead and dying churches in the Southern Baptist Convention. Membership in more than seventy-percent of churches in North America has plateaued or is declining according to the North American Mission Board. Rather than just starting new churches, this thesis will present an option to revitalize dead and dying churches in order to reverse this trend. The aim of this thesis is to promote the historical Southern Baptists plan which will help Southern Baptists regain historical parameters and goals when revitalizing dead or dying churches. The thesis will cite existing quantitative and qualitative data, and biblical sources. Pastors, denominational leaders, and a congregation who have been involved in revitalizing churches will be surveyed and interviewed to gather their recommendations, pitfalls to avoid and strategies to employ. The thesis will conclude with a plan to be presented to pastors and other denominational leaders to encourage them to consider investing in established churches.

Abstract length: 157 words
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for saving me and extending to me “grace that is sufficient for all my needs.” I would like to thank Him for allowing me the opportunity to prepare this thesis project, and I pray that it will be used for His glory. In addition, I want to express my deepest appreciation to Charlie N. Davidson, D. Min. for his shepherding model as a mentor and to David Hirschman, D. Min. for being my reader.

Secondly, words cannot express my appreciation to my family and friends who have encouraged me and stood by me through this process. My late parents, Vernon and Shirley Rogers, always showed their love and support by providing for all my needs and many of my wants. I will never forget the sacrifice they made so I could have so much. I also want to especially thank my sister, Seteria Bain, for her continued support, encouraging words, and “care packages.” Her encouragement has sincerely helped me when the days were long and difficult.

Thanks also to special friends such as Ron Moore, Dr. Bill Ireland, Jack and Sharon Wallace and Dave and Evelyn Mills, who have always believed in me. Although recognizing everyone individually who has helped me is not possible, I want to say all gifts of prayer and financial assistance are helping make an eternal difference in God’s ministry plan of which I have been blessed to be a part.

Finally, I want to thank Beulah Baptist Church. It is such a pleasure to serve with you. Your support all around has been tremendous, and I look forward to seeing what God has in store for you in the future.

Expecting His Best
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## ABBREVIATIONS

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<tr>
<td>ACP</td>
<td>Annual Church Profile</td>
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<td>ESV</td>
<td>English Standard Version</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCSB</td>
<td>Holman Christian Standard Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMB</td>
<td>International Mission Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>KJV</td>
<td>King James Version</td>
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<td>NAMB</td>
<td>North American Mission Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>NASB</td>
<td>New American Standard Bible</td>
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<td>NKJV</td>
<td>New King James Version</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOBTS</td>
<td>New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary</td>
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<td>SBC</td>
<td>Southern Baptist Convention</td>
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<td>SBTS</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Background

In 1845 Southern Baptists met at the First Baptist Church of Augusta, Georgia. “During that meeting, it was voted to establish themselves as the Southern Baptist Convention of churches. The SBC was not merely a Southern version of the Triennial Convention; it was an entirely new model of the convention itself.”¹ According to David Dockery, even being organized as a convention of churches, the SBC did not come of age until 1945 after the end of World War II. The SBC became a national denomination by awkward default in the years from 1945 to 1965. Because no one needed any sort of denominational permission to start a Baptist church, Baptists were doing just that across the country.²

During those twenty years, Southern Baptists found themselves operating evangelical churches in all fifty states. This was the first time Southern Baptists had been seen as an influential national denomination. With influence comes power, and with greater influence, a denominational structure needed to be put into place. “The SBC’s Executive Committee hired Booz Allen Hamilton, the organizational and efficiency experts that had recently reorganized General Motors, to help them rethink their own denominational structure.”³ It was in the 1960’s that Southern Baptists began to realize this new structure for the denomination was causing a systematic breakdown in the mission. Confusion set in and denominational leaders, church pastors, and church members fought a public fight that resulted in what is called by some as a conservative resurgence within the Southern Baptist Convention

² Ibid., 33-34.
³ Ibid., 34.
This conservative resurgence brought about steep changes not only in the Southern Baptist Convention, but also in the entities it owned, such as: The Six Southern Baptist Theological Seminaries, Lifeway Resources, International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, and GuideStone Resources. In 1995, the Program and Structure Study Committee presented to the convention a covenant for a new century that eliminated seven entities to try to better purpose the mission that Southern Baptists are known to support.4 One of the core elements in Southern Baptist biblical understanding is Inerrancy of Scripture: holding that Scripture is Holy and without any mixture of error. What the conservative resurgence established was that Southern Baptist institutions were once again going to be a people of the Book. Many SBC churches were indoctrinated by pastors who held to freedom of liberty when interpreting scripture while the more conservative church pastors held to truth. This confrontation along with the changes in institutional entities and doctrinal stances caused a rift between many SBC churches which led to the more liberal churches leaving and forming a separate fellowship.

In the meantime, church denominationalism was losing ground with the new postmodernism culture shift of thinking. After the SBC conservative resurgence,

“there is a renewed understanding that Baptists can rethink the way we relate to each other, and it is the churches that are driving that change-again, without asking for permission. The large infrastructure of modern Southern Baptist life may not survive in the postmodern age, but that decision will not be made by the executives of Southern Baptists agencies, or by the executives of state conventions. It will be made, eventually, by the churches.”5

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5 Ibid., 34-35.
Southern Baptists began looking at what a healthy and growing church should look like. In 1988, C. Kirk Hadaway offered a study that estimated that seventy-percent of Southern Baptist Churches were plateaued or declining. With an estimated seventy-percent of SBC churches plateaued or declining, many more studies and books began to be written about church health, growth, renewal, revival, and revitalization. In 2004, Bill Day proposed a new definition for a plateaued or declining SBC church. His study revealed that eighty-nine percent of SBC churches are plateaued or declining.

**Statement of the Problem**

Overcoming Church Euthanasia in the SBC is a staggering challenge. The North American Mission Board of the SBC not only keeps records of church decline but is also actively trying to make gains in church health and growth through church planting. This trend must be completed because SBC established churches, according to a “study by the Leavell Center for Evangelism and Church Health at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary looked at worship service attendance and found that in 2010 only 6.8 percent of SBC churches were healthy…”

To help offset the decline within SBC churches, the NAMB is strategically attempting to plant over 15,000 churches per year. In addition to starting new churches, NAMB is concentrating on reaching out to existing and established churches which are dead or dying.

Regardless of what research is used, the American church culture has shifted in the post-modern era. When trying to understand one of the root trajectories within the American church,

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one must look at the population growth.

“The population of the United States has grown by 52 million people from 1990 to 2006, which happens to be same number that attend church on any given weekend. Among those new arrivals are 68,510,978 newborn babies and 22,873,578 immigrants - a total of 91 million additional people. Accounting for the 39,611,000 who died in that time period produces the net population growth of 52 million people.”

The American church is not keeping up with the population growth. These statistics confirm research by the SBC. “Southern Baptists have lost significant ground in the church-to-population ratio during the last 100 years.”

In 1900, there was one Southern Baptist church for every 3,800 people in North America. Today, that number is one for every 6,200. In the south, that ratio is much better (one SBC church for every 2732 people). But in other regions, we have much work to do: in the west the ratio is 1:15,885; in the northeast it’s 1:36,998 and in Canada its 1:117,925. These widening gaps come from two problems: first, we have not started enough churches-especially in and around cities where 83 percent of North Americans live; second, each year an average of 1,000 SBC churches disappear.” “We analyzed data from the Annual Church Profile (ACP) and found that between 2007 and 2012, only 27 percent of reporting SBC churches experienced growth. Forty-three percent were plateaued and 30 percent declined.”

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9 David T. Olson, The American Church in Crisis (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 35.


11 Ibid.
Since their inception, Southern Baptist churches have had an identity that made them Baptist. Historically, Baptists have held to key fundamental foundations. These foundational principles or keys to a healthy and growing church are: New Testament Pastoral Leadership, Text Driven Teaching and Preaching of God’s Word, Fellowship and Nurture of the Priesthood of the Believers, Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and Prayer. Out of these five foundational keys, one would find; worship, evangelism, and missions. R. Albert Mohler Jr. reminds Baptists that the main challenge ahead in this new world of post-modernity is to not
forget who we are as Baptists. “Tradition - that backward glance at what Christians throughout the centuries have confessed and how they have understood the great doctrines of the faith - allows the dead to have a vote. We are not the first persons to read the Bible, nor are we the first to confess the Christian faith.”\textsuperscript{12} Clearly, SBC church leadership must not forget its origin. There are many trends and gimmicks to lead SBC churches and their leadership away from the fundamental foundational keys of church health and growth.

Too many churches within the SBC have abandoned the five keys of fundamental foundation. The first guideline in attaining a revitalized church is leadership. “Leadership is the most important factor in making a comeback. Leadership is rated as the factor having the highest impact by comeback leaders.”\textsuperscript{13} Holy Spirit called leaders are Shepherds and Pastors who really care for the church body. “Shepherds, Pastors, or Elders mentioned in the New Testament were men of proven moral character . . . they were servant-leaders . . . not slave-drivers (Matt. 20:25-26) they were men of proven spirituality and faithfulness, not high powered administrators.”\textsuperscript{14} Not only is leadership a key, but the leader himself must teach and preach the Word of God. Too many pastors have abandoned the calling to teach and preach the Word. In Acts 2:42, an emphasis on leadership is crucial. “With the phrase “the apostle’s teaching,” Luke stresses both the authority of the apostles and the authoritative content of their teaching. The events of Pentecost firmly established the authority of the apostles as leaders in the Jerusalem


\textsuperscript{14} Frank Viola, \textit{Rethinking the Wineskin: The Practice of the New Testament Church} 3\textsuperscript{rd} ed., (USA: Present Testimony Ministry, 2001), 81.
church as Jesus intended.”¹⁵ That authority was translated down to the elders as seen in apostolic authority of the apostle Paul to the New Testament churches. In the Lukan text, one sees doctrinal content being explained and emphasized. The apostles “message would have included an exposition of the Old Testament from the perspective of their fulfillment in Christ. No doubt much time was also spent repeating, explaining, and applying the teachings of Jesus, as well as recounting his life and ministry.”¹⁶

Many SBC churches and their leaders have been so enamored with numbers on the church rolls and in the periodicals of SBC life that it has forgotten what true membership within a SBC church really is. This third fundamental key of fellowship within the Priesthood of the Believer is so crucial in revitalizing and making a church healthy again. The true Priesthood of the Believer is that of royalty, and

they have been elected as stated in 1 Peter (‘chosen,’ RSV) (a) ‘according to the foreknowledge of God the father’ (cf. 1:17), (b) ‘through the sanctifying activity of the spirit’ (cf. 1:10-132, 14-16; 4:14), and (c) ‘for obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ’ (cf. 1:14, 19, 22’). The Petrine passage in which the two references to the royal priesthood are located is 1 Peter 2:4-10.¹⁷

Baptism is one of two very important scriptural ordinances left for the New Testament Church for the Royal Priesthood of the Believer. For the most part, SBC churches have held to the baptizing by immersion. Only with some of the emergent churches in the twenty-first century do we see a departure from immersion baptism. “The vast majority of Baptists have always believed that baptism is a symbolic ordinance that identifies the believer with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baptists also have identified the ordinance of baptism as


¹⁶ Ibid., 67.

the following: (1) the believer’s public profession of faith, (2) the believer’s identification with Christ, and (3) the initiatory ordinance into the local church.”¹⁸ What is often missed within the local church is the seriousness of participating in the taking of the Lord’s Supper. It should never be something done once a month or once a quarter. It is not only a personal adjudication and self-examination, but it is a direct responsibility and role of the local church. First Corinthians 11:28-30 teaches the role of individual responsibility when it states, “But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.” It is up to the individual to thoroughly examine himself, for he does not want to improperly take the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper has a direct correlation to church discipline. A second element is the local body’s responsibility. Not only is the Lord’s Supper a remembrance, but it should also be a symbolic celebration. “The Lord’s Supper does look back to the cross in memorial, but it also looks around in fellowship and forward in anticipation of Christ’s return. Thus, a complete understanding should characterize the Lord’s Supper as a meaningful, symbolic celebration.”¹⁹

Finally, the fifth foundational key is, intimacy with God through prayer. In Acts 2:42 a revitalized church was praying. Scripture fed and Spirit led prayer is all about worship. A revitalized church must be a church that is intimate with God. “Worship-based prayer seeks the face of God before the hand of God. God’s face is the essence of who He is. God’s hand is the blessing of what He does. God’s face represents His person and presence, and God’s hand


¹⁹ Ibid., 149.
expresses His provision for needs in our lives. These five foundational keys are essential in overcoming church euthanasia and developing a plan to revitalize dead and dying Southern Baptist Churches.

**Statement of Limitations**

This thesis will investigate biblical principles of church revitalization, considerations regarding the key foundational elements of a Southern Baptist Church, and church revitalization resources of many church revitalization writers, pastors, and church health and growth studies containing the five key elements listed above. Therefore, much time will be spent carefully examining the New Testament especially in the Lukan text in Acts 2:42. This thesis will also provide an overview of recent trends in Southern Baptist churches, specifically those that have abandoned the five key foundational elements for successful SBC church health and growth.

This thesis is not intended to provide strategies of Overcoming Church Euthanasia when dealing with geographical stagnation in attendance in rural areas where the population has shrunk. It will be limited in scope to dealing with SBC churches that have seen their health falter and their growth stagnate due to the lack of the key foundational elements explicitly necessary for any SBC church to not only survive but thrive through the spiritual work of the Holy Spirit. The focus will not be on church revitalization efforts primarily being carried out by the different state conventions in the SBC, but will draw some comparisons to ideas which seem to be working. The main focus will be limited to revitalizing dead and dying churches by reintroducing SBC churches to the key foundational elements found in the Lukan text in Acts 2 and other biblical texts for summation. Specifically, this author hopes to apply a clear vision of the call, preaching and teaching, fellowship of the royal priesthood, ordinances, the pastoral

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leadership, vision, and effective worship-based prayer. By specifically reintroducing these key foundational elements and reminding the church and its leadership of them, it will encourage pastors and churches to reignite and refocus on the important aspects of what being a Southern Baptist church is. This thesis will provide a clear plan for dead and dying Southern Baptist churches to implement in order to be rescued, resurrected, revitalized and refocused on what a vibrant and healthy Southern Baptist church should be and should look like. Finally, it is intended that pastors and denominational leadership will be reintroduced to a biblical model or mandate which if re-interjected back into SBC church life will produce church health and should produce church growth. The increase or growth comes from the Holy Spirit.

**Theoretical Basis**

In 50 AD, the apostle Paul planted the church in Corinth and within a few years, the apostle wrote a letter in response to reports that was being heard about the church. He also had received some letters from the church requesting interpretations from him. In 1 Corinthians 1:10-17, the church does not know whether it should be following the teachings of Paul, or Apollos. Because the church had taken its eyes off of the foundational elements of importance, it began seeing fleshly chaos brought on by enormous amounts of sinful behavior. This behavior included: “Tolerating sexual immorality (5: 1-13); Lawsuits among church members (6:1-8); Confusion over marriage and sexuality (7: 1-40); Division in the church over the limits of Christian freedom (8: 1-13; 10:1-33); Worship wars (chs, 11-14), and False teaching about the resurrection (ch 15).”

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22 Ibid.
It takes little imagination for pastors and other leaders in SBC churches to see the correlation of present day churches in the denomination. Many churches today have lost their way. Many Southern Baptist churches have lost their identity and are in a state of decline and possibly death if something drastic is not done quickly. It should be a burden for every Southern Baptist pastor and leader when experiencing chaotic similarites within the SBC church families to restore worship. Many in the SBC would prefer to chalk the loss of the church up to disgruntled people and walk away, but the apostle Paul certainly did not do that with the church in Corinth. “Instead, he pleaded with them. He came to see them again and again. He rebuked them and bore with them. In short, he worked to reform the church of God which was at Corinth.”

The Apostle Paul not only planted the church in Corinth, but he also worked the church in Corinth. Remember that Corinth was just one of many churches Paul planted and nurtured as he made his missionary journeys. As seen in Acts 15:36, 41; 1 Cor. 4:17, 11:1; Phil. 3:17, and Rom. 15:20, Paul made his rounds encouraging, rebuking, strengthening, teaching, and building up the royal priesthood of the believers within the New Testament church. This writer “suggests that if we are to follow in Paul’s footsteps, as Scripture calls us to, then we should have a burden for the ongoing health and strength of congregations which bear the name “Christian” and profess to adhere to the gospel.”

“In the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3, Jesus himself works to reform the local congregations. He spoke to these churches in order to set right what is broken, to heal

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24 Ibid.
what is sick, to rebuke what is false, and to give new life to what is dying.” The call to revitalize and renew these seven churches found here in Revelation was a decision our Lord and Savior decided was important in the life of the church. Should not all evangelical church pastors, especially those in the SBC be concerned and willing to follow Jesus’ own example in revitalizing? Jesus died for the church. “Jesus reformed and revitalized churches - seven of them in Chapters 2 and 3 alone. So should we.”

The born again “Christian” bears the mark of the cross. As Isaiah 43:7 states: “the church is the people who are called by God’s name whom He created for His glory, whom He formed and made.” Christ’s followers are not just liberators from sin and shame, but are royal priests who have a great responsibility to “deny themselves daily and take up their cross daily and follow Christ.” (Luke 9:23) “So a concern for the name of God, which he has placed upon His people - and upon their corporate gatherings in a special sense (Matt. 18:20) – should move us to reform and revitalize churches.”

“By AD 41/42 James and the elders appear to have taken up the leadership of the Jerusalem church after they fled the city. James, the Lord’s brother was leader of the Jerusalem church from AD 41 to 62, when the Jewish historian Josephus records that the high priest had him stoned to death.” A biblical call on a man of God is an essential element in church revitalization. In *Comeback Churches*, Stetzer and Dodson stated biblical leadership is a must in

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26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

leading and having God’s people follow.\textsuperscript{29} When examining the Lukan text, one sees the apostolic authority shifted to the elders who had been set aside and ordained to carry on the ministry and the propagation of the Gospel message.

“Elders played a growing leadership role in the Jerusalem church, alongside the apostles . . . The information that Luke provides shows how comprehensively the early churched fulfilled Jesus’ command in Jerusalem. God added daily to their numbers as the movement spread through: Calling out leaders, preaching the word, healing the Sick, Believers witnessing to family and friends, they genuinely loved one another, demonstrated courage in the face of violent persecution, and willingly extended forgiveness to their persecutors.”\textsuperscript{30}

In Acts 2, Peter delivers a sermon specifically aimed at the authority given to him for biblical leadership, teaching and preaching in the local church. In Acts 7, Stephen’s sermon is a dramatic depiction of what the church body’s responsibilities are in light of their current situation and what the church needs to do to reach out with the Good News. It was customary for Paul to be preaching and teaching in the synagogue. He showed the importance of scripture and its teaching of Jesus as the Messiah in Acts 17: 2-3. In 2 Timothy 3:15-17, Paul set the record forever that the life of the Church is sustained in the authority of Scripture.

In Ephesians 4:11-12, leadership was key in developing leaders in the local church. The New Testament speaks of the different leadership posts such as: Elders, Deacons, Pastors, Prophets, and Apostles. All these are key leaders within the local church. Leadership was to be honored by the local church because these men brought the teaching of the Scripture to the people as seen in 1 Timothy 5:17. His church is all about equipping leadership, and building biblical leadership is the bedrock to Christianity and the proclamation of the Gospel as seen in 2


\textsuperscript{30} Steve Addison, \textit{What Jesus Started: Joining the Movement-Changing the World} (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 97, 100.
Timothy 2:2. In Revelation 2:1-7, Jesus lays out the strengths of the local church in Ephesus. After He lists their strengths, He deals with their weaknesses and what must happen in order for them to be renewed in the Spirit. In Philippians 1:6, God is at work in His church. He used leaders He calls to represent Him to His bride. In Acts 6:1-5, here the brotherhood established leadership in order that the message of the Gospel would not be hindered from going out because of the needs of the Hellenistic Jews against the Hebraic Jews. Needs needed to be met in the local church.

In 2 Timothy 3:15-17, Paul set the record forever that the life of the Church is sustained in the authority of Scripture. Jesus Himself is one of the greatest examples of uses of Text Driven teaching. In Luke 24:25-27 and 32-34 Jesus “expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself” that these discouraged, heavyhearted disciples found their hearts to “burn within” them; and it was this opening of the Scriptures to the eyes of their understanding which sent them back to the city that same night with a glowing testimony of a renewed faith.”

In 1 Timothy 3:15 and Titus 2:1, 15, Divine Truth is expounded on and given for instruction within the local church. “The word of God is the only thing that is guaranteed to shatter satanic opposition to His will. His Word is the divine scalpel that pierces through the outer tissues of unbelief, exposing the heart to the healing and disinfecting rays of God’s graces. His Word is the only thing that can accomplish His purpose in and for sinful men, and bring prosperity to the soul.”

The church at Jerusalem performed the ordinance of breaking of bread within the local church. Jesus commanded the local church to do this in “remembrance of Him.”

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32 Ibid., 27-28.
“The New Testament clearly demonstrates . . . that the practice of “breaking bread” or the Lord’s Supper, was one of the church’s central features. The regular practice of the church of Troas and the church of Corinth indicate this: (Acts 20:7, 1 Cor. 11:20-21, 33, and Acts 2:42).”33 Viola continues to state: “It is a re-proclamation of the Lord’s sacrificial death for us in the past. It is a re-declaration of His ever abiding nearness with us in the present. And it is a re-pronouncement of the hope of His coming in the future.”34

In Acts 2:41, the church was commissioned to baptize new believers. Continuing in Romans 5: 12-21, the apostle Paul makes a wonderful contrast between the “man of life and the man of death.”35 Romans 5:20 – 6:4 speaks of one’s new life in Christ. “Baptism testifies to our new identity. We are now identified with the Man of Life.”36 The church continued in a covenant relationship by sharing its convictions and lessons learned.

In Matthew 28:19-20, the church is commissioned to go out and share the good news and baptize believers. Continuing in Proverbs 29:18a, the church is the place where believers come for worship and vision. Without a divine vision from the Lord to his leaders, the church can become chaotic. The church is an institution which was built with the rebirth of believers in Jesus Christ and an institution which Jesus promised to grow and bless as seen in Mathew 16:18. Philippians 3:3, shows that the church is a gathering of like believers communicating in worship. Mark 10:29-30 demonstrates the loving aspect of the church. “In short, the church that is introduced in Scripture is a loving household, not a business. It is a living organism, not an

34 Ibid., 47.
36 Ibid., 67.
organization. It is the corporate expression of Jesus Christ, not a religious corporation. It is the community of the King, not a well-oiled, hierarchical machine.”

In Ephesians 5:25, Colossians 1:20, 1 Peter 1:18, and Revelation 1:5, Jesus Christ shed His own blood for His bride, the church. The process of being reborn and being made clean through the washing of blood and the extension of grace is what Heaven rejoices in as Christ’s church is growing. Continuing in Matthew 16:18, the church is the bride of Christ and it will be the victor locally and world-wide.

In Hebrews 10:22-25, His church is Spiritual for born again believers are Spiritual beings. A vibrant church is in the making as believers come together and allow the Holy Spirit to work. Acceptance of His work is not only family-building but it is true “koinonia,” seen in Ephesians. Believers as seen in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and 2 Peter 3:18, are for equipping, evangelism, edification and exultation. Titus 2:11, reminds the reader, His church is where born again believers go in an effort to be equipped and then sail off to bring the good news that changed their lives to others. This is the evangelistic arm of the local church.

Finally, the Biblical and Theological Basis can be found in Numbers 6:24-26 in the intimacy of God in seeing His Face. “We agree now sealed by the Holy Spirit with that presence until the day of our final redemption from this world. Yet God calls us to an intimate encounter as we pursue him with all our hearts.” In Matthew 21:13, His church shall be a place of Prayer where believers come and seek their heavenly Father. Continuing in Acts 4:31, Acts 1:14, and Acts 13:1-2,


“The disciples in Jerusalem responded with Prayer . . . the Christian movement could not have spread rapidly if it relied solely on a small group of “professionals” to share the gospel. The apostles and other Christian workers set the example and equipped ordinary believers to spread the good news wherever they lived and wherever they went. When the message was met with faith, Christianity quickly became an insider movement as the new converts spread the gospel.”

Prayer is an essential part of a believer’s ability to communicate with a Holy God. “In prayer, believers discover a level of trust and unity of heart that is truly supernatural, given our many differences in perspective and personality.”

**Theoretical Basis: Biblical Terms**

Qahal a Hebrew term that means: an assembly, a congregation, or a convocation. Eda’h is also a Hebrew term that means: a congregation, a company assembled together by appointment, or acting concertedly. Finally, Ekklesia a Greek term that means: called out.

The Old Testament identifies the people of God with specific terms. The Hebrew word qahal is defined as an assembly, a congregation, or a convocation (see Gen. 35:11, 49:6; Num. 22:4; Ezra. 10:12; Ps. 89:6; Prov. 5:14; Jer. 31:8; Mic. 2:5). A second word, eda’h, means a congregation, a company assembled together by appointment, or acting concertedly. John Hammett points out the distinction between the two terms: (‘Qahal embraces only those who have heard the call and are following it. Eda’h, on the other hand, is the permanent community into which one was born.’). Although these terms predate the church, they point to the existence of a people whom God called together for His purposes.

The church was born on the day of Pentecost (see Acts 2). In the New Testament the Greek word for church is ekklesia. It is derived from the verb ekkaleo, a compound of ek, meaning out, and kaleo, to call. Often the meaning is used to support the biblical doctrine of the church as a people called out by God and separated from the world. Though this is technologically true, the usage of the term in the secular Greek language does not support this meaning. Ekklesia (‘ came to stand for any assembly, regardless of its constituents or manner of convening. This broad use is evident even in the New Testament where a confused mob which had rushed into the theater at Ephesus is twice called an ekklesia (Acts 19: 32,41), and in the same context the term is used for ‘a lawful assembly’ (v.39)). In secular Greek ekklesia referred only to the assembly or meeting and never to the people who composed that assembly. When the people were not assembled, they were not considered an ekklesia. A new ekklesia came to be each time

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the people assembled. So while today we think of *ekklesia* as referring specifically to the New Testament church, at that time the word had more than one meaning...A survey of the New Testament reveals four clear uses of the term *ekklesia* to refer to a church or churches.41

**The Statement of Methodology**

This thesis will suggest a new but fundamental way for revitalizing dead and dying churches. Reintroducing dead and dying Southern Baptist churches to the keys of church health, if implemented, will produce good health which in turn will produce growth. A healthy church is the first step into becoming a revitalized church. The definition and concept of revitalization will be examined in depth. Once determined, the keys to fundamental implementation for a dead or dying Southern Baptist church will be defined and will demonstrate the urgency to employ these steps for successful health and growth.

In Chapter 2: A plan of consideration will be critically examined in retrospect to revitalizing dead and dying Southern Baptist churches. Definitions of healthy churches compared to dying churches will be used along with an explanation of how a dying church becomes healthy and in-turn becomes revitalized and growing again.

Chapter 3: A detailed look at the keys of effective fundamental change for the dead or dying Southern Baptist church will be thoroughly considered. A case study of (Beulah Baptist Church), historical background and data analysis will be collected and processed for clearer understanding of the Theological perspective in revitalization of a dead and dying SBC church.

Chapter 4: Methods of revitalization of Southern Baptist churches will be studied. Interviews will be conducted with pastors who are leading revitalized Southern Baptist churches. Individual churches will be surveyed along with Southern Baptist pastors and denominational

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leaders. Data analysis will be collected and processed for clearer understanding of the Theological perspective in revitalization of a dead and dying SBC church.

Chapter 5: An Action Plan will be introduced to demonstrate what steps should be taken in order to revitalize dead and dying SBC churches. In addition a correlation will be shown between church revitalization and church health. It will show how closely related they are. A revitalized church exists only if it is a healthy church. A healthy church can produce a growing and revived church.

In Conclusion: The importance of church revitalization within the Southern Baptist Convention of churches will be emphasized once again. When the Southern Baptist churches in need of revitalization are willing to accept the necessity of the keys of church health and begin implementing them, then the church will enter into its first phase of church revitalization. Out of a healthy church, a revitalized church that was about to close will see new life again.

**Review of Selected Literature**

Addison, Steve. *What Jesus Started: Joining the Movement Changing the World*. The author draws a comprehensive comparison from Jesus’ ministry to the ministry of the apostle Paul. Addison gives a historical analysis of why Jesus had to come. Jesus is the one who called out the first disciples. He was the instrument and the cornerstone in the first church. “I will build my church.” What Jesus began, the early church continued. “Acts of the Risen Lord; Missionaries Without Borders; Eyewitness News; Obedience School; Life in the First Church, and From Jerusalem to the World.” Jesus set the example to follow and declared the mission to carryout. In Addison’s conclusion, he discusses the work of the apostle Paul and his faith dwelling on what it must have looked like in the early church. Completing the task, he leaves the reader with a clear question of, “What is Jesus doing today?” The church, His church, must be
“Seeing the End; Connecting with People; Sharing the Gospel; Training Disciples; Gathering Communities; Multiplying Workers, and Starting Somewhere.”

Akin, Daniel L., David L. Allen and Ned L. Mathews eds. *Text Driven Preaching: God’s Word at the heart of Every Sermon*. The editors cover the elements of Text Driven Preaching from its historical beginnings to the present. It establishes the primacy for every pastor to examine the biblical mandate to preach and teach God’s Word. It expounds about the preacher and his ability and discipline to enrich the sermon by allowing preparation to succeed through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The contributors make a compelling argument for the Text Driven approach to accompany every sermon. In doing so, the church is not only blessed but its body grows spiritually. With “Exegesis for the Text-Driven Sermon; Biblical Genres and the Text-Driven Sermon, and Biblical Theology and Preaching” outlined, the editors literally help the local pastor/shepherd prepare a sermon like sermons accomplished in the Lukan narrative. Finally, delivery of the sermon is paramount in its reception. The application is the only aspect that draws the audience or congregation to act upon the Holy Spirit’s leading. The church is left to carry-out the work.

Anderson, Leith. *The Jesus Revolution: Learning From Christ’s First Followers*. The history of Jesus’s life cannot be contained just in what He did and accomplished in the short thirty-three years. There is so much more to the story. Anderson directs the reader through the “journey through the book of Acts.” Jesus’s revolutionary message changed the world and instituted the church. Here one sees that the power of Pentecost is still alive through the eyes of the Lukan text of the Acts. The church is the “bride of Christ.” Jesus will one day return for his bride, but until that day, His church has a responsibility to carry-out His work.
Callahan, Kennon L. *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church: Strong, Healthy Congregations Living in the Grace of God.* 2nd ed. In revitalizing churches that are dead or dying, churches must first become healthy again before they can become revived. Callahan’s new volume focuses on the importance of a healthy church to be more concerned with the “mission, sacrament and grace.”

Chambers, Andy. *Exemplary Life: A Theology of Church Life in Acts.* One of the greatest references for revitalizing dead and dying churches is found here with the reminder of how the New Testament Acts church looked. Chambers gives a clear understanding for the contemporary church of today about how a church should be presented to a world dying without any hope of rescue. He uses the Lukan narrative to reintroduce modern-day churches to the twenty-first century Lukan model. The reader sees “How We Lost Luke’s Theology of Church Life; Rhetoric Church Life in Acts; Portraits for the Individual and the Whole in an Exemplary Life; Gentile Churches, and How one Regains Luke’s Theology of Church Life.”

Crabb, Larry. *Real Church: Does It Exist? Can I Find It?* Crabb gives an exhaustive account of why churches seem to be failing in the twenty-first century. Churches, especially traditional orthodoxy churches, have seemed to lose their “footing” in recent years because of the “worship wars.” Here the reader is confronted with what “Real Church” should look like according to the New Testament. With a lack of biblical leadership, Crabb is asking questions that many people in congregations across the United States are wanting answers to but are afraid to ask. Biblical church vision has been replaced in some circles with desires of the flesh. God is not in it.

Dever, Mark. *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible.* Dever delivers an ecclesiology of church like no other theologian. He has laid out a clear pattern of biblical and theological inward
focus and is direct and clear. “He explains in detail what the Bible says about the church’s nature and purpose - what it is, what it’s for, and what it does.” The modern-day church has lacked clear direction in regard to biblical and theological ecclesiology and now clarity has been improved with not only sought after specifics but with personal application.

Dever, Mark. *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*. When addressing the stark task of revitalizing a dead or dying church, Dever gives the reader nine clearly defined marks of a healthy church. A revitalized church must become healthy before it can become revived. This book is a hands-on ministry plan for the local pastor.

Devine, Mark and Darrin Patrick. *Replant: How a Dying Church Can Grow Again*. A journey from overcoming church euthanasia to replanting and becoming a new church is discussed. Here the authors give great detail to the calling process and the struggles that follow in leading a historically healthy church which had declined considerably over the years into a thriving multiplying church with the help of a sister church family. This is one way a church specifically can be revived.

Dockery, David S. *Southern Baptist Consensus and Renewal: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Proposal*. Here Dockery is challenging Southern Baptist churches to renew their calling and commitment to “the gospel, biblical authority of the Scriptures, and their confessional heritage.” As the Southern Baptist Convention of churches is struggling in the twenty-first century, Dockery lays out a concise plan on how to reignite Southern Baptist churches so they will be energized sharing the gospel message and building on the legacy which has been established with our cooperative program.

Dockery, David S., Ray Van Neste and Jerry Tidwell. *Southern Baptists, Evangelicals, and the Future of Denominationalism*. It is clear that denominationalism has suffered over the
last several years. Questions are being raised about whether “evangelicalism, denominationalism, or conventionalism” will even survive within the twenty-first century as was the case in the twentieth century. Here Dockery and his contributors have offered great insight into the future aspects and effects of what a Southern Baptist Convention might look like if changes are not put in place now for tomorrow. These insights have been championed by many but regarded as old news by others. Southern Baptist leaders who have contributed to this book are helping evangelical Southern Baptist churches maneuver in a dire time within the convention. The Cooperative Program for missions is at stake if cooperation does not return.

Dockery, David S. Editor. *Southern Baptist Identity: An Evangelical Denomination Faces the Future*. Many challenges face the evangelical church in America for a number of reasons. Here one sees a great multitude of advice from the contributors for the Southern Baptist Convention of churches as it looks at itself in the mirror. The Southern Baptist church of yesterday is being replaced by a church that seems to hold little of what Southern Baptists have believed and practiced, and many are abandoning the name Baptist altogether. Dockery and the contributors give clear direction for the current century. The Southern Baptist church’s identity is not what it used to be. Even Southern Baptists are having trouble defining what a Southern Baptist should be in the twenty-first century. Here, clarity puts much of these questions to rest and a re-emphasis on fundamentals is called upon to help churches and their leaders navigate through the “minefields” ahead.

Eliff, Tom. *A Passion for Prayer: Experiencing Deeper Intimacy with God*. Eliff shares some personal insights into intimacy with God. With any revitalized church, prayer is a key component to good health. Passionate and intimate prayer is focused on within the individual and the corporate body of believers.
Gardner, Clinton E. *The Church as a Prophetic Community*. In many circles of believers, the church in the United States has been broken down into different “social classes.” Gardner gives a compelling argument for overcoming barriers for the New Testament church when dealing with “class, race, and religious pluralism.” Furthermore, he gives information from the Old and the New Testament about the church’s call from the Lord. He finalizes his summation with what is seen in the post-modern viewpoints of the day. He points toward a Prophetic Community . . . one that needs to be given attention.

Hellerman, Joseph H. *When the Church was a Family: Recapturing Jesus’ Vision for Authentic Christian Community*. Not only is Hellerman’s call to the twenty-first century church needed, it is “prophetic.” Here can be seen the fabric of what a family attitude of the church is from the eyes of the New Testament and the ancient world. He gives practical application to churches regarding understanding of who they are and who made them the way they are.

Henderson, Daniel. *Transforming Prayer: How Everything Changes When You Seek God’s Face*. Every church revitalizer is definitive about the necessity of prayer for renewing life in a dead or dying church. Jesus said, “My house shall be a house of prayer.” Prayer is one of the fundamental keys to be used for any biblical New Testament church. Here we see how Scripture Fed and Spirit Led prayer is what is needed in the worship and intimacy that must accompany any healthy church.

Macchia, Stephen A. *Becoming a Healthy Church: Ten Traits of a Vital Ministry*. This book is a practical hands-on picture of what a healthy church might look like. Here, his Ten Traits of a Healthy Church can cultivate a church growth model after the church becomes healthy.
MacNair, Donald J. *The Practices of a Healthy Church: Biblical Strategies for Vibrant Church Life and Ministry.* Here one sees the practicality of reliance on biblical directives for church health and growth that follows. In identifying church health, the challenges can be seen that are facing the church especially the twenty-first century church. MacNair gives practical application for helping churches stay healthy or to become healthy.

McGavran, Donald A. Revised and Edited Peter Wagner. *Understanding Church Growth.* 3rd ed. As one of the greatest missiologists, McGavran helps the reader understand the church’s mission. Even in the twenty-first century, his research and tutelage is still sought out for the local church and its mission.

Miller, Calvin. *The Vanishing Evangelical: Saving the Church from Its Own Success by Restoring What Really Matters.* The evangelical church in America has accepted so much of the post-modernity pressures that evangelicalism is beginning to look like the very thing it has fought against for years. If the trend continues with the acceptance of worldly and cultural abbreviations to truth only found in God’s Word, then evangelicalism as we know it will become extinct. This book deals with this great tragedy that the evangelical church is facing today. No evangelical church is secure, not even Southern Baptist churches.

Mohler, R. Albert, Jr. *He Is not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World.* This book is a direct link for the church pastor to learn how to stand in the face of a culture that seeks appeasement. The church pastor or shepherd is the leader under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is alive in the hearts and minds of current trends and postmodernity pastors, it is not evident in their preaching. Mohler delivers a stunning rebuke and encouragement for the pastor of the twenty-first century church. “Preach the word!”
Olson, David T. *The American Church in Crisis*. Over 200,000 churches have been researched about the effects of congregational health based on the population growth of United States. This is a treasure trove of research on statistical analysis of why churches in America are in a state of decline. Its insight should help any church struggling to identify areas of need.

Rainer, Thom S. *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap*. Rainer gives us a story of thirteen churches that broke with the dealings of dying or death to health and growth. This is a first time account of how a church came back from basically being dead or dying to experience new health and growth. The book is based on biblical leadership and the fundamentals of what is seen in the Lukan text in Acts. This book offers methods for churches that are no longer effective to become alive and dynamic.

Rainer, Thom S. *The Book of Church Growth: History, Theology, and Principles*. Not only does Rainer look at the biblical aspects of any church growth movement, but he looks at specific elements of ministry such as Sunday School, Fellowship, Visitation, Discipleship Programs, and Governmental Structure. These elements are all part of a growth model when dealing with an ineffective church. Unfortunately, too many churches seek growth before they seek health. It is imperative and instructive for the health to come before the attempt to grow is made. Rainer makes the case for that scenario.

Rainer, Thom S. *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them*. This book presents a clear understanding of what the “unchurched” think about church and the people in church. Rainer gives great insight into what people’s attitudes are for the church in the twenty-first century. Many churches that have adopted a post-modernity, thought that church should match what the culture looks like, but Rainer finds out from his statistical
analysis that it is just the opposite. The unchurched desire authentic, biblical leadership, and the preaching of God’s text driven Word above all else.

Rainer, Thom S. and Daniel L. Akin. Vibrant Church: Becoming a Healthy Church in the Twenty-First Century. Is the church, especially the Southern Baptist church, relevant in the twenty-first century? This is a question that was asked in this book. Rainer helps the reader, pastor, and denominational leader to recognize how to have a “Vibrant” growing and healthy church in our day and age. He explores the core mission and gives specifics about decision making applications for churches to follow if they choose to be a relevant church in their community again.

Reeder, Harry L. and David Swavely. From Embers to Flame: How God Can Revitalize Your Church. In today’s world, a vibrant church needs encouragement as much as the dying church because the Biblical mandate for all evangelical churches is Jesus. Here we see Biblical principles that shape the church. Having personally been involved in revitalizing several churches, Reeder helps to challenge churches with the possibility of not accepting death, but accepting life as Jesus offered to those who saw no hope.

Stetzer, Ed and Mike Dodson. Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too. This writing gives a practical example about how if 300 churches have made a turn around, then any church can turn around. Here the practicality of making the tough decisions to be either legacy leavers or legacy losers is seen. The church that is dead or dying has a choice to make. Will they choose life or death? That is to be seen. Here we see that when Biblical mandates are put into place, and practical applications are applied, not only does health return but growth ensues.
Stetzer, Ed and Thom Rainer. *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations*. This book gives what no other book has given to date; it gives a rating or scorecard on where churches really are in the important aspects of church life. It does not focus mainly only numbers and budgets, but on “discipleship, accountability, and spirituality.” These are the key areas to observe to determine whether a church is really healthy or if it is just an unhealthy church with a lot of people and a lot of money. This book’s stats are very applicable for today’s church.

Vergo, Terry. *The Spirit-Filled Church: Finding Your Place in God’s Purpose*. This book is rich in acknowledging the Holy Spirit and His office and ability to increase the church. The Holy Spirit does not receive the recognition that He deserves because so many people have been reviled by the misguided charismatic movement. Vergo shows the reader the humble, and gracious side of how the Holy Spirit grows the church and why He does it. It is by transforming grace and the truth in the Word of God that the change takes place. Trying to separate either from the other fails. The Holy Spirit increases the size and the health of the congregation, but it takes faith to allow Him to accomplish the task.

White, Thomas, Jason G. Dueshing and Malcolm B. Yarnell III. Editors. *Restoring Integrity in Baptist Churches*. This book is urgently needed in the local Baptist church. Too many Baptist churches seem to have lost their way in this post-modern world in which we live. This book clearly communicates the major truths and doctrines that enable Baptists to be Baptist. “Church Membership, Baptism, The Lord’s Supper, Church Discipline, and The Priesthood of Believers” are all key elements of who Baptists have historically been. The church needs to return to its roots in order to follow the “GPS” instructions.

Viola gives clear treatment to the modern church’s misappropriations from the New Testament church’s intent in the twenty-first century. He uses clarity which is needed most in today’s vocabulary. He does examine the “House” church model and its applications in the early church. This is a practical book for practical application in changing a church from dead and dying too healthy and growing.
CHAPTER TWO

CHURCH REVITALIZATION: WHAT’S IT GOING TO TAKE?

The term church revitalization must first be defined and discussed prior to a church’s being able to comprehend fully the effect it will have on dead or dying churches. Church revitalization is rather new in its origin and application to churches. The term became heavily used in the late 1990’s, but has since enlarged even more since Thom Rainer and others began promoting it. It is frequently talked about by ordinary lay leadership in churches or pastors when the church has begun to decline even though the church size, location, marketing, style, and membership may have peaked in the past. “However, quantitative development is not an essential part but just one of many aspects of church growth.”

Church growth is the terminology often used to measure whether a church is in need of revitalization, but to better understand church revitalization, the precise meaning of the church according to the text found in Acts, Chapter 2:37-47 should be revisited.

Now when they hear this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself. And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying “Be saved from this perverse generation!” So then, those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house; they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.

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This passage is often referenced when trying to understand what the New Testament church should be. In conclusion, the church is the one place where repented and born again believers in Jesus Christ can gather together to worship the God of Heaven and the Bible. Thus, the church is a place where brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus pray together, worship together, learn about the teachings of Christ together, are of one mind together, praising God together, and giving to each other as one another has needs.

These verses in Acts demonstrate what the New Testament church looked like and explain its performance, “What shall we do?” The people were instructed to repent of their sins, be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit. Thus, people continued to ask questions, such as, “Who can do this?” Peter explained this: Salvation in Christ Jesus is for anyone who the Holy Spirit draws to salvation through repentance.433

Growth in the early church was completely dependent upon the “Lord, adding to His church.”4 “Concern for evangelism and church growth is an essential part of the Christian faith and an irreplaceable part of the work of the church. The church is the Body of Christ that brings people from all nations to faith and obedience as it proclaims the gospel effectively and incorporates all believers into ongoing churches.”5 If a church is seen to be a growing congregation, it is normally not seen as a candidate for revitalization.

In trying to understand what a church must look like in order to be considered for church revitalization, one must first have a clear understanding of the definition of church revitalization.

3 1 Peter 1: 1-9 (Paraphrased).
4 Ibid., 2:47 (NASB).
5 Donald A. McGavran, Understanding Church Growth (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), xii.
“Church Revitalization is a movement within protestant evangelicalism, which emphasizes the missional work of turning a plateaued, declining, or rapidly declining church around and moving it back towards growth and health.”

Cheney describes church revitalization as a missional work of “moving” a church back to growth and health. As seen in the text in Acts 2:37-47, growth and health are evident and need to be examined in order to know what a church should look like before it needs to be revitalized.

Looking closely at the text, it is clear that “the Lord added to His church daily.” If the Lord is adding to His church, is the church growing and healthy? Donald A McGavran is considered by most to be the father of what some call the “Modern Church Growth Movement.”

It is imperative that one look at church growth and church health in correlation to church revitalization as stated by Cheney.

The definition of church growth is “humane action: the strong bearing the burdens of the weak and introducing to the hungry the bread by which humans live. Nevertheless, God’s obedient servants seek church growth not as an exercise in improving humanity, but because the extension of the church is pleasing to God. Church growth is faithfulness.”

Church growth is then God’s people being obedient to carrying out the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:16-20.

Stephen A. Macchia sheds light on this subject of church health; he lists ten essential ingredients for a church to be healthy as follows:

- God’s Empowering Presence
- God-Exalting Worship
- Spiritual Disciplines
- Learning and Growing in Community
- A Commitment to Loving and Caring Relationships
- Servant-
Leadership Development, An Outward Focus, Wise Administration and Accountability, Networking with the Body of Christ, and Stewardship and Generosity.\textsuperscript{10}

When researching the findings of these ten ingredients, this researcher found all ten were present in the early church as stated in Acts, Chapter 2.

God’s Empowering Presence was certainly evident when Peter was preaching after the Holy Spirit had fallen on the day of Pentecost. One sees in Acts 2: 34-36,

\begin{quote}
for it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: The Lord said to my Lord, ‘sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’ Therefore, let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ - this Jesus whom you crucified.” God’s power was not only present, but it was so powerful that the people were “pierced to the heart.”\textsuperscript{4611}
\end{quote}

God’s Exalting Worship is not in chronological order as is stated in the text, but it is certainly visible. The people were worshiping and praising God through prayer, singing, and having favor with all the people. Exalting worship is more than opinions about the style of music liked or disliked. The Apostle Paul defines the act of exalting worship as found in Romans 12:1 as one’s “Spiritual Act of Worship.” The believer’s act of worship, as seen in Acts Chapter 2, is communicated to all believers and states that exalted worship is God-centered worship, and as the Apostle Paul penned under the direction of the Holy Spirit, a twenty-four hour-a-day act.

Spiritual Disciplines are certainly seen in the Acts 2 church. “Immediately following the response of the 3,000, Luke launched into his first description of church life beginning with four commitments made by the new believers in Acts 2:42.”\textsuperscript{13} As Chambers states, there are at least

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10}Stephen A. Macchia, \textit{Becoming A Healthy Church: 10 Traits of a Vital Ministry} (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 7.
\item \textsuperscript{11}Acts 2:37 (NASB).
\end{itemize}
four disciplines the early Christians maintained and committed themselves to: “the teaching of the Apostles, fellowship with other believers, breaking of bread together, and prayer.”

Throughout Luke’s writing in Acts, the importance of commitment is stressed. The verb *proskartero* in Greek is used which means: serious and dedicated commitment.

Learning and Growing in Community was a new understanding for the early Christian. As a new believer, each one became new - new as a community; new to each other, and began to have to learn and grow in new ways. This was not a human characteristic, but a holy one. “The Holy Spirit formed them into a community, not merely an aggregation of autonomous individuals.”

Luke uses summary narratives to imply that the community of believers was a new group of citizens in the light of the change that had occurred in the lives of the early church. It is imperative that the church, from its inception through today, know and grow into the likeness of Christ in the faith community.

A Commitment to Loving and Caring Relationships was a common theme in Luke’s theology in the book of Acts, and Chambers cites many aspects of an exemplary life among the early believers. It is a common thread with Luke that each believer be committed to loving and caring in the Body of Christ. “Luke describes the way the believers shared in each other’s lives with two phrases. First, they were “together” (*epi to auto*), which is a word meaning common

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This researcher summarizes that a healthy church must have a loving and caring group of believers joined together who are committed to each other as Luke described in the early church.

Servant Leadership Development is the act of developing leaders out of believers who have devoted themselves to being servants of Jesus Christ. When Christ ascended into heaven, he promised that a “Helper” would come. The “Helper” is the Holy Spirit. The Apostles were extended supernatural power by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and the believers who had just become new servants of Jesus Christ were being led and taught by the Apostles’ teaching. “Teaching and being taught are major themes in Luke and Acts. With the phrase “the apostles’ teaching,” Luke stresses both the authority of the apostles and the authoritative content of their teaching. The events of Pentecost firmly established the authority of the apostles as leaders in the Jerusalem church as Jesus intended.”

Luke’s narrative certainly suggests that development in servant leadership was common because believers were spreading the Gospel message to friends and neighbors in each community.

An Outward Focus was certainly seen in the early church. The book of Luke paints a picture of the body of believers as a recognized body (church) revealing the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and being recognized as a kind and goodwill group caring for the city and its inhabitants. “Luke’s exemplary portrait makes clear that not only did the believers love one another, they also loved their neighbors (Lev. 19:18; Luke 10:27), the people of Jerusalem.

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18 John 16:7 (NASB).

God’s grace changed their lives, and it caused them to love the city where they lived and to practice hospitality toward her people.” The hospitality that was shown toward the city was an active presentation of who the worshipers and servants of Jesus Christ’s were and should be today.

Wise Administration and Accountability are clearly seen at Pentecost as the Holy Spirit arrives on the scene. God’s administration and accountability is handed down through His calling out His leaders and His work in the form of the Holy Spirit. “Luke’s placement of the belief that the Holy Spirit gives birth to the church. The Spirit of God takes the initiative and drives events throughout Luke and the Acts. In the Gospel the Holy Spirit filled those who heralded the Messiah’s coming (Luke 1:15, 41, 67; 2:25-27).” God’s men who were chosen were given instructions to carry out the call that God had placed on each one’s life. The Holy Spirit impressed upon them how to administer His will, and each one was accountable to God. The people were to listen to the teachings of those men whom Jesus Christ had called, the apostles. The apostles had to be accountable to the Holy Spirit to teach and preach what had been given them to say. For example, on the day of Pentecost,

Peter’s sermon was an exposition of several Old Testament texts from Joel and the Psalms, which he applied to the risen Jesus. In his sermon, Peter confronted the complicity of his hearers in the death of Jesus (Acts 2:22-23, 35). His message culminated in a call for an obedient response, and He commanded his hearers to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:37-38).


21 Ibid., 62-63.

22 Ibid., 63.
Networking with the Body of Christ was not as cliché as it is often referred to today. It must be understood exactly who made up the Body of Christ. These were individuals and families who had radically been saved, and each one’s life had been changed. Many of these families and individuals became friends with those that they may not have known or trusted before. Each had a common bond with the other because of his bond with his new Lord and Savior. They became close friends and were often responsible for making sure the other had food or other necessities of life. There was certainly a network consisting of anyone from growers to carpenters to business people to bread makers who came to become friends and also brothers and sisters in Christ. “However, friendship alone did not produce such openness and unselfishness toward others. Rather, it was the presence and power of the Holy Spirit and the impact of a new standing with Christ, whose death many of these converts recently cheered (Acts 2:36; Luke 23:21, 23, 35).”

Stewardship and Generosity was seen in a radical and uncompromising fashion. Relatively new converts would generously give to help a fellow Christ follower regardless of cost or sacrifice. This radical sacrifice would often come from selling possessions such as land. Not everyone sold all they had, but many found the new freedom in Christ rewarding to the point of communal payment for things the church body needed. It is clear in Scripture that not all sold all they had, but many did. “Believers regularly sold their possessions and goods and gave to anyone among them who had a need. The word possessions (kte’ma) can also be translated “property” and is often used to refer to a field or track of land.”

The new believers were practicing what had been taught by Jesus’s instructions to the disciples in (John 12:6).

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24 Ibid.
Stewardship and generosity are more than just saving and giving; they are also about planning and making sacrifices.

**Understanding a Dead or Dying Church**

As stated above, the early church was vibrant and clear in purpose and obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Luke’s account gives clear understanding that people were being converted after hearing the Gospel preached. The Holy Spirit was drawing people to Himself unto salvation. Christ’s followers were being empowered by God’s presence. Each one was being impacted by the teaching of God’s leadership to those whom He had called and were being taught by His leading by the Holy Spirit. Each one was experiencing awesome worship through prayer and supplication to God’s exaltation and exultation. Each one was disciplined in his or her duties as found in the teachings of the apostles. There was a sense of growing in the community and love for each other as shown by the sacrifices being made to help consistently in turn or deed. The church’s hospitality was shown to each community with goodness and worth. The servants of God were being developed and were eager to learn so that each one of them could eventually teach one’s family or friends about the love of Christ and the freedom in Christ that believers received. The early church had a clear and concise mandate that was followed with an outward focus on telling others about what had happened in their life. In being outwardly focused, the church was able to network and communicate the message showing kindness toward others so that children and adults alike could become imitators of God through Christ Jesus. A sense of sacrifice was second nature to them because each person’s own sin nature had been forgiven and freedom finally existed for both the Gentile and the Jew.

These fledgling communities lived in contradiction to the world around them and saw themselves as an entirely new expression of humanity. But today, much of the Western church is merely an increasingly irrelevant and powerless reflection of society’s values.
and priorities. The church has ceased bearing witness to the dynamic and all-encompassing kingdom of God and has instead become an end to itself.\textsuperscript{25}

Much time had passed before John penned the words of Revelation, but in studying the texts found therein, it is seen that the words of Jesus stated by John to the seven churches revealed that each church was found to have some type of blemish. At the church at Ephesus, Jesus found that the church had “left its first love,”\textsuperscript{49} Jesus himself. The church at Smyrna had allowed money to cloud its judgment causing it to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. Pergamum church listened to false teachers and allowed such teaching to corrupt the minds of believers which caused much immorality. The message Jesus delivered to Thyatira was His disdain and disapproval of those who followed after Jezebel and her ways of immorality which led to great sickness and tribulation. Jesus’s message to Sardis was that many in this church were lost and without Christ. Their name had not been recorded in the \textit{Lamb’s Book of Life}. Those who were not found needed to repent and be saved and stop pretending to be Christ followers. The message Jesus had for the church at Philadelphia was that because of their faith and trust they had received a little power. The church’s power was little because it had not been led with the full assurance of and total reliance on the Holy Spirit. To Laodicea, Jesus said that because they are just “Lukewarm that He wants to spit them out of His mouth.”\textsuperscript{50}

Like all the seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation, many churches today are irrelevant because of a dead or dying mentality that has been brought on by at least ten factors.

\textsuperscript{25} Mike Erre, \textit{Death by Church: Rescuing Jesus from His Followers – Recapturing God’s Hope for His People} (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2009), Back Cover.

\textsuperscript{26} Revelation 2:4 (NASB).

\textsuperscript{27} Revelation 3:16 (HCSB).
Ten Factors of Dead and Dying Churches

Church revitalization expert and church growth analyst, Thom Rainer cites ten factors of dead and dying churches.

**Slow Decline in Outward Focus and Community Neglect**

“It is rare for a long-term church member to see erosion in his or her church. Growth may come rapidly, but decline is usually slow, imperceptibly slow. This slow erosion is the worst type of decline for churches, because the members have no sense of urgency to change.”

**Decline Due to the Success of the Past’s Glory Years**

In Luke’s narrative in Acts 2, the act of obedience is seen for the Christ follower. Each follower was to be obedient to the apostle’s teaching and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, as time has passed, many churches and its leadership have fallen away because of lack of obedience due to the fact that no one wants to change. The expression, “we have never done it that way before” became an epic line of the churches in history that lacked enough faith to try new ways. Like the church at Philadelphia in John’s Revelation, the church had just enough of little power to have done good work in the past, but not enough power to change who the church became in the present, resulting in death.

**Rejection of Hospitality to the Community as Seen in Acts 2**

As one sees in Acts 2:47, the believers cared for the people of Jerusalem. The believers were exemplary in giving and sacrifice. “They ate together with glad and sincere hearts. They praised God daily, and they had good will toward all the people in their community.”

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was the church hospitable to the community, but the community was hospitable to the church. Because it was contagious, there was a level of excitement at what was going on as this phenomenon was becoming more popular.

**Stewardship and Generosity Failed to Meet Sacrificial Levels for the Sake of Christ**

In the early New Testament church, according to Luke’s narrative, the early Christians gave not only generously but gave sacrificially for the sake of Christ. The sake of Christ is an interesting term which means the benefit or good of something to come for Christ. Declining churches have tended to try to hoard money in the bank and neglect neglected to have a sacrificial attitude by meeting the needs of the congregants.

Churches don’t have to be broke or wealthy to be dying. It’s not a matter of how much you have or don’t have. It’s what you do with your money, or what your attitude is about the money. Some churches hold on to funds because the money itself becomes the focus, and they no longer asks how the church can make a difference for the Kingdom with the money. They accumulate because they fear not having enough money, or not having enough money means they can’t spend any money even if they did have it.  

**Slowed then Stopped Going In to All the World**

Too many churches gave up on fulfilling the Great Co-Mission because of the attitude of “someone else will do it.” One of the reason deceased churches have slowed or stopped moving ahead is because each one has lost its “First Love” as told to the church at Ephesus. Unfortunately the dependence upon Christ alone has been stifled by personal discomfort. “Going in Christ’s power requires effort. Certainly the results are dependent upon Him, but obedience is work.” Dead or declining churches have gotten lazy and are not interested in truly

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31 Revelation 2:4-7 (NASB).

putting in the work that is required for success. Church success is all about obedience, but too many church are just disobedient.

**Indulging Yourself While Pushing the Cross**

There is a span of declining or dead churches that are indulging themselves while pushing the cross instead of “denying themselves and carrying the cross.”\(^{52,33}\) “A church cannot survive long-term where members are focused on their own preferences: My Music Style; My desired length and order of worship services; My desired color and design of buildings and rooms; My activities and programs, and My need of ministers and staff.”\(^{34}\)

**Poor Pastoral Call and Lack of Spirit-Filled Preaching**

“The role of the Spirit in Acts does not end at Pentecost. He appears frequently in Acts empowering witness to Christ and the planting of churches to the ends of the earth . . . The Holy Spirit brought the church into existence through the Spirit-filled preaching of the good news about Jesus Christ.”\(^{35}\) Declining and eventually dead churches tend to have had short pastor tenure and lack luster preaching. Unfortunately there is a movement that lends itself to forgoing the need of a call from God to lead God’s church. Church has become more of a social gathering to meet the societal needs of a culture and wanes for the hope that is only found in the saving grace in Jesus Christ. Jesus warned the church at Pergamum of this very contagious sin. A man who stands to speak for Christ but who does not even know Christ and is certainly not called to preach for Christ, is an apostate of major proportion.

**Prayer Became Something to Do Instead of Something Done**

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\(^{33}\) Matthew 16:24 (NASB).


Dead and dying churches often think of prayer as something to do and something that needs to be done, but in its early decline they have neglected the teachings of scripture found in Acts about the early church’s teaching on prayer.

Prayer is a major theme in the books of Luke and Acts. Luke portrays Jesus as a person in constant communion with His heavenly Father through prayer. Jesus taught His disciples to pray in Luke 11:1-13; 18:1-8, although they struggled at times to remain focused in prayer (Luke 22:40, 46). After the resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Holy spirit; however, the believers became devoted to prayer, both individual and corporate, as seen as a major theme that runs throughout Acts.36

In Acts 2:42, the early Christians were devoted to prayer. The word “devoted” is a passionate form of commitment. This researcher recalls Dr. Daniel Henderson stating that “passionate prayer is the backbone to a transformational life.”5337 Prayer is the way of direct personal communication with a Heavenly Father. “When the early Jerusalem church members devoted themselves to prayer, they were doing a lot more than reading names off a list. They were fervent, intense, and passionate about prayer. They had no doubt that God was listening and responding. A failure to pray was tantamount to a failure to breathe.”38 Just as with life, when a church stops breathing, it dies.

The Church, Lost Its Way

A church in decline normally shows signs of loss of direction. In many cases it is the result of poor leadership. The right leadership is a necessity to the right direction. Emphasized emphatically in God’s Word is the revelation of the Word empowering leaders to lead as Jesus did with the early disciples. These men were empowered to lead His church, the Bride of Christ.


The vision and master plan had been set, and all these men had to do was follow the directions that were given to them by the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, too many churches seem to have lost the vision set forth in the Scriptures. Too many churches have called leaders who have no vision because of lack of study of God’s Word and supplication through prayer. The Holy Spirit is often put in a corner, and the church is being run by leaders who think they know best.

All churches fit into two categories: those with vision and those without. The ones with vision have a clear sense of direction and destiny. Those without vision seem lost and befuddled, but … when a congregation becomes a people of vision, faith, and expectation and they can hold the vision in their hands, they become the embodiment of the vision!39

**Church Become Fat and Lazy**

Two of societal’s “Seven Deadliest Sins” are viewed in the last factor. The church has allowed itself to become fat and lazy. Fat or Gluttony is excess in eating and drinking: “for drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.”5440 Churches that are dead or dying tend to be more concerned with what they have such as buildings, land, and money in the bank rather than on the Great Co-Mission. The second of these two sins is laziness. Laziness is being disinclined to activity and not energetic or vigorous: “The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns, but the path of the upright is a highway.”5541 Secondly, churches have tended to become lazy, mainly due to the lack of vision. Because of lack of vision, “the people perish.”5642 “Vision unifies people to be joined together to live, go after the dream, pray, worship, grow, change, marry, raise families and go through hard times and good times.


40 Proverbs 23:21 (KJV).

41 Proverbs 15:19 (KJV).

42 Proverbs 29: 18 (KJV).
Living like Jesus and sharing His love is done both individually and in community. We live like Jesus and build His Church together. The vision of being a part of building Christ’s church should cause every church to stay in touch and focused on being obedient to the leadership of the Holy Spirit and being less focused on buildings, land or money in the bank.

The Evaluation and Five Theories of Church Revitalization

Theory One

Tom Cheney in his book, Thirty-Eight Church Revitalization Models for the Twenty-First Century suggests seven pillars are essential in church revitalization. Below is a graph demonstrating those seven pillars.

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Cheney’s church revitalization method is revolved around these seven pillars to renovate the church. Each pillar seems to try to realign the church back to its biblical direction as laid out in Luke’s account in Acts.

A church in need of revitalization is described as one where; there is the plateauing or declining after a phase of recent or initial expansion; then the church experiences the beginning of a high turn-over of lay leaders; there becomes a shorter duration of stay of fully assimilated people with the work; the church morale and momentum level drops; the church coasts for a brief time and then drops again, only to see the cycle of decline repeated again and again.44

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When studying the Gentile churches in Acts, a constant theme building morale and momentum is seen even though the churches had begun to be persecuted. The churches in Samaria, Antioch, Ephesus, and Troas were all exemplary in striving to make servant leadership a priority in hopes of assimilating the people for the work of ministry. As a contrast to so many churches today, Luke never called attention to the work of ministry by the members or converts but always gave God the glory for the growth and work. “All three references to numerical growth credit God’s gracious intervention in the city.”

Cheney’s second pillar tends to be focused on re-focusing the growing church. The difference between Cheney’s second pillar and third pillar, re-visioning seems to be that refocusing deals more with keeping a growing church focused on the main aspects of ministry that are successful in helping the church to continue to grow. The re-visioning pillar seems to put more emphasis on helping a struggling church beginning to decline, restructure or re-vision in order to re-capture the vision the church might have once had.

Every church has its own divine destiny, because each is led by God just like each individual is uniquely led. The church vision is tied to those who lead the vision, along with their spiritual maturity, integrity, wisdom, preparedness, unique gifts and personal experiences. Vision for a church always has two dimensions: the big picture and the implementation.

The fourth pillar in Cheney’s seven, focuses on church renewal. It is apparent that the reader must infer that church leadership must get back to the basics in spiritual enrichment with individual application. In other words, each leader in the church must reclaim or be revived or renewed in one’s prayer, meditation, and deep devotional life. The Holy Spirit is the main player


in this pillar, and the church leadership must regain an understanding of who is in charge. It is of utmost importance for the church body to have a renewing in order to grow as the body of Christ. “The body is more than a mere collection of individuals. It is a spiritual organism. Believers in Christ are united in His body because they are, through regeneration, united with the Head.”

Many churches that were started in the twentieth century gained a great deal of influence especially in the early to mid-century, but in the latter part of the twentieth century, many churches tended to lose that influence and become churches irrelevant in the community where they were located. This scenario leads the reader to Cheney’s fifth pillar of reinvention. “A church that is experiencing the need for reinvention must take seriously the need and make the commitment for reinventing itself, revaluing itself, reforming itself, and reinvigorating itself to fit the new context.” In some instances, a church might use its “new context” to think there is a new way other than the way taught in Scripture to lead the church. Many churches have fallen prey to societal dogmas of man-made church growth principles that have led the church to stray or become a church completely foreign to the biblical mandate given by Luke’s account, found in the book of Acts. Although, this researcher believes that Cheney has a clearer understanding and is not implying the latter, but stating that if a church has gotten off track and gone down a road that leads to no-where, then the church needs to be reinvented to bring it back in line with the teachings of Scripture.

The sixth pillar as described by Cheney is restoration. According to Cheney, restoration should be used in situations where a climatic event occurs in the church causing the community to possibly reject the church as a whole or where a church has been beaten up

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because the devil has eaten away at trust with the leadership and members which have led to division within the body.\(^{49}\)

When researching what causes a church to need restoration, one may discover that church division was brought on by divisive individuals who kept a conflict stirred up all the time. This type of influx in the local body should be dealt with in a firm but loving way. Too many times because of weak leadership and church politics, churches tend to allow fighting and divisive and hurtful sentiment to do an end-run around the teaching of Scripture and the leading of the Holy Spirit by way of personal opinion or personal and corrupt agendas that tend to lead to destruction in need of restoration.

The last of the seven pillars listed by Cheney is restarting. A church may restart when the original church closes or gets to the point it feels it can no longer sustain a viable church body. Normally, the church has died down to just a handful of members and the church seeks to either close its doors or allow a new body to come in and restart a new church. This researcher has personal experience in a church restart. Research tends to show that generally, church restarts are successful ways to regain momentum possibly lost due to stagnate membership or community irrelevancy. Restarting is essentially starting over. In many cases, it allows a new church to not be tied down to policies and procedures or rules that had stifled the previous church. It allows the restarted church to throw out all the things the previous church did wrong and celebrate with the things the previous church did right. In many instances, this allows the previous church’s heritage to continue to live on.

A quick rundown of the thirty-eight diverse models or methodologies being utilized in the field of church revitalization and renewal is perhaps the best place to begin. Not all of these models are being used in a wide variety, but they are being used. While I acknowledge God does not have a magic pill that we all can use, here are actual models

being used for the work of church revitalization and renewal. Some of them are often used while others are utilized less frequently. Here is a list of these models.50

Table. 1 Cheyney’s Thirty-Eight Models of Revitalization

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<td>33. Church Merger</td>
<td>34. Affinity Based</td>
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<tr>
<td>35. Mother to Daughter Based</td>
<td>36. Breaking Growth Obstacles</td>
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<td>37. Relocation, and</td>
<td>38. Bi-vocational Church Revitalization Model</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theory Two**

Secondly, another set of church revitalizers with a little different take on the subject of church revitalization is Kevin G. Harney and Bob Bouwer. Both men attended Western Theological Seminary. The book that has inspired many to turn around a church in decline is known as *The U-Turn Church: New Direction for Health and Growth*. An attempt to evaluate the theory found in *U-Turn Church* model is one way of projecting a clear plan to help churches that are in trouble and that are willing to get back to the biblical mandate found for a New Testament Church. *U-Turn Church* is primarily about a journey of two distinct churches (Faith

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and Corinth), and how each one separately turned from decline to a superior healthy growth model.

In researching this particular model for revitalization, it is clear to see eleven factors that Harney and Bouwer use to inject life and healthy growth back into the church and its mandate found in the Scripture. Each church began with what is referred to as the “beginning of the U-Turn.” When evaluating Luke’s account found in Acts, the early church certainly had what is described in the *U-Turn Church* within its first four main factors in being able to turn a church back to its foundational structure. The first four factors include: “Holy Zeal, Urgency, Crystal-Clear Vision and the Power of Prayer.” Each of these four factors was definitely present in Acts.

The early church certainly had “Holy Zeal.” The church was unified and exhibited repentance and faith. The church believed in baptism, and it showed members’ joy and zeal by each other’s strong convictions. “The early church was composed of persons who were thoroughly converted to Christ and committed to one another in the church.” In addition to “Holy Zeal,” the early church did show signs of an urgency. The church was in its infancy and it had an automatic urgency to spread the good news of the Gospel. Clear vision and prayer were also clearly defined in Acts. These four main factors in the re-birth of Faith Church and Corinth Church were present in Luke’s account in Acts. As stated earlier, the early Christian believers were the same people who had yelled crucify just a few days earlier. These new converts and

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52 Ibid

believers were not only changed completely, but Luke describes for us each’s devotion to pray. Each person’s zeal came forth in their belief that what the apostles were teaching was indeed God’s revelation.

The fifth factor unleashed by Harney and Bouwer is an exceptional and clear comparison to what one finds in Acts 2:42: The believers committed themselves to the apostle’s teaching. The difference in this fifth factor biblical truths compared to personal preferences is what is biblical truth and biblical conviction. “You cannot fudge on biblical absolutes. The Bible teaches that worship is to include prayer, teaching and preaching of the Word of God, offerings, songs of praise, sacraments, fellowship, and church discipline. None of these are up for debate.”

Since churches are made up of people, personal preference sometimes causes confusion and hurt. Generally people mean well and may think that the decisions that are being made are biblical, but often these decisions turn out to be based on preference instead of being a mandate. In the early church, personal preference did not often rear its “ugly head.” This happened when sin began to enter the church. Still today, “one’s wants and desires” may completely kill a church because the church cannot function with so many different agendas and desires. The unity of the church is damaged when all personal preferences are trying to be satisfied. It’s God’s church. Foundational and functional rules are laid out in scripture for the structure and purpose of His church.

The remaining six factors illustrated by Harney and Bower in this researcher’s mind have more to do with the effects of the first five factors than the factors themselves. The final lists are as follows: “Unleashing Leaders, High Expectations, Tough Skin and Soft Hearts, Taking Holy

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Risks, Looking Out, and The Wow Factor. Each one seems to be a reaction to what can result if the first five factors which are found in the account in Acts are followed.

**Theory Three**

The third theory and evaluation one can confer about is Harry L. Reeder III’s model from the work *From Embers to a Flame: How God Can Revitalize Your Church*. Reeder paints a picture of troubled churches today. Below is an introduction to the type of church Reeder is suggesting needs the hand of God on it, and that certainly needs revitalization.

Imagine that you are a recent seminary graduate and have just begun your first pastoral ministry. The church you have been called to serve was at one time among the largest and fastest growing in the region. It had risen to a membership of almost nine hundred, with four major worship services and a vital Sunday School program. It was known for creative and effective ministries, an innovative youth program, an expanding Christian day school, and a significant commitment to world missions.

Now, twenty-five years later, the average Sunday morning attendance is below eighty. The Sunday school has fallen to fewer than twenty adults with no children. The average age of the members is around sixty-nine. At age thirty-three, you are the youngest member of the congregation, with the exception of your wife and children. Sunday evening services have been canceled, and it is considered a notable victory if five people come to the midweek prayer service. Vandalism occurs daily on the church grounds, and minimal amounts of money are now going to missions and benevolence.

Reeder paints a grim picture, but unfortunately that image is seen across the country. No denomination or Christian leader is immune to it. No church is immune to the description stated above. Correcting this situation and breathing life back into the church is complex for the minister and the church. “Revitalizing a stagnant church is not easy. If it were, 70 to 80 percent

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of North American churches would not be stagnant or declining, and 3,500 to 4,000 U.S. churches would not close each year.”

Reeder’s theory, model or method is a ten point strategy which is listed as one, connect to the past by learning from the past without living in the past. Second, a call to repentance by not covering up but fessing up. Third, Gospel driven drives a person to live a Christ filled life. Fourth, personal Gospel formation expands the discipline of grace. Fifth, the priority of intercessory prayer produces the ministry of prayer. Sixth, the primacy of preaching sets in place a Word based ministry. Seventh, staying on mission with a vision requires simplicity and focus. Eighth, servant leadership multiplication is the most neglected strategy for church vitality. Ninth, small group discipleship is the biblical delivery system for the local church. Tenth, to be a W.E.L.L. Church, a church must have a great commitment to the Great Commission.

This researcher will stipulate that strategies three through ten are biblical and extremely relevant in the life of a New Testament church for today. The focus of evaluation is going to primarily be on Reeder’s first two strategies. It seems these two important aspects are often overlooked in some of the other models when discussing and evaluating theories of church revitalization.

“Connect to the Past: Learning from the Past without Living in the Past” is certainly an overlooked account when discussing what created the current church problem. One must remember, in the early New Testament church found in Luke’s account in Acts, the converts were responding to the message of the Gospel that Peter was preaching.

Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost …, and he preached an exposition of several Old Testament texts from Joel and Psalms, which he applied to the risen Jesus. In his sermon, Peter confronted the complicity of his hearers in the death of Jesus (Acts 2:22-23, 35), and his message culminated in a call for an obedient response. He commanded his hearers to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the


59 Ibid.
The call to repentance is a call to a decisive turning away from sin that leads to forgiveness through faith in Jesus.\textsuperscript{60}

When the past is recalled, it gives people realization of who has done the work in changing lives. The privilege to repent from sins was bought with the shed blood of Jesus Christ. The early converts were the same people who just a few days earlier were cheering to crucify Him, and these were the same people who had spat upon Him as He made His way down the Via Del-a Rosa on His way to the “Place of the Skull.”\textsuperscript{61}

Reeder is basically stating that the church from its infancy until now should always remember from where it came. The Christian life is a perfect example of how one should never forget the past, not because of fear of remembering, but to be grateful for God’s grace to change lives and provide repentance and salvation. The Christian life of just one person is a good example of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian church was born out of the new life provided in acceptance and trust in Christ Jesus. In evaluating Reeder’s theory, this researcher has gained much respect for Reeder’s interpretation of the text of Scripture, and how one can capitalize on the understanding of the phrase, “one doesn’t throw out the baby with the bath water.” Reeder emphasizes that it is not necessary to throw out all things of the past to try to bridge to the future. When worship in the church is referenced, there is much debate in current trends and suggestions of what must and must not be done. Reeder gives a different look at that debate.

Good worship does not engage in the arrogance of modernity, which disconnects from the past, nor does it participate in the idolatry of traditionalism, which lives in the past. Rather, we should begin with the great classical worship that at one time was


\textsuperscript{61} Matthew 27:33 (HCSB).
contemporary and has now become tried and true, and then build on it, being ready to absorb that which is excellent in the present. Good worship is offered in spirit and in truth, honors Christ, and facilitates the praise of God’s people and the communication of the gospel to the lost. It is connected to the past without living in the past, contextualized in the present without accommodating the present, and setting a pattern to shape the future instead of becoming dated in the future; thus it becomes an example of our overall philosophy of ministry.  

The second point from Reeder which is being discussed and evaluated is “a Call to Repentance: Cover Up or Fess Up.” For many churches that are in decline or dead, no true repentance has taken place on the part of the church in years. “The “fruits” of repentance mentioned in these verses can be summarized in three words: restitution, restoration, and reconciliation. Restitution meaning, paying back what is owed; Restoration, setting things right again, and Reconciliation is renewing of relationships that have been broken by sin.”

Each of these three words and definitions have extraordinary power within the church. Reeder states the need to deal with each one of these with great passion and care. It is not just the church, but in many instances, it is the senior pastor or pastoral staff that must deal with these three fruits of repentance. “Any kind of ‘sin in the camp’ is damaging to the ministry of a church, as the story of Achan in Joshua 7 illustrates, but nothing is worse than when it is located in the leaders.”

Reeder’s formula or theory of church revitalization has many merits that need to be addressed for full compliance in moving forward for any church struggling with decline and possible death. The principles stated in *From Embers Flame: How God Can Revitalize Your Church*  

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63 Ibid., 1-2.

64 Ibid., 50.

65 Ibid., 51.
Church might certainly be helpful in the church revitalization process. One of the main aspects in Reeder’s evaluation is the potential problems confronted. Reeder gives specifics in dealing with those problems. It is not going to be enough though to just recognize the problems, but as Reeder stated, “it will help church leaders to recognize weaknesses and opportunities, but it also guides the church in applying biblically based strategies for rekindling the flames of Godly growth.”

**Theory Four**

The fourth theory and evaluation which is given by this researcher is Mark Devine and Darrin Patrick’s *Replant: How a Dying Church Can Grow Again* model. This model clearly deals with church revitalization in retrospect to “churches looking to plant and churches in need of replanting and renewal.” This model is not widespread in the country mainly because of the logistics within its sometimes difficult grasp. The premise in this model of revitalization is to merge one struggling church with a declining or dying congregation in with a more striving congregation which is growing with vision and passion. “The result is a harvest of ideas on how to promote new church growth. Discover a revitalized openness to churches merging with other congregations, changing leadership, and harvesting fresh spiritual fruit-inviting us all to rethink how churches not only survive, but thrive.”

What sets the approach apart from just a nostalgic move of God where two churches know that the merger is in each’s best interest, so the two churches merge and live happily ever after is that the complexities of such a merging idea requires years of planning and

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68 Ibid., Back Cover.
implementation. The process stated is not for every church in decline. It is historic, but history will determine in time whether or not it is historically relevant.

The following approach deals with some of the complexities that involved the people within the body of Christ in one particular struggling and declining church. The church called a pastor and over a relatively short time of service, the pastor felt impressed by God to begin talks with another church about the possibility of a merge. The church merge idea was not well accepted by the congregation at first, but the pastor felt it was God’s direction in the life of the church, and as leader, it needed to be done. This model details many specifics that might have to be dealt with when trying to capture this type of revitalization work in a ministry without consulting the church members.

The main approach in this model is the introduction of what Devine refers to as the “congregational rule.”69 In normal Southern Baptist polity in church business, the church business meeting is called into session by a moderator, and each member is allowed to speak in an orderly fashion, and vote his or her conscious. It has always been hectic to leadership when a certain few in a church business meeting take over and vote everything down the pastor or leadership is trying to do in leading the church. Unfortunately, many SBC churches tend to operate in this dysfunction. “The irony is at once startling and tragic. For all the self-righteous blustering about congregational rule, rule by such an unelected and ill-equipped few is the order of the day in thousands of Baptist churches across the fruited plain.”70 This concept of changing the Baptist polity of how business is conducted in the local congregational form is up for further

69 Ibid.

70 Mark Devine and Darrin Patrick, Replant: How a Dying Church can Grow Again (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2014), 159.
study. This researcher agrees; many churches that are in need of revitalization are held back because of poor leadership of church members who subvert a will over the church in many cases without rhyme or reason.

**Theory Five**

The final evaluation and theory is found in Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson’s model or strategy for coming back from decline or even death. The work, *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too* is certainly a statistical and relevant example of principles that pastors, staff, denominational leaders and church members can use to help turn a church from decline to possibly life with the help of the Holy Spirit. Many scholars who write about church revitalization have endorsed this theory of church revitalization.

This particular model or strategy literally deals with more than 300 churches that had been in decline or dying, and it deals with ten different denominations. This by far is the most researched with actual data received of all the models or strategies this researcher has evaluated in this thesis.

First, Stetzer and Dodson list eight main connections that need to be made in getting a church from declining to thriving. Here is a list of connections that this researcher has determined is Stetzer and Dodson’s main points in this model.

Foundations, without the right foundation, nothing stands long term. Leadership, the right leadership is essential for any success. Faith Factors, necessity for any turn-around. Worship and Preaching, something that is extremely important. Evangelistic Focus, at home and internationally. Spiritual Maturity, a Christian’s growth. Motivation, a passion and vision. Connecting People, one does this in small groups.71

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Evaluating and discussing church, it must be understood that the church was born out of Jesus found in Matthew 16:18, “He builds the church.” This researcher finds it extremely helpful that both Stetzer and Dodson understand that the need for any consideration of ideas for church revitalization must start with a foundational structure which consists of these six “must haves” for a church to be a church: “Scriptural authority; Biblical leadership; Preaching and teaching; Ordinances; Covenant community, Mission.” Time will not be spent in elaborating these essentials since each one has been covered in previous chapters.

The seven remaining priorities presented are similar with the exception of two that will be discussed in detail: Biblical Leadership and Connecting people in Small groups. When evaluating leadership in business settings or in self-help conferences, emphasis is placed on methods of training to be a better leader in the workplace. Leadership is key in the local church because the design of the leader was instituted by God Himself. “There is no denying that leaders like Moses, Joshua, David, Nehemiah, Gideon, Jesus, Peter, Paul, Deborah, Priscilla, and many others in the Bible were leaders. So, maybe leadership is truly as much of a spiritual factor as renewed belief, servant hood, and strategic prayer.”

Church leadership is more than the ability to lead an idea to success since church leadership is not only leading people to do something, but the leading process must be performed in love for the one that is being led. It is not just an end to the means; it requires Godly caring for God’s people for God’s purpose in God’s house. Church leadership demands a loving shepherd, like Jesus.

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72 Acts 2:47 (Paraphrased).


74 Ibid.
Stetzer and Dodson seem to understand that a CEO and Shepherd mentality do not always work especially in the local church. In some rare instances, a person may maintain both, CEO gift of administration and a Shepherd gift of love and care with gentleness, but for the majority of pastors, that is not the case. This is why leadership development is crucial to the life of a church. The model presented with *Comeback Churches* seem to understand this concept and not only suggest it be studied, but make a bold commitment and necessity component in the detail of the reality of changing directions from a dying church to a growing Comeback Church.

The second and final aspect which will be discussed and evaluated at this point is that of small groups. It is clear in this segment; both Stetzer and Dodson are completely sold on the fact that small groups are essential for connecting people. The example and necessity of small groups is not portrayed in the early New Testament except for the disciples. One sees in Acts 5:12b, “the believers committed to meeting together on a regular basis.” As the New Testament in Acts grew according to the Lukan account, “Solomon’s Colonnade became an increasingly hostile place, but the believers decided that they would continue to meet there regardless of the threat. The Colonnade was a large covered porch that ran along the eastern portion of the temple precinct.”75 This was a public venue that would often attract crowds of people. The use of the Colonnade was popular until persecution increased so much that believers began meeting in small groups in homes.

Small group meetings in homes can be seen beginning in the New Testament church in (Acts 16:40; 17:7; 18:7-8; 20:20). Luke, however, points out to the Gentile believers who were meeting in the home small groups “that their gospel was rooted in the faith of Israel even as their

practice of meeting in homes transcended temple attendance and observances. Fear which is seen often in history may bring on a determination that may not otherwise be seen or carried out. That fear coupled with the love for each other was a major ingredient in the rise of the New Testament church as seen in Acts.

The response of new believers was overwhelming in spite of the risks involved in joining the church... In Acts 2:47 Luke notes that people were being saved and daily added to the church; in 5:14 he intensifies his emphasis on growth in two additional ways. First, Luke does not begin his sentence in Greek with the subject “believers;” instead, he leads with mallon, an adverb that intensifies the action of “added.” Placing mallon at the beginning of the sentence positions it in strong contrast to the preceding statement in 5:13 and means “now more than ever.” In spite of the many who stayed away, believers were ‘more than ever’ being added to their number.

The Bible clearly states that the “Lord builds His church,” so it is unclear what significance the relation a small group meeting has anything to do with the actual growth of the church according to Acts, but it is clear that Stetzer and Dodson seem to believe that small groups are essential in growing from within spiritually in order to grow outward with the Gospel message as was seen to happen in the early church.

**Summary**

In chapter two, the researcher tried to define and show what church revitalization is: why it is needed in the life of the church, and what are the theory and evaluations of how to correct the decline and death of evangelical churches in the U.S.A. A great deal of time was spent on clarifying the Lukan account in Acts and the echoes between it and churches today. In addition,

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78 Acts 2:47 (Paraphrased).
A comprehensive breakdown was done on theories and evaluations of models of church revitalization. Specifically, five models and the books that proceeded after the implementation were focused on in detail in the evaluation. Many of the models or strategies presented had similar aspects and were complemented but not discussed directly. This researcher tried to take the differences and highlight the effectiveness of each.

The five evaluations on theory were completed on Tom Cheney’s *Thirty-Eight Church Revitalization Models for the Twenty-First Century*; Kevin G. Harney and Bob Bouwer’s *The U-Turn Church: New Direction for Health and Growth*; Harry L. Reeder III’s *From Embers to a Flame: How God Can Revitalize Your Church*; Mark Devine and Darrin Patrick’s *Replant: How a Dying Church Can Grow Again*, and Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson’s *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too*. All five models or strategies were compared and contrasted with the New Testament account of the early church for additions or subtractions. The Acts account of the biblical church was the guidepost to a healthy church revitalization model or strategy.
CHAPTER THREE

CHURCH REVITALIZATION: LOCAL PROGRESS

Beulah Baptist Church – The Early Years

Like many other Southern Baptist Churches during the late eighteen hundreds, Beulah Baptist Church was organized and formed in 1890. The church’s beginning was May 14, 1890 and started with the signing of the Church Constitution. The Church Covenant reads as follow:

We the members of Beulah Baptist Church hereby voluntarily and freely covenant with one another to be of one body under one head, which is Christ, and jointly to exist and act in church fellowship by the bonds and rules of the gospel, and we do engage by the assistance of God’s grace to walk together in brotherly love, to exercise a Christian care and watchfulness of each other, to admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require; and that we will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect the great duty of prayer, that we will participate in each other’s joys and endeavors with tenderness and sympathy to hear each other’s sorrows.¹

Basic Data Regarding Beulah Baptist Church

With the growth of Lynchburg, the church’s membership increased from 1890 and the first permanent building for meetings was constructed in 1892. The church continued to grow, and thirty-five years later another building was added on to the existing building. It can be noted that this was the first time the church had taken out a loan to pay for property additions. The church borrowed $2200.00, and within five years, the loan was paid off.

Because the church was experiencing rapid growth, a vote was taken in 1940 to construct a new building to accommodate the increasing number of people attending Sunday school and Worship. A few weeks later, the church decided instead of building a new building it would raise the present building off its foundation and build a basement. A fellowship hall and new

Sunday school rooms were added in this new area, and two new wings were built extending out on the sides of the upstairs. These new wings added additional seating. In 1948, the church again needed to build a new structure because of new growth and over-crowding in the current facility. “On the 9th day of June, 1948, after months of deliberations, the church voted to erect a new building.”\(^2\) Over the next two years, the church began to raise the $46,000.00 needed to construct the new building which would include a new sanctuary. “On May 15, 1950 at 6:00 P.M., a ground breaking ceremony was held for the start of the new building on the tract of land adjoining the parsonage lot.”\(^3\) The new sanctuary section of the building would seat 350 people. “It was to be colonial in design with a front porch having tall columns. Plans also called for a belfry and steeple. Provisions were being made to play recorded chimes for the community.”\(^4\)

In less than five years, the church was again encountering an over-crowding on Sunday morning, especially in Sunday school. So, the church voted in 1956 to build a new educational building. The new educational building was dedicated in a ceremony in 1957. The building consisted of two floors, and it was connected to the existing building.

“In the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, due to the influx of new industries, Lynchburg was growing and Beulah was growing with it. It became necessary to hold two worship services on Sunday mornings. The sanctuary was too small; therefore, the architect, Mr. J. Everette Farber, Jr., was asked to draw preliminary floor plans for a new sanctuary.”\(^5\) Seven years later, in 1967, the church voted to build a new sanctuary building with additional Sunday school facilities and

\(^3\) Ibid
\(^4\) Ibid.
\(^5\) Ibid., 14.
offices which would also connect to the educational building. The new sanctuary would seat 1000 people. “A cornerstone was laid containing a bible, a hymn book, a membership list as of October 1, 1968, a picture of the ground breaking, coins, and other items.” Beulah Baptist Church’s sanctuary became the largest church auditorium in the Lynchburg area at that time.

Not only was the church growing numerically, but it was also growing through tithes and offerings. With the addition of the church’s receipts, they began looking at the amount of mission giving. “In 1889, Beulah Baptist gave $13.75, and in 1985, Beulah Baptist gave $118,014 to missions. In the late 1800’s the average gift was 51 cents per member – in 1985 it was $120 per member.”

In addition to consistent mission giving, Beulah Baptist also began a special mission program in Campbell County. A new church was formed called Calvary Baptist. The local Baptist association, twenty-five members from Beulah and the local school board in Campbell County, joined to promote a new church in the area located off Timberlake Road. In 1964, Calvary Baptist Church constituted. Beulah Baptist Church was on the forefront of church planting. “Someone made the observation in 1982 that in ten years the missions’ gifts had increased 268%: $114,402 had been given for the year – more than the entire budget for 1972.”

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7 Ibid., 23.

8 Ibid., 24.
1980 - Present

This researcher is going to supply Annual Church Profile data from 1980 to the present to better track the decline of Beulah Baptist Church. It appears that the decline began in the 1980’s. Up until this point, the church was still recording steady growth in all areas church life. In 1980 through 1985, the church membership was still holding at around 1100 members, giving and participation were still above its average from previous years.

In 1986 the church saw a 30% decline in church membership. Much of this had to do with a split between the conservative and liberal factions of the Southern Baptist Convention. The church voted to stay conservative. The church’s budget and missions giving stayed on par with previous years. Mission percentages were 27.3 percentage of a total budget of $344,192.00. Not only did church attendance and membership declined, but Sunday school attendance also dropped from 1074 from 1985 to 709 in 1986.

The decline in attendance and membership continued to decline. A separate factor that also led to steady decline was shallow baptisms from previous years. In 1994, only one person was recorded being baptized. In 1994, the church saw its additions drop from twenty-four in 1993 to sixteen in 1994. The decline in membership continued grow with the church losing an additional 42 members that year. In ten years, the Sunday school average attendance had dropped from 709 to 267; that is over a 50.0 percentage drop in Bible study attendance. The factor that did not see much of a decrease was in the faithful giving toward cooperative program giving. In 1995 total mission expenditures totaled $97,713.00.

If there has been one guiding light throughout the decline, it has been the giving toward missions. The folks at Beulah Baptist Church have faithfully given toward the cause of spreading the gospel message at home and on foreign fields. Even as Sunday school average
attendance dropped to 228 in 1999, the church’s mission giving for that the year 2000 rose over 10.0 percentage from the previous year to a grand total of $110,426.00.

In 2002, the church saw its average Sunday school attendance drop for the first time below 200 since the church built its first building on its current site. The average Sunday school attendance dropped to 179. By 2002, total membership had dropped by over 50.0 percentage from its heightened history. Total members had dropped to 766.

For a brief three years from 2004-2006, the church seemed to be beginning a new direction, for the first time, Sunday school average attendance had grew back above 200. Although, one indicator of only two baptisms in 2005 showed that the church was still struggling. As the survey showed, a large percentage of long time members believed that poor pastoral leadership was a huge cause of continued decline in many areas during this time.

A new direction came with the church voting to call Dr. Dennis Hollandsworth in 2012 as Beulah’s senior pastor. The data indicated the church was somewhat divided on the new direction for the church, but the church decided it needed to revitalize. The statistics reveal when Dr. Hollandsworth began, average worship attendance was 159, total members were at 642, average attendance in Sunday school were 142, and total missions expenditures were $75,654.00.

Since embarking on this new direction of revitalization, Beulah Baptist Church has added seventy-six new people. Worship attendance has risen by thirty people. Average Sunday school attendance is still struggling with an average in 2012 of 142, 2013 of 136, and 2014 of 132. Instead of an addition in Bible study, the church is still recording a decline. Even with a decline in mission expenditures from $107,485.00 in 2013 to $100,657.00 in 2014, the church according to the data collected believes the church’s leadership is leading the church in the right direction. Dr. Hollandsworth in an interview with this researcher said it best, “my job is to deepen my
relationship with the Lord, lead my flock to deepen their relationship with the Lord, and allow God to add to the number as He sees fit.”

As stated above, this chapter is dealing with the historical growth of the church until the 1980’s and then it deals with the decline of the church from 1980 to the present. Case study research was conducted to evaluate the sheer magnitude of decline in Beulah Baptist Church over the last thirty plus years. To accomplish this survey, a questionnaire (twenty-five questions) was distributed to church members and sixty-two of them were returned. Beulah has currently 649 members, but only 176 actively participate in worship. Calculation based on average worship attendance, concludes that sixty-two members make up approximately 35.0 percentage.

The data was conducted and calculated by a range of demographic members of adult age and longevity of membership or attendance. The decline was a steady drop that as has been shown took place over a period of thirty plus years. In that time, many conclusions have been formed as to why the decline took place to begin with; this researcher believes the best gauge of specifics is best contributed by church members.

The church members were asked to share each’s views on what led to the decline, and the results of what the members attribute to the decline are shown below:

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Over 53.0 percentage of church members believe that poor pastoral leadership led to the decline and an additional 33.9 percentage believe it was due to a divided church congregation.

The research indicates a divided congregation with respect to moving into a revitalization process. Prior to calling the current pastor, the congregation had a broad difference of opinion concerning whether they had an opportunity to voice their concerns on the selection. Below is the data detailing percentages of those questionnaires returned:
The church seems to be divided. The “yes” category does show a slight percentage higher than that of the “no” and “yes, but I did not agree with the decision” category.

Communication in a Revitalization Process

Research indicates that the communication at the beginning of the revitalization process was not completely solid in terms of church direction. When the congregation was asked whether or not a church assessment had been conducted prior to the church launching into the revitalization process, the percentage division was fairly evenly divided. With the revitalization beginning a little over two years ago, over 38% were not sure if an assessment was performed. In addition, over 32.0 percentage replied that an assessment had certainly not been completed, and only 29.0 percentage confirmed with a “yes” that an assessment had been performed prior to launching into the revitalization process.
Figure 8. Communication

It does appear that the church has improved its position as far as communication. The chart below clearly shows an improvement since the beginning of the revitalization process. The chart below also reflects the communication level 2 ½ years since the revitalization process began.

Figure 9. Event Communication

The important factors in the revitalization process according to the research are Prayer, Text Driven Preaching, Outward Focus, Pastoral Leadership, Southern Baptist Identity, Doctrine, Small Group Bible Study, Tithing, and Loving Each Other.
Figure 10. Beulah and Importance to Prayer

Table 5. Segmented Beulah and Importance to Prayer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The most important thing we do as a congregation</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>82.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is important, but other things are just as important</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is not as important as other things</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over 82.0 percentage believe that prayer is the most important thing the church does as a congregation. Only 17.7 percentage believe that other things are just as important as prayer, but that prayer is important. No one believed something other than prayer was more important or that prayer was not important.

Preaching the text of Scripture is another of Beulah Baptist Church’s highest priorities of the revitalization process.
Figure 11. Beulah and Text Driven Preaching

The respondents overwhelmingly believe that text driven or expositional preaching is either important 14.5 percentage or extremely important at 85.5 percentage. No one believed that it was less important or not important at all.

As stated earlier in this chapter, Beulah Baptist Church believed that poor pastoral leadership was one of the main reasons the church needed to be revitalized. The church had seen the growth and assimilation of new believers dwindle and much of that was credited to poor pastoral leadership. Findings show how passionate the church feels about the importance of pastoral leadership, and the important factor it plays in the revitalization process.

The church sees a definite need for a greater understanding and recognition of the role of the church in the community. The people believe that a Southern Baptist identity is crucial and is a key to the revitalization process. Since many Southern Baptist Churches are dropping the name “Baptist” from their official name, Beulah strongly believes that teaching the people who and what the Southern Baptist Church stands for is clearly necessary in helping to expedite the revitalization process and in making the church stronger in the future.
Table 6. Segmented Beulah and Doctrine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely important because of the doctrinal differences in how we believe</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less important because doctrine causes strife in the church</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important because doctrine is dead</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over 85.0 percentage of the congregation believes that the Southern Baptist identity is extremely important. Less than 15.0 percentage believe that the SBC identity is less important or not at all important.

Table 7. Segmented Beulah and Pastoral Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely important</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Important</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral leadership is really not necessary</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beulah Baptist Church believes that pastoral leadership is 100.0 percentage necessary for the revitalization process to work. No one believed that pastoral leadership was less important or not necessary for a successful revitalization.

Another clear factor in the revitalization process show by the survey is that Beulah Baptist regards as important the implementation or continuation of Small Group Bible Study and Sunday school programs.

Table 8. Segmented Beulah and Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, every Sunday unless I’m sick or out of town</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>72.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but I only average two Sundays per month</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above chart gives a breakdown of the respondents who were asked about the importance of Small Group Bible Study or Sunday school in the revitalization process and how often it is attended. Over 72.0 percentage believe it is extremely important and participate on a regular basis. Only 16.0 percentage do not participate, but this group still believes that it is extremely important. Only 4.8 percentage believe it is less important and are not planning on participating in a Sunday school class or Small Group Bible Study.

The principle of tithing taught in the Scripture of giving 10.0 percentage out of joy and obedience is a factor that Beulah Baptist Church believes is necessary for the growth and revitalization of a healthy church. The chart bellows shows the importance of tithing and teaching tithing to new believers in the faith.

**Figure 12. Beulah and Tithing**
Table 9. Segmented Beulah and Tithing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, and I give out of joy and obedience</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but I surely could use the money more than the church</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, but I know I should, but I need help in learning how</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, because I have bills that take precedent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time is a precious commodity given by God to each person to do with as that person sees fit. At Beulah Baptist Church, the revitalization process depends on the selfless act of giving of personal time for a successful revitalization process. In past years, Beulah Baptist Church has seen the staff have as many as six fulltime paid members. Currently, that cannot be the policy. Each questionnaire participant was asked how much time is given to the church other than that on Sundays. Below is a breakdown of the response regarding how much time is given.

Table 10. Segmented Beulah Time Commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 min or less</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 min or less</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 hours</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>41.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- 5 hours</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 hours</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As stated earlier in this chapter, prayer is essential according to Beulah Baptist Church for the revitalization process. Prayer is considered by the respondents as extremely important to over 80.0 percentage with another 20.0 percentage of them stating that it is important as a corporate body. Prayer is a personal opportunity to open hearts to the Creator seeking His guidance and direction through sincere worship through this gift of divine communication. The information shown in the chart below shows how much time is spent in worshiping God through prayer as reported on the questionnaires.
An outward focus is another aspect or factor for the individual and the church family to consider in a revitalization process. Beulah Baptist Church believes that an outward focus is crucial to the growth of the church. Out of the questions asked of the members, see below the data collected with the responses.

**Table 11. Segmented Why People Come to Beulah**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We are committed to young people and families</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are a loving congregation and people are attracted to us</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have great small groups and Sunday School Classes that encourage people</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the above</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The congregation is doing its part by being a loving congregation and enrolling new people in a small group always showing the love of Christ to family and friends.

A Legacy is something many families want to leave for their family, other families, or for historical significance. At Beulah Baptist Church, there is a need and desire for the church family to see the bigger picture of encouraging legacies to be left to the church to glorify God.
The data shows that Beulah is actively seeking people to be Legacy Leavers, people who leave funds, land, property, or stocks for the church to use to God’s glory when a member dies. In addition to leaving monetary items, a Legacy Leaver is also a person who makes a great investment in the growth of the church. Beulah’s administration sees the need for these gifts in order for the revitalization process to be successful.

Figure 15. Legacy Leaver for Beulah

Vision for any church is crucial in revitalization. At Beulah Baptist Church, many of the members seem to have no definition of church vision nor do they know if the church has ever addressed the issue. They do not believe the church has a vision. Proverbs 29:18 states, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” Beulah certainly does not want to perish. The following data shows a mix of what the vision is thought to be.

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10 Proverbs 29:18 (KJV).
The data shows that almost 26.0 percentage of the church is not sure what the vision of the church is and another 14.5 percentage believe that the church has no vision. Only approximately 60.0 percentage firmly believe that the church has a vision for the future.

**Summary**

As a case study, this chapter has dealt specifically with Beulah Baptist Church and its cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention. Historical data and information about the church from its inception until its first signs of decline, which began in the 1980’s, have been presented.

After the 1980’s, the study shows that the church did in fact report a decline in the ACP data reported to the Southern Baptist Convention by Beulah Baptist Church. The ACP is a detailed profile of the church from year to year, and gives clear and demonstrable data. That data certainly showed the decline in baptisms, Sunday school attendance, church membership, and worship attendance through the years. Those indicators were signs of a steady decline. The
ACP also gave a detail breakdown of all ages, classes, and monetary gifts for future study and reflection as Beulah Baptist Church continues to reach for that successful revitalization process.

Finally, a survey was conducted of Beulah Baptist Church’s membership, approximately thirty-five percent average attendance. This survey was given over a period of two weeks, allowing ample time for response. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain what church members consider important factors necessary for the revitalization process to be successful for the church. In addition, the data revealed personal misgivings regarding the way the revitalization was handled at the beginning when Beulah Baptist first enacted the process; but since then, the data shows that communication has improved by 60.0 percentage over the inception. The research also revealed what the expectations are for Beulah Baptist Church to successfully succeed in the revitalization process by each individual doing his or her part in the effort. Chapter Four will deal with the Southern Baptist Convention and its entities with respect to dealing with church revitalization. Research and data that have been collected will be reported.
CHAPTER FOUR

CHURCH REVITALIZATION: IN THE TRENCHES

Basic Data Regarding Southern Baptist Church Revitalization

The previous chapter explored how one Southern Baptist Church, Beulah Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia has recorded plateau and decline, and how it has begun to revitalize. This chapter utilizes data collected through personal interviews, and by surveys and data provided by Southern Baptist Convention pastors, staff, denominational leaders, church revitalization specialists, and church lay leadership. To accomplish the survey, a questionnaire consisting of thirty-six questions was distributed to SBC senior pastors, staff, denominational leaders, church revitalization specialist and church lay leadership, with each entity being requested to give the best multiple choice answer to the question. Only one answer per question was allowed. The 36 questions were answered by forty-two respondents. Out of the forty-two, 37.2 percentage were senior pastors, 25.6 percentage were staff pastors, 14.0 percentage were denominational leaders, 16.3 percentage were revitalization specialists, and 7.0 percentage were church lay leadership.

Table 12. Segmented SBC Surveyed Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Senior pastor</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Staff pastor</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Denominational leader</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Revitalization specialist</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Lay church leader</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The North American Mission Board, a division of the Southern Baptist Convention, is given the nationwide responsibility of studying and assisting autonomous SBC churches who are plateaued, dying or dead. The Board’s mission is to help these churches revitalize and regain strong health. NAMB’s mission statement and mandate begins with “The estimated 46,000 autonomous churches that cooperate together with the Southern Baptist Convention pool their resources to support the work of the North American Mission Board. Formerly known as the Home Mission Board, this entity was renamed the North American Mission Board (NAMB) in 1997. The stated mission of NAMB is to “work with churches, associations and state conventions in mobilizing Southern Baptists as a missional force to impact North America with the Gospel of Jesus Christ through evangelism and church planting.”

NAMB’s purpose and job is certainly large in scope and vast in responsibility.

What does NAMB do? This entity helps provide support for missionaries serving throughout the United States, Canada, and their territories. These church, association, and state workers proclaim the Gospel, start new churches, baptize converts, disciple new and established believers in the faith, and provide Bible-centered teaching ministries. The entity’s work is especially focused in areas of North America that are under reached with the Gospel and underserved with Southern Baptist churches.

With the more than 50,000 SBC churches and the need according to the stats from NAMB of 40,000 in trouble of decline or death, it might make for a statistical analysis to be conducted within those 40,000 churches in order to find out how bad off they really are.

“Among its partners for evangelism and church planting are the six Southern Baptist seminaries, LifeWay Christian Resources of the SBC, numerous state conventions, and local Baptist associations. Such joint ministry projects between these entities demonstrate the long history of cooperation in Southern Baptist life. Indeed this principle of cooperation between the entities and the individuals in them is one of the eighteen spiritual principles enshrined in Southern Baptists’ confession of faith, The Baptist Faith

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2 Ibid.
and Message. The work of NAMB is vital to reaching North America for Christ. NAMB stands ready to assist your church as you seek to be on mission with God.”

The last two sentences in the mission statement are: “The work of NAMB is vital to reaching North America for Christ. NAMB stands ready to assist your church as you seek to be on mission with God.” “Since over 70.0 percentage of SBC churches are either in decline or dying, the SBC is attempting to make a difference and turn the tide from decline and death to revitalization and life. Since nearly 70.0-75.0 percentage of SBC churches are plateaued or declining and another 10.0-15.0 percentage at or near death, much needs to be done to turn the negative into a positive.

The SBC, through state conventions for each state in the union, is charged with collecting what is called the Annual Church Profile. This profile is a document filed with the individual state convention by each church in the SBC according to location. The ACP collects data such as: Total Church Membership, Total Number Enrolled in Sunday school, Total Number of Baptisms for the Year, Average Attendance for Sunday school or Small Group Bible Study, Average Worship Attendance on a Sunday Morning, Budgetary Yearly Amounts, Undesignated and Designated Offering for the Year, and many more line items showing data collected. One item that is not listed on the ACP that might illuminate the reason churches are closing is a line item asking for the church’s opinion. When asked, 90.7 percentage of all respondents form the survey believe it would help the SBC, NAMB, State Conventions and Local Associations if there was a line item for churches to list why the church closed. A multiple choice answer system is

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4 Ibid.
one suggestion with options such as: Financial Reasons, Dead and Dying Population, Merger, Name Change, or no Pastoral Leadership.

**Table 13. Segmented SBC and Why a Church Closes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Yes</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Not Sure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second, since 70.0 percentage of SBC churches are declining and another 10.0-15.0 percentage are in serious trouble, the NAMB data suggests implementing a database system listing strong SBC churches willing to help or partner with plateaued or dying churches. Directors of Missions in each local association might form a team of local and state leaders to help perform church assessments. Also, revitalization workshops might be developed for pastors and congregants who are living through a revitalization effort or in need of beginning one.

3. According to the North American Mission Board, nearly 70% of churches in North America are either plateaued or dying. A large percentage of those churches are SBC churches. How can SBC churches who are plateaued or dying receive help from local SBC Associations?

![Pie chart showing options for helping SBC churches]

**Figure 17. SBC and Receiving Help**
Table 14. Segmented SBC and Receiving Help

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start a database of strong SBC churches willing to partner with plateaued or dying churches</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors of Missions form a team of local and state leaders to help do church assessments</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan quarterly revitalization workshops for pastors and congregants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the above</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Collected data revealed that almost seventy percent of leaders believe that all three items would be useful in helping a plateaued, declining or dead church to recover. Another 28.0 percentage believe that at least one option would help.

Third, the NAMB in its mission statement provides information and process procedures regarding church planting. The emphasis that NAMB has placed on starting new SBC churches is referred to as “Send North America.” “Send North America” is focused on creating new churches in extremely populated areas of the USA and Canada where SBC church influence and message is not as strong as it is in the southern part of the United States.

NAMB has planted hundreds of new churches in North America since “Send North America” was launched. Starting new churches is one way of turning the tide in the death of SBC churches. Data collected reveals that another opportunity for turning the tide of declining or dying churches is by beginning a national emphasis on church revitalization as the “Send North America” campaign works within SBC.

SBC leaders responded 69.8 percentage by being in agreement with starting a national emphasis on church revitalization as NAMB is presently doing with “Send North America.” Those disagreeing with starting a national emphasis were 30.2 percentage.
Fourth, the SBC state conventions play a vital role in the revitalization process in addition to the NAMB. In the more than 50 state conventions, most have a dedicated person responsible for working with dead or dying SBC churches in need of revitalization. The collected data revealed 95.4 percentage of respondents agree that the need for some type of added benefit needs to be developed within the state conventions when assisting these troubled churches.
Below is a breakdown of percentages of senior pastors, staff pastors, denominational leaders, church revitalization specialists, and church lay leadership ranking the four multiple choice answers: Resources and Education; Finances to help pay staff; A Mentor or Advisor in the process; A Partnering Church; All the Above; or None of the Above.

Table 15. Segmented Areas of Need in a Revitalized Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources and Education</th>
<th>Senior Pastor</th>
<th>Staff Pastor</th>
<th>Denominational Leader</th>
<th>Revitalization Specialist</th>
<th>Church Lay Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Pastor</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Pastor</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denominational Leader</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revitalization Specialist</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Lay Leadership</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finances to help pay staff</th>
<th>Senior Pastor</th>
<th>Staff Pastor</th>
<th>Denominational Leader</th>
<th>Revitalization Specialist</th>
<th>Church Lay Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Pastor</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Pastor</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denominational Leader</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revitalization Specialist</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Lay Leadership</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Mentor or Advisor</th>
<th>Senior Pastor</th>
<th>Staff Pastor</th>
<th>Denominational Leader</th>
<th>Revitalization Specialist</th>
<th>Church Lay Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Pastor</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Pastor</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denominational Leader</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revitalization Specialist</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Lay Leadership</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Partnering Church</th>
<th>Senior Pastor</th>
<th>Staff Pastor</th>
<th>Denominational Leader</th>
<th>Revitalization Specialist</th>
<th>Church Lay Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Pastor</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Pastor</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denominational Leader</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revitalization Specialist</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Lay Leadership</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All the Above</th>
<th>Senior Pastor</th>
<th>Staff Pastor</th>
<th>Denominational Leader</th>
<th>Revitalization Specialist</th>
<th>Church Lay Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Pastor</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Pastor</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denominational Leader</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revitalization Specialist</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Lay Leadership</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the Above</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Pastor</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Pastor</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denominational Leader</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revitalization Specialist</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Lay Leadership</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fifth, by researching church revitalization on the website of the NAMB, information is found regarding conferences on revitalization, an online form to be completed if one is interested in church revitalization, and information about the *Legacy Project*. The Legacy Project basically offers three options for dying churches. Legacy Church Plant Models:

“Replant Model – The at-risk church closes and a new church plant is launched. Multi-campus Model – The at-risk church closes and becomes a campus location for an existing church plant. Merger Model – The at-risk church joins with an existing church plant and the two churches become one.”

The respondents were asked a yes, no or not sure question about whether or not (or not sure) this NAMB information could be discouraging to a church pastor or church leader who is searching or seeking help in beginning the revitalization process. Results are as follow:

![Figure 20. SBC and NAMB Discouragement](http://www.namb.net/revitalization/)

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Sixth, NAMB’s website states that an “honest evaluation” is necessary for a church in order for it to determine how sick it really is. Information regarding what must be done is presented on the website, but no evaluation form is to be found. The data received from senior pastors, staff pastors, denominational leaders, revitalization specialists, and church lay leaders overwhelmingly 93.2 percentage indicates that an online downloadable form for evaluation or assessment should be included on the website for visitors’ use.
Seventh, one of the three items listed on the NAMB’s website in reference to church revitalization is revitalization conferences. Two of the conferences that are either endorsed by or organized by NAMB are the Johnny Hunt Church Revitalization Conference or the Tom Cheyney Renovate Conference. The collected data revealed how helpful, encouraging, not helpful or never attended these conferences are to churches. It is interesting that over 62.8 percentage of leaders who are actively involved in revitalization projects have never attended either of the conferences. The collected data reveals 29.7 percentage of respondents believe the conferences are extremely helpful or encouraging with another 9.3 percentage finding the conferences not helpful in the revitalization process.
Table 18. Segmented SBC and Conferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Extremely helpful</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Encouraging, but most information I already knew</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Not helpful</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. I have not attended either conference</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, the last mined data concerning the NAMB, SBC state conventions, or local associations in respect to the benefits of the work devised for revitalizing dead and dying SBC churches can be found in a hypothetical question posed to the survey respondents. Below is shown the percentage data that pertains to the question.

Figure 23. Neighborhood Demographic Change

Since each church in the SBC is an autonomous church without the hierarchial system of supervisors and boards, each church must set its own destiny as whether or not it is going to do the things that must be done in order for it to not only survive but thrive. Each church takes its mandate from Acts: Chapter 2. Any church, but especially a church in a revitalization program, may need to repurpose the mission found in Luke’s account in Acts for the local church.
Factors of Effective Revitalization

The collected data reveals that faith factors are extremely important for the success of a church, and their proper use paints the picture of true Southern Baptists. When asked how important it is for a revitalization church to refocus on its roots of New Testament and Southern Baptist Doctrine, an overwhelming response was recorded by (93.0 percentage).

Table 19. Segmented SBC and Doctrine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Extremely important because of the faith factors of who we are in Christ</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Important, but local factors the church must face are more important</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Less important because a revitalization church needs to look forward not backward</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Not at all important because the New Testament model does not work today</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second, after evaluating the faith factors in a congregation needing revitalization and finding them lacking, data indicates that a church should contact either the local Baptist association or the state Baptist convention. The collected data reveals a close divide between the leaders surveyed with 32.7 percentage indicating the local Baptist association should be contacted first. Although, the second most popular of the four choices given was that 32.8 percentage of the respondents saying that the church should bypass the local association and go directly to the state Baptist convention. The third most popular answer was 18.6 percentage in favor of the church’s going to a private revitalization organization that has ties to the SBC. Only 11.6 percentage believe the church should contact the NAMB.

Third, the collected data indicates the next step in the process for revitalizing a church is for the congregation to conduct a church evaluation or church assessment. Nearly seventy-seven percent 76.7 percentage, believe that a church should do this step first.
Table 20. Segmented SBC and Church Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Church evaluation or assessment</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Finding out the historical background of the church</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Doing a demographics study</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Speak with the director of missions in the local Baptist association</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fourth, once a church assessment is taken, the collected data reveals that a plan of action should be implemented as the next step in beginning the revitalization process. The respondents overwhelmingly either said it was extremely important 72.1 percentage, or said it was important 27.9 percentage. The total opinion is that all 100.0 percentage agree that a plan of action is crucial in the success of any church revitalization effort.

Fifth, the importance of the role of prayer before any major implementation in a church revitalization is indicated from the research conducted. The consensus seems to reflect that the church take at least one to six-plus months in prayerful preparation for the start of the program.

Table 21. Segmented SBC and Prior Prayer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. One day</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. One week</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. One to three months</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Three to six months</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Over six months</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sixth, the collected data indicates that one of the greatest physical needs of any church revitalization effort in a SBC church is getting new people to come and be a part of what the church is doing. Over 62.8 percentage indicate that “new people” are necessary for a revitalization church to succeed. The second highest factor indicated is financial health. Over 27.9 percentage respondents state that finances are the second most important part of a revitalization program. Additional staff and overcoming old buildings tie for third most important factor with 4.7 percentage votes for each.

Seventh, statistics indicate that in order for a SBC church to become healthy during, and remain healthy after the revitalization process, the church must agree to teach and preach the text of scripture, salvation through repentance and faith, baptism by immersion, priesthood of the believer, church discipline, and the power of prayer. When asked if any one of these doctrines could be left out and the church still remain healthy, only 9.3 percentage of respondents said at least one could be left out. An overwhelming 86.1 percentage stated that all these doctrines are necessary in order for the church to be truly healthy.

Eighth, the data reveals that a large majority of respondents 72.1 percentage believe that a clear plan of action should be placed in front of the congregation as a constant reminder of what the revitalization process is supposed to be doing with 23.3 percentage of the respondents believing that a clear and visible chart or outline for the congregation be displayed. The data stated that the congregation should be given a clear vision, outreach strategy, welcoming strategy, connecting strategy, assimilating strategy, and a strategy in discipling current and new members.
Ninth, the collected data shows that the congregation must smoothly transition into a revitalization mindset. Four reasons are given regarding why the church might be resistant to the revitalization process, and these four reasons must be addressed in order for the church to transition appropriately. Statistics reveal all four reasons may need to be looked at through conflict resolution. Below are the four reasons and the percentages given for each one.

![Figure 24. SBC Churches Mindset](image)

**Table 22. Segmented SBC Churches Mindset**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Past and current history of church dysfunction</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Negative leadership</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Mentality of pushing against change</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Controllers scared of losing power</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tenth, the collected data shows that Deacons 62.8 percentage are the most important leaders to work with the pastoral leadership in the revitalization process. The second most important group listed was Sunday school teachers 27.9 percentage. The third most important
person listed to assist the pastoral leadership in a revitalization process is a Music leader 7.0 percentage. A Fellowship team brought up the ending with only 2.3 percentage.

Factors that are indicators of effective revitalization in a SBC church have been listed below. Each factor constitutes a transformational need for the church to be successful in the process. With regard to Prayer, Evangelism, Worship, Membership and Missions; Prayer overwhelmingly led in the statistics as the top contender necessary for a successful revitalization of the local church requiring new life.

![Figure 25. SBC and Prayer](image)

Second, in reference to prayer, 72.1 percentage respondents specifically believe that every church needs to be taught or re-taught how to pray “Scripture-Fed Prayer” or “Worship Based Prayer.” “Scripture-Fed Prayer or Worship Based Prayer is taking focus off ourselves and our needs and places the focus on communicating to the Heavenly Father with thanksgiving
and praise by reading passages of scripture, singing songs of praise, wherein placing the priority on a Holy God and off of sinful man.\textsuperscript{6}

![Pie chart showing the importance of scripture-fed prayer versus worship-based prayer in teaching and re-teaching our churches in revitalization](image)

**Figure 26. SBC and Scripture Fed Prayer**

Third, out of these four characteristics of a healthy church, the collected data 44.2 percentage reveals that the church needs to maintain an “Outward Focus” when revitalizing a church. Servant leadership development registered as the most important characteristic 27.9 percentage for a church in revitalization mode. The third highest statistic 25.6 percentage was maintaining a commitment to being a loving and caring congregation. Only 2.3 percentage believe that wise administration and stewardship are the most important characteristics of a church in revitalization.

\textsuperscript{6} Daniel Henderson, *Class Lecture*, Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, Lynchburg, VA: Summer, 2014.
Fourth, the collected data indicates that 95.4 percentage of those surveyed believes that foundational building blocks, such as: Theology, Prayer, Mission, Leadership, and Vision are extremely important for the success of a revitalized SBC church. Only 4.7 percentage believe that those factors are only important and not extremely important.

Fifth, the statistical data also recorded the importance of Text-Driven Preaching. The survey results suggests that 88.4 percentage of SBC leaders believe that this form of preaching is extremely important in a revitalization church.
Sixth, earlier the statistical data indicated that a church assessment and choice of direction that the church eventually would decide to follow were crucial to the success of a revitalization church process. The data also reveals that pastoral leadership is the third most important aspect of the process. 78.6 percentage of the respondents clearly indicate that pastoral leadership is crucial in the success of a revitalized work. The latter church demographics 16.7 percentage and budgetary concerns 4.8 percentage registered far below pastoral leadership.

Table 24. Segmented SBC and Pastoral Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Pastoral and church leadership</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Finding out what kind of budget one has to work with</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. How much debt does the church have</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Church demographics</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seventh, one of the greatest factors in a revitalization program may be the need for educating the congregation. Six books were listed that all dealt with the aspect of church
revitalization, and each respondent was asked if any of these books had had an impact on his own views in the revitalization work. Below are listed the books and the statistics response regarding benefit to either the congregation or the leaders of a church.

**Table 25. Segmented SBC and Lack of Reading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Comeback Churches by Stetzer and Dodson</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Becoming A Healthy Church by Macchia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Extreme Church Makeover by Anderson and Mylander</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. From Embers to a Flame by Reeder</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Replant by Devine and Patrick</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Thirty-Eight Church Revitalization Models for the Twenty-First Century by Cheyney</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. None of the Above</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data indicates that even though each church is autonomous in the SBC and no revitalization is the same, the reason most churches need a change is due to one of four reasons listed: Spiritual-depth and dynamic is lacking; Congregation is dysfunctional; Pastoral leadership is inadequate; Lack of vision, or none. The data indicates that Spiritual-depth and dynamic is lacking by 30.2 percentage. Lack of Vision came in as the second most change agent with 23.3 percentage. Congregation dysfunction scored 20.9 percentage and an inadequate pastoral leader was only 16.3 percentage.

**Table 26. Segmented SBC and the Why’s of Revitalization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Spiritual depth and dynamic is lacking</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Congregation is dysfunctional</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Pastoral leadership is inadequate</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Lack of vision</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An interesting data calculation in reference to pastoral leadership came when this researcher segmented the responses of the SBC leaders surveyed. It is interesting that out of the 42 respondents, only 1 senior pastor, and 1 staff pastor recorded that pastoral leadership was inadequate in the church and might force a change in leadership. Denominational leaders recorded 33.3 percentage of inadequate pastoral leadership and church revitalization specialists recorded 42.9 percentage of change needed in the area of pastoral leadership.

Second, motivation is an area of change the data indicated as one of the most difficult roadblocks to a revitalization process. The collected data shows that 39.5 percentage respondents believe a change of attitude is the greatest need for a revitalization church, while the need to stay focused on the main strategic plan was the second most important need 25.6 percentage for success in the revitalization process. A church looking backward at the way things used to be came in third with 18.6 percentage, and getting the congregation to mobilize and make a difference in the community 16.3 percentage was the least of the four reasons.
Figure 29. SBC and Congregational Roadblocks

Third, another set of change agents that the data revealed as important for a church in a revitalization process to deal with is: Spiritual issues; Behavioral issues; Old habits, and Lack of organizational structure. Below is listed the breakdown of percentages. The collected data reveals that the most important change agent out of these four is Spiritual issues with 48.8 percentage of the respondents agreeing.

Figure 30. SBC and Change Agents
Table 27. Segmented SBC and Change Agents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Spiritual issues</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Behavioral issues</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Old habits</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Lack of organizational structure</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, the compiled data shows that a huge change agent is trust and unity. The congregation must learn to trust the pastor and his leadership as the church transitions into the revitalization process, and a united effort by the entire church is necessary to make the transition smoothly. The statistical breakdown between the church trusting the pastor as important or the pastor trusting the church as important is overwhelming in favor of the church trusting the pastor and his leadership 86.1 percentage to 14.0 percentage.

Summary

Chapter four dealt with the basic data regarding church revitalization in the SBC. In addition, the role of the church was detailed with data revealing what role churches play in the revitalization process with respect to what a church must do in order to have a successful revitalization process.

Second, the role of the church and the factors that a church needs to bring about in order to have a successful revitalization in the SBC is addressed. Since churches are autonomous in the SBC, each church must determine what it is going to do to overcome its problems. The data reveals factors that are of upmost importance for the church to become healthy and successful in a revitalization mode.
Third, the role of the church and the change agents that each congregation must search out for themselves is crucial according to the data conducted. The statistical research details areas of change that need to take place in a congregation to help promote a successful revitalization process. The data indicates that these change agents are not only essential for a successful revitalization process but are extremely helpful for continued growth and health of the SBC church.

Finally, chapter five will conclude this researcher’s project with an action plan to: overcome church euthanasia with a plan to revitalize dead and dying SBC churches. In addition to the outline and plan, the researcher will include the conclusion of this project.
CHAPTER FIVE

CHURCH REVITALIZATION: FOURTEEN ESSENTIAL STEPS AND CONCLUSION

The conclusion drawn after in-depth research of Southern Baptist Convention churches is that almost 90% of the churches are either plateaued, dying, in a state of inclement death, or already dead, while the other 10 percentage find themselves exceling in growth parameters such as the following: People consistently coming to Christ, healthy disciples being reproduced, members living out the Word in their daily lives, members serving and meeting significant needs in the community, and leaders looking for ways to send missionaries and start churches.¹

This thesis project has been devoted to “Overcoming Church Euthanasia” within the Southern Baptist Convention of churches. “The 50,000 plus churches and congregations must cooperate like never before through the 1,100 associations, 42 state conventions, and twelve Southern Baptist entities.”² As Southern Baptists, each church is extremely important not only in the life of the SBC, but more importantly in the lives of those who need to hear the good news of Jesus Christ.

Church revitalization is crucial in enabling Christian people to reach North America for Christ. Not only are new church starts needed, but new life must be given to existing churches that have struggled for the last twenty plus years.


The data gathered indicates that 100 percentage of denominational leaders and church revitalization specialists believe that spiritual depth and dynamics are lacking: Congregation is dysfunctional; Pastoral leadership is inadequate; or Vision is lacking in the dead or dying church.

Fourteen Step Plan of Action

Essential SBC Steps – Better SBC Communication

Step one begins with better communication from SBC entities to churches. The Southern Baptist Convention and its entities must maintain a better line of communication with its churches. The Annual Church Profile (ACP) should ask additional questions other than those of numeric additions or subtractions in such things as membership, new converts, or finances. The ACP program that is being used by the SBC should be updated to catch a trend of data. When a church is experiencing a drop in Sunday school or worship attendance over a three year period of time, an indicator should be flashed, and the local association should be notified. Additionally, someone from the Sunday school department in the state convention should contact the local church to see if the state association can be of assistance to the church.

The ACP is the one instrument that state conventions use to track data about the local churches. In addition to simply data tracking, other church events should be recorded, such as church mergers or church closings and reasons involved. Currently, the ACP only notes that a church closed; it does not give a reason for the closure. This leaves a void in the information process and gives a false reading in percentages of church closures.

Better SBC Assistance for Churches

Step two sets up a database, provides assessments, and initiate workshops. The collected data indicated that over 97.7 percentage of SBC leaders would like to see a database of healthy, growing churches that would be willing to help dying churches. The NAMB should set up a
A National SBC Emphasis on Church Revitalization

Step three requires the SBC to begin a national revitalization emphasis. When asked about national revitalization of enervated churches in their area, the SBC leaders responded by 69.8 percentage that a national revitalization emphasis should be created on a scale comparable to that of the “Send North America” program with emphasis on new church starts. A national emphasis should be begun to place a much more serious emphasis on church revitalization efforts in existing churches that are experiencing decline. According to NAMB data, over 45,000 SBC churches 90.0 percentage are in decline or death. If this information is accurate, it means that 45,000 of all SBC churches are in trouble. If 45,000 churches are in trouble, it is a national crisis and should be treated as one.

Enhancements to NAMB Website for Dying Churches

Step four requires NAMB website be made friendlier to declining churches. Currently, if a declining church goes to the website of the NAMB, it will find information on the Legacy Project. The Legacy Project is an option for dying churches that are in extreme financial difficulty, and it suggests enlisting one of three models. Churches that meet the legacy criteria
can either go into the “Replant Model by where the at-risk church closes and a new church plant is launched, or a Multi-campus Model where an at-risk church closes and becomes a campus location for an existing church plant, or finally a church can choose the Merger Model where by the at-risk church joins with an existing church plant and the two churches become one.” ³

The website is not unfriendly to a church in decline that meets one of those models, but a church that does not meet one of those models can become discouraged with the lack of other choices or models to implement. Over 53.0 percentage of SBC leaders stated that the lack of additional information on the NAMB site is discouraging to pastors or church leaders who may be earnestly searching for help in the revitalization process.

It is an essential step that NAMB list models other than the three found in the Legacy program in order for a church to select a model appropriate for its individual church revitalization. Not all 45,000 SBC churches qualify to go into the Legacy program. NAMB needs to lists other models. Tom Cheyne’s book, Thirty-Eight Models of Church Revitalization for the Twenty-First Century lists thirty-eight models or methods to use to begin a revitalization process. NAMB should develop these methods or models and list additional ones on its website to address needs not found in the Legacy program. This would create a more user-friendly site for pastors and church leaders searching for help in church revitalization.

**Essential Church Steps – Church Must Recommit to SBC Identity**

Step five is essential in making sure Southern Baptist identity is not lost. The SBC church must maintain its heritage of doctrinal understanding and the implications that follow.

The NAMB must implement better communication and provide more user-friendly web service to the churches, but the church is ultimately responsible for doing the hard task of recommitting itself as the New Testament church in today’s culture. The lynchpin that has kept SBC churches relevant in today’s culture has been its commitment to Baptist doctrine. A church that does not know what it believes can be very harmful to the gospel message.

Adapting that thinking to Baptist life, I would like to call for us once again to focus on matters of Baptist identity such as a commitment to the Gospel, to the full truthfulness and authority of Scripture, to the autonomy of the local church, to a regenerate church membership, to religious liberty, to the priesthood of all believers, believers’ baptism, and other important tenets of Baptist identity.4

Churches need to reestablish its Baptist identity if it truly wants to become healthy and revitalized. When SBC leaders were asked, how many of the doctrines of the faith in the SBC church can be left out and the church still remain healthy? The response was none. The doctrines included: Text Driven Preaching, Salvation through Repentance and Faith, Baptism by Immersion, Priesthood of the Believer, Church Discipline and the Power of Prayer. Below are results from the segmented survey of the SBC leaders.

Table 28. Segmented: What can be left out and still remain Healthy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Senior Pastor</th>
<th>Staff Pastor</th>
<th>Denominational Leader</th>
<th>Revitalization Specialist</th>
<th>Lay Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All are necessary in order to be truly healthy</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At least one could be left out and the church could still be considered healthy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Senior Pastor</th>
<th>Staff Pastor</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denominational Leader</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revitalization Specialist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay Leader</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Pastor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Pastor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denominational Leader</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revitalization Specialist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay Leadership</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At least two could be left out and the church could still be considered healthy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Pastor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Pastor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denominational Leader</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revitalization Specialist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lay Leadership</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey shows that 80.0 percentage of senior pastors responded positively that all doctrines listed are important for a church to truly be considered healthy. The negative response is that 20.0 percentage of senior pastors believe that one doctrine listed could be left out and the church would continue to be considered healthy.

This researcher believes it is an essential step that all SBC churches participating in a new revitalization process first recommit to the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 Version. It is extremely important for the church to be known as a Southern Baptist church with its people committed the Book with Bible teaching ministers who not only preach the Bible, but serve members who live according to biblical principles as endorsed by SBC Baptist doctrine.

**Church Must Commit to Worship Based Praying**

Step six is one of the most important and essential steps in helping SBC churches not only revitalize, but it also is a necessary step in making the body holy in God’s sight. The church
needs to learn how and exercise Scripture-Fed or Worship Based Prayer as defined by Daniel Henderson. Prayer is the single most important aspect of any revitalization. The church must learn or re-learn how to pray.

Beulah Baptist Church was selected for this thesis as an example of a church in a revitalization program. Regardless of whether it was stated by this local congregation or if was voiced by SBC leaders, agreement was that learning to sincerely connect with a Holy God is essential and extremely important in the life of any church. Daniel Henderson in his book, *Transforming Prayer*, re-introduces churches to Scripture-Fed or Worship-Based Prayer reflective of the psalmist, David.

When this researcher looks at the segmented breakdown of data, 100.0 percentage of all SBC leaders and Lay leaders conclude that the church needs to re-learn how to pray. Too often in SBC churches, a prayer list is compiled. Prayer meetings in many SBC churches turn into forty-five minutes of prayer request and fifteen minutes of praying by going down a list. List praying is not the most effective way to pray, and it can limit the church and its effectiveness in seeking holiness from a holy God.

A Worship Based Prayer outline could have components of soft listening reflective instrumental music playing of hymns or praise songs along with a welcome and orientation. People need to understand what type of praying is going to be happening, and what is expected from them. Worship Based Prayer is about worship. One should worship God by allowing the Holy Spirit to speak to us through the reading of God’s word and meditation.

Second, after the orientation, the group in attendance might sing some songs such as a favorite hymn of holiness or a praise song. As you continue, the leader of the Worship Based Prayer might read a passage of scripture like Acts 6:1-7.

1 Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. 2 Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the
Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; 4 but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’ 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, 6 whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. 7 Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Third, the leader might begin focusing the group on a prayer focus. This is time of worshiping the God who produces positive spiritual outcomes. Afterward the leader might sing a chorus of a favorite hymn focused on how great God is. As the meeting continues and people have shared concerns to God that each are in need of a particular solution, the leader might move to a second prayer focus of trusting Christ’s sufficiency for His people. Once people have prayed, another song might be sung related to that particular topic.

Finally, the leader will decide how many prayer focuses are needed for any given prayer session. Many times, a time constraint is in place, so a leader needs to remain aware of those constraints. The key for success is for the people and the leader to prepare for a time of worship and prayer to a holy God who is full of mercy, grace and love, and allow the Holy Spirit to lead each one in a time of Worship Based Prayer. 5

It is an essential step that each church re-learn and re-teach how better to pray by utilizing Daniel Henderson’s re-introduction to psalmist David’s method of Worship-Based prayer. It is imperative that churches be re-introduced to holiness prayer for serving a holy God.

**Church Needs a Viable Plan and Vision**

Step seven is essential for without a plan and vision, the church may suffer early setbacks that could imperial the church’s revitalizing efforts. Churches in need of revitalization need to develop and plan and pray for God to give the church a vision as it proceeds.

Denominational leaders and revitalization specialists both agree 100.0 percentage that churches in need of revitalization need to devise a plan of action prior to launching into a revitalization program. Senior Pastors and Staff Pastors agree 94.7 percentage on developing a

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plan prior to a launch. In addition to a plan of action, the church also needs to pray through and develop a vision of where it is going, and how it is going to get there?

Churches need to develop a visible chart, map, or statistical gauge depicting how the church is going to move beyond the dead and dying state into a thriving, growing, and healthy condition. When SBC leaders and pastors were asked how important it was for the upcoming revitalized participating church to demonstrate charts, graphs, or visual outlines showing how the church is going to begin to grow again, 87.6 percentage to 100.0 percentage agreed that outlines are necessary if the church is to succeed in getting the people to buy into the model and support the leadership.

This researcher believes it is essential that each church entering into a revitalized church process, sit down and plan out the short term and long term goals and the benchmarks of success. In addition, each church should write out a vision statement. Within the vision statement, the church leadership needs to chart the plan in a visible way forward with benchmarks to meet. To complement the plan, the vision should also be stated as how it correlates with the plan of action.

**Church Needs to Commit to Text Driven Preaching**

Step eight is by far the most important and essential step in preaching the Gospel message. SBC churches need to preach the text of scripture. It is essential for a church in need of revitalization that it calls a Godly man who is a text driven preacher.

For too long, SBC churches have strayed from text driven preaching of God’s word. In the Lukan account found in Acts, Peter is preaching text driven messages. Dr. David Allen gives a definition of what text driven means.

In a nutshell, text-driven preaching is a term that says the actual structure of the sermon, to some extent, as well as the substance of the sermon and the spirit of the sermon, all should come from what we find in the text itself. In that sense, the sermon is not topically
driven, it’s not audience-driven; it’s not felt-needs driven; it’s not narrative-driven in the sense of the new homiletic narrative as a rubric for how to do preaching. 6

Research indicates that for some SBC churches that are in decline, the reason they have weakened is partly because of poor pastoral preaching. Since many of our SBC seminaries were infiltrated at one time by liberal thought and heresy, a large group of pastors graduated and began pastoring churches with poor preaching skills. The lack of text driven preaching caused many churches to shutter because of the doubt that seethed out and into the congregations. The Bible was referred to as a book instead of the book.

Research shows that it is important to learn preparation and proper delivery techniques of a text driven message before preaching it. Here is an excerpt from Dr. David Allen, Dean of Theology and preacher at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas:

There are some key things that I encourage people to do in terms of the actual methodology of preparing a text-driven sermon that might be somewhat different from what they normally do. Let's assume we're preaching on an epistle. In the exegetical process, first of all, determine the paragraph boundaries, the paragraph units; then my recommendation would be to preach through the paragraph units. There are linguistic reasons why I would argue that, which we won't go into now; but I would say once you determine your paragraph boundary, then that paragraph will be the text from which you preach.

What you will do is analyze that paragraph by identifying and doing what I call verb charting. This is something that is not usually found in standard books on expository preaching. Here you actually make a list of every verb that is in your text, every main verb, and then you make a secondary list of verbals, which would be your participles and infinitives. Ideally you would do this from the Greek New Testament; but if you've had no Greek, then you would do so as best you can with the help of commentaries and an English Bible. Then you determine the tense, voice and mood of those verbs and you chart that, you identify that.

You use that information to determine what are the independent clauses and what are the dependent clauses in your text, with the underlying sense that the independent clauses are going to convey information that is more dominant in terms of its meaning; and the subordinate clauses are going to contain information, by definition that is subordinate.

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that you move on down from the paragraph level to the sentence level, to the clause level, to the phrase level. You analyze each one of these finally down to the word level where you do word studies.

It may be that one sentence is conveying an exhortation, the next sentence is the grounds or reason for that exhortation. That's the kind of thing this methodology zeroes in on, and thus allows one to understand what the author is really saying in that text in terms of the main verses and sub-points. Then you let that flow into your outlining process and the development of your sermon. I would say that's a big part of what we're attempting to do. I use 1 John 2:15-17 as an example of actually how to do this in my chapter. That is a bit different from what is done in more traditional exegetical approaches to writing expository sermons.  

**Church Must Trust Pastoral Leadership**

Step nine, church in revitalization must trust the pastoral leadership is not only essential, but it is crucial for success in the revitalization process. The old saying, trust is earned is true for both the pastoral leadership and the congregation. In the revitalization process, the pastoral leadership should get the benefit of the doubt and a level of trust because statistics show past and poor decisions by many congregations were forced on pastoral leadership because congregations were not willing to follow a called man of God. Many congregations put petty disagreements over vision and direction ahead of Godly unity and outward focus. For many churches, this caused a continual decline that most likely led to a church becoming less relevant and dying.

It is imperative that the church congregation be able to trust the pastor to lead the church through the revitalization process. The reviewed data indicates that the pastor and his leadership must be trusted by the congregation if the revitalization process is to be successful. Between 75.0 – 100.0 percentage of SBC pastors and leaders responded that they believe that this one area is a must for a successful revitalization church process. Statistics show, senior pastors who are leading a church when it begins to decline or serve there during a large part of the declining years, are not able to lead the church through the revitalization process, mainly because of lack

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of trust on the part of the congregation. This should open the door for new leadership and new vision.

**Church Must Commit to Relationships, Leadership, and Focus**

Step ten is essential for internal and external growth in the local church. A revitalized church must be committed to caring relationships, servant leadership and keeping and outward focus. Too many times, the local church have lost its focus on the most important growth factors in ministry. Jesus died for the church. The church is a body of believers who should be unified in Word and deed. It should demonstrate love in its relationships; it should demonstrate attentiveness in its leadership, and forward thinking in its outward focus on the community.

The New Testament church is defined in the Lukan account of Acts. Luke describes for the reader how the church is focused on each member, and the unity thereof. The people who had just a few days earlier been shouting, crucify, were now shouting, how we can help. People were selling all their goods and possessions and giving as needed. In addition to the generosity and love shown to believers, the church also “devoted itself to the apostle’s teaching.”

Each one was striving to improve his or her servant leadership abilities. For the first time, people were experiencing a newness of life.

Tom Rainer of Lifeway Christian Resources compliments Andy Chamber’s book as it describes how churches today can learn from the Lukan account of Acts, even between its pages.

There are a lot of great exegetical books on the Acts of the Apostles and plenty of books on contemporary church life that utilize Acts. However, far too few books bridge the gap between scholarship and the needs of the church today. Andy Chambers in his book *Exemplary Life* seeks to close that gap by showing how Luke embedded a vision for exemplary church life within his narrative. He demonstrates how Luke was deeply concerned about showing Christ’s followers a portrait of what life together could be like and how they could shape their own churches after the apostolic pattern. This volume

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8 Acts 2:42 (NASB).
helps us hear Luke’s distinctive voice on the church alongside other Bible authors. I highly recommend it.  

Finally, the revitalized church must keep an outward focus. New people are the key to church growth. It is a fulfillment and mandate of the scripture to reach out to new people with the gospel message, and churches accomplish this by focusing on the community where they are located. The pastor preaches the message as did the apostle Peter in Acts. The people respond to the message through an invitation from Peter (pastor). The church body begins to minister to the new believers. This could mean a lot of different methods in current times; the church must meet the needs the best way it can. When new believers become a part of the family of God, each one should become familiar with 2 Timothy 2:2 and begin to “teach one so he or she can reach one.” This researcher believes Harry Reeder sums it up best when he writes about the church of today, and what pastoral leadership and the congregation should expect from each other.

Revitalization is a commitment by the church leadership to Biblically lead the church back to spiritual health and vitality. Let’s use an appropriate analogy. The health of the church is in the Hands of the Sovereign Lord just like the health of my children is in His Hands. But, as a parent, while I rest in God’s sovereign will for the health of my children, I also engage in those means that God has ordained for me as a parent to effect the health of my children. As a means of accomplishing this I make sure they are fed, I make sure they are exercised and I make sure that they get appropriate rest. Now, let’s apply the analogy to Pastors. Paul says in the book of Thessalonians that he was like a “nurturing mother” and a “faithful father.” So, we too are to parent the church to spiritual health and vitality. Statistical growth is not our objective; statistical growth, (i.e. the enlargement of the Body of Christ) is like the growth of my child’s body…The “first things” of the church are actually the life lines of the church: Christ-centered, Gospel-driven ministry, personal spiritual formation, the ministry of prayer, the ministry of the Word, Biblical mission and vision, leadership multiplication and mobilization, small group disciple making and a great commitment to the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. In an attempt to assist this endeavor I wrote the book: The Leadership Dynamic with the immodest proposal that the church become a Leadership Factory defining, developing

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and deploying leaders from the church into the world instead of our present practice of letting the world define, develop and deploy leaders even into the church.¹⁰

**Church Must Submit to Self-Examination for Discipline**

Step eleven, loving church discipline is not only essential but is badly needed in many, and maybe in all SBC churches that are in decline or dying. Statistics reveal that church dysfunction, bad habits, and sinful spiritual issues have led to the decline and eventual death of many churches. The unfortunate reality is that this is true in most cases of church closures. The church and its leadership have allowed unconfessed sin and unacceptable behavior from church members to be accepted. This bad behavior in many instances has left the church reeling from scandal and irrelevancy in the community, leaving the church wounded and dysfunctional.

Dr. Rodney Harrison, a former revitalization pastor says,

…part of the process is also addressing issues that the former leadership of a church did not deal with, such as ‘problems caused by members who embodied the works of the flesh’. In church restarts, church discipline has always been a part of the revitalization process. The goal of discipline is restoration; however, since the process is painful, most churches in need of revitalization have not addressed the issue of members behaving badly.¹²

When surveyed, 76.8 percentage of all SBC pastors and leaders indicated that church discipline in a revitalized church is either important or extremely important. It is important or extremely important because it allows old sinful corruption to be cleansed, and it gives a clean church a fresh new encounter with a holy God and a healthier congregation.

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Church Must Call Only Men of God as Pastor

Step twelve, the senior pastor must be God called to lead the church. This is one of the most overlooked essential steps that must be followed if the church truly seeks a successful revitalization process. It is not only essential, but it is a must for a New Testament inspired church body. In Ephesians 4:12 and I Timothy 5:17, the biblical mandate of Elder/Pastor is found. The senior pastor or the “under-shepherd” of the local congregation should be a man qualified to lead a church. If a man has not been set apart by God and ordained into the ministry, he should not be considered for the role of senior pastor.

Below, John Piper gives a clearer explanation of the fact that a man needs to be God called to the ministry to be effective.

The Holy Spirit makes them overseers, not man. They exist to help the church fulfill its threefold purpose: To express joy in Christ; to spread joy in Christ, and to deepen joy in Christ.

Elders accomplish this through shepherding/pastoring. So think of shepherding/pastoring in the terms of Ephesians 4:12: Equipping believers for the work of ministry so that we all might express joy, spread joy, and deepen joy in Christ. We saw that shepherding or pastoring is a comprehensive term for all that elders do: Preaching, teaching, and exhorting are all parts of shepherding. Indeed, the emphasis biblically in direct commands to elders is on prayer and the public aspects of ministry, though it is also clear that caring for the flock as individuals is important also.

Finally, the ultimate goal of the pastors/shepherds is not healthy sheep, happy sheep, or well-fed sheep. Instead, the goal is for all of us to become the kind of sheep Jesus is: a sacrificial lamb. So the central task of the elder/pastor is to prepare you for sacrifice, to prepare you for laying down your life. So: How do elders function together to accomplish this? Are there different types of elders? Are there authority relationships among elders?  

Piper continued to discuss the Biblical positons of a called man who is a senior pastor. Senior Pastors are to have these four characteristics: “The centrality of necessity of preaching, God called individuals, the Church should support the preacher’s leadership, and the church should be financially taking care of by the church body.”

I Timothy 5:17 speaks of “rule” which indicates the role the senior pastor should take. A senior pastor should be a man who leads his congregation through his preaching, teaching, and direction given to the church. The research has indicated that in many instances senior pastors have lacked in some of these areas which have led to decline and in some instances death. This is why it is so important for the senior pastor to deepen his walk with a holy God, for he must lead the sheep to deepen its relationship with a holy God.

If the senior pastor’s role in the church is to “express joy, spread joy, and deepen joy in Christ,” then he must certainly be a called-out man of God. Some churches that have experienced decline have gone away from biblically mandated men of God and chosen to call CEO’s who have been ordained by the world instead of by God. The senior pastor should be a man who has devoted one’s life to God and believes one’s calling is to be God’s instrument to be used however God sees fit.

After 19 years in pastoral ministry, blogger, Scott Postma states,

I’m concerned about the pastor who is a chief executive instead of a contemplative sage. The pastor is called to a contemplative life of prayer and study of the word (Acts 6:4, and Ephesians 4:11-16). From that life his ministry flows to the church. The pastor was never called to be a rock-star communicator or bench-mark business leader. He was called to model redemption and shepherd the flock of God (1 Peter 5:1-4, and Acts

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14 Ibid.

Perhaps pastors should consider putting away their John Maxwell and Nelson Searcy books and picking up the Bible and the church fathers.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{Church Must Recommit to Historical Baptist Ordinances}

Step Thirteen, of re-educating oneself on the Historical Ordinances of the Lord’s Supper and Baptism is not only essential, but is desperately needed in SBC churches of today. It is imperative that the church re-educate itself on the ordinances of the church. For too long, churches have practiced the Lord’s Supper as a nominal must or an occasional procedure. Churches and its leadership must refocus on what the New Testament in Acts refers to when discussing the Ordinances of the Lord Supper and Baptism. Both are extremely important in the life of not only the church but of the individual. Too many churches have not taught with a clear understanding of what Baptism truly means to the new believer in Christ. An extensive look back at Luke’s account in Acts would give churches a clearer account of the statement the new believer had once the person gave themselves to the water and took one’s stand for following Christ and His teaching. The Lord’s Supper is not only a once a month, once a quarter, or once every six month event, but it should be re-introduced to the church as an act of worship and communion with a holy God. Churches in revitalization efforts certainly need the holiness of God to re-strengthen and revitalize the people of God. Both Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper provide the type of motivation needed when truly understood and accepted by faith.

They are not human creations but given by God to assist us in declaring and sharing the gospel (1 Corinthians 11:26) and motivating us to live the Christian life (1 Corinthians 10:16-33). The act of baptism affords opportunity for a person who is being baptized to testify publicly that he or she has trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior and experienced forgiveness of sin. The person doing the baptizing can utilize the experience to explain the nature of salvation and the meaning of baptism.

The Lord’s Supper provides an opportunity for both evangelism and Christian growth. The Supper movingly emphasizes the love of God that led Jesus to give himself a

sacrifice for sin. For believers, the Supper affords a time for special communion with the Lord, expressing thanks for His sacrifice that enables us to be forgiven of our sin. Thus the Lord’s Supper is also referred to as Communion. 17

Church Must Recommit to Royal Priesthood of the Believer Teaching

Step fourteen is essential in a revitalization process because Churches need to be re-educated about the Priesthood of the Believer. Statistical research conducted in this project concluded that one area of sizeable instruction in the local church is helping the new believer to understand who he or she is in Christ Jesus. The Southern Baptist Convention changed its Baptist Faith and Message from the 1963 version to the 2000 version. There was a need for a greater and better understanding of what the Priesthood of the Believer stood for in the SBC church. Al Mohler states: “Baptists believe in the priesthood of all believers because we understand the church to be an assembly of priests together. No human priest stands between the believer and the Lord Jesus Christ—our Great High Priest.” 18 The Priesthood of the Believer and its history within the SBC for a while back in the 1970’s became a fluid and diverse understanding and began changing because certain elements within Baptist doctrine became blurred with the liberalization of interpretation. “Indeed, some have claimed that every believer has the right to believe anything he or she wishes, and that any doctrinal belief is as good as any other—regardless of its lack of biblical support.” 19 For the church to really be able to revitalize, congregants need to be re-educated and come to a clear understanding of who one is in Christ,

19 Ibid.
and understand who and what a Southern Baptist Church believes especially when it comes to oneself as a holy Priesthood of Believer.

**Colossians 3:1-17**

3 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. 5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, 7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— 11 a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. 12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

**CONCLUSION**

In Conclusion, with an almost epidemic of SBC churches in decline or death, it is imperative that each SBC church take a close look at where it is in terms of health, growth, and relevancy. Jesus Christ died for the church, and if the SBC church is not fulfilling its mandate, it needs to step back, re-tool itself, and re-launch, so it can be not only relevant in the community but successful in accomplishing the task set out for it on the day of Pentecost.

---

20 Colossians 3: 1-17 (NASB).
This researcher believes the contents of Colossians, Chapter 3 gives an admonishment to all churches and its leadership. One needs to heed the words of the apostle Paul. As believers and followers of Jesus Christ, the church is seeking to revitalize; let each remember who one is in Christ Jesus. The church has a responsibility to love the Lord and Savior, love the brothers and sisters in Christ, and love the lost. If the church complies with these three love assignments, God will add to His church, and true church revitalization will be enjoyed.

According to NAMB’s statistics, 70.0 percentage of all SBC churches are in decline and another 10.0 – 15.0 percentage are at death’s door. Those numbers are staggering. There are many reasons for the decline; some have been mentioned in this project. There is not enough time or paper to record all the reasons for the decline in each and every church, but an effort has been exerted to cover the most common reasons.

It is the hope and prayer of this researcher that SBC churches and the SBC and its entities, such as NAMB and Lifeway, learn to work closer together to bring about a change in the process of turning around dead and dying SBC churches. No Christian leader wants to see a church die. The strategy of planting new churches is a complement to existing churches, and the funding for the new church plants comes from existing churches. In many cases, churches that fall into the 70.0 percentage of church decline, are still giving consistently toward the new church plants administered by the NAMB. The ACP reveals the truth of this statistic in many churches that are considered in decline.

Beulah Baptist Church, the local church congregation used as a case study for this research, even in its worst years of decline still maintained an extremely healthy missions giving for the NAMB, the IMB, and the Cooperative Program. Since churches like Beulah have given faithfully even in decline, the SBC entities should work even closer with them.
Church revitalization efforts are mostly delegated to the local congregation. The essential steps listed in this final chapter, if implemented, will certainly bring the congregation back to New Testament footing as is suggested and modeled in Acts. It is imperative for the church congregation to do an assessment of itself and of its surroundings. The foundation of the church’s existence should be its desire to honor Christ in all it does and to deepen its love for Christ.

Finally, this researcher cannot stress enough about these fourteen essential steps in as stated earlier and backed up by data and statistical research; every good plan of action in the revitalization process requires a viable plan to be carried out. This research project concludes that if these fourteen essential steps are carried out, in faith, “God will add to His church.” The Southern Baptist Convention needs to immediately revise and implement the steps pertaining to it. If the SBC does its part, the church does its part in these fourteen essential steps, then and only then, the church will not only be revitalized but will become a healthy and relevant Christ following SBC church again.

---

APPENDIX A

Annual Church Profile Survey for Beulah Baptist Church from 1980-Present

SBC Conservatives of Virginia
Beulah-Lynchburg
528 Leesville Road, Lynchburg, VA 24502
File:///Membership/Annual/Church/Profile/1980-2014/Baptist/2/6/2015.

1980
Total Number of Baptisms – 18
Number of Additions – 40
Number of Members Lost – 42
Number of Total Members – 978
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday school – 1078
Average Attendance in Sunday school – 375
Total Missions Expenditures - $73,219.00

1981
Total Number of Baptisms – 22
Number of Additions – 22
Number of Members Lost – 29
Number of Total Members – 993
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday school – 1034
Average Attendance in Sunday school – 412
Total Missions Expenditures - $89,967.00

1982
Total Number of Baptisms – 19
Number of Additions – 32
Number of Members Lost – 60
Number of Total Members – 984
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 1097
Average Attendance in Sunday school – 415
Total Missions Expenditures - $114,482.00
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Number of Baptisms</th>
<th>Number of Additions</th>
<th>Number of Members Lost</th>
<th>Number of Total Members</th>
<th>Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School</th>
<th>Average Attendance in Sunday School</th>
<th>Total Missions Expenditures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>979</td>
<td>1052</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>$103,685.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>978</td>
<td>1038</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>$113,142.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>979</td>
<td>1074</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>$ Blank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>976</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>$ Blank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>$121,682.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1988
Total Number of Baptisms – 3
Number of Additions – 26
Number of Members Lost – 41
Number of Total Members – 951
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 712
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 316
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 134,272.00

1989
Total Number of Baptisms – 18
Number of Additions – 47
Number of Members Lost – 31
Number of Total Members – 985
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 722
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 281
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 128,398.00

1990
Total Number of Baptisms – 16
Number of Additions – 70
Number of Members Lost – 35
Number of Total Members – 1033
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 733
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 335
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 133,462.00

1991
Total Number of Baptisms – 17
Number of Additions – 38
Number of Members Lost – 41
Number of Total Members – 1050
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 671
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 320
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 138,802.00

1992
Total Number of Baptisms – 9
Number of Additions – 22
Number of Members Lost – 54
Number of Total Members – 1027
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 659
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 267
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 119,623.00
1993
Total Number of Baptisms – 11
Number of Additions – 24
Number of Members Lost – 45
Number of Total Members – 1013
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 655
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 287
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 114,489.00

1994
Total Number of Baptisms – 1
Number of Additions – 16
Number of Members Lost – 42
Number of Total Members – 989
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 662
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 267
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 114,489.00

1995
Total Number of Baptisms – 7
Number of Additions – 10
Number of Members Lost – 8
Number of Total Members – 969
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 975
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 261
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 97,713.00

1996
Total Number of Baptisms – 8
Number of Additions – 11
Number of Members Lost – 44
Number of Total Members – 817
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 943
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 237
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 95,277.00

1997
Total Number of Baptisms – 10
Number of Additions – 18
Number of Members Lost – No Listing on ACP
Number of Total Members – 811
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 925
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 245
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 101,281.00
1998
Total Number of Baptisms – 11
  Number of Additions – 9
Number of Members Lost – No Listing on ACP
  Number of Total Members – 799
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 766
  Average Attendance in Sunday School – 228
Total Missions Expenditures - $107,435.00

1999
Total Number of Baptisms – 12
  Number of Additions – 20
Number of Members Lost – No Listing on ACP
  Number of Total Members – 807
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 777
  Average Attendance in Sunday School – 228
Total Missions Expenditures - $ Not Listed on ACP

2000
Total Number of Baptisms – 12
  Number of Additions – 8
*Number in AM Worship – New Item on ACP - 235
  Number of Total Members – 790
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 779
  Average Attendance in Sunday School – 212
Total Missions Expenditures - $110,426.00

2001
Total Number of Baptisms – 12
  Number of Additions – 14
*Number in AM Worship – New Item on ACP - 241
  Number of Total Members – 784
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 774
  Average Attendance in Sunday School – 200
Total Missions Expenditures - $88,178.00
2002
Total Number of Baptisms – 6
Number of Additions – 21
Number of Members Lost – No Listing on ACP
*Number in AM Worship – New Item on ACP - 210
Number of Total Members – 766
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 706
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 179
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 108,572.00

2003
Total Number of Baptisms – 5
Number of Additions – 19
Number of Members Lost – No Listing on ACP
*Number in AM Worship – New Item on ACP - 198
Number of Total Members – 741
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 664
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 171
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 87,464.00

2004
Total Number of Baptisms – 8
Number of Additions – 17
Number of Members Lost – No Listing on ACP
*Number in AM Worship – New Item on ACP - 194
Number of Total Members – 741
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 631
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 196
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 80,436.00

2005
Total Number of Baptisms – 2
Number of Additions – 12
Number of Members Lost – No Listing on ACP
*Number in AM Worship – New Item on ACP - 202
Number of Total Members – 712
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 390
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 204
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 91,923.00
2006
Total Number of Baptisms – 8
Number of Additions – 13
Number of Members Lost – No Listing on ACP
*Number in AM Worship – New Item on ACP - 207
Number of Total Members – 704
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 443
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 201
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 103,180.00

2007
Total Number of Baptisms – 4
Number of Additions – 10
Number of Members Lost – No Listing on ACP
*Number in AM Worship – New Item on ACP - 204
Number of Total Members – 699
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 430
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 198
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 114,913.00

2008
Total Number of Baptisms – 1
Number of Additions – 8
Number of Members Lost – No Listing on ACP
*Number in AM Worship – New Item on ACP - 192
Number of Total Members – 679
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 313
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 178
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 130,063.00

2009
Total Number of Baptisms – 5
Number of Additions – 6
Number of Members Lost – No Listing on ACP
*Number in AM Worship – New Item on ACP - 176
Number of Total Members – 672
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 380
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 162
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 126,624.00
2010
Total Number of Baptisms – 8
Number of Additions – 14
Number of Members Lost – No Listing on ACP
*Number in AM Worship – New Item on ACP - 170
Number of Total Members – 669
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – 389
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 144
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 145,569.00

2011
Total Number of Baptisms – 0
Number of Additions – 9
Number of Members Lost – No Listing on ACP
*Number in AM Worship – New Item on ACP - 172
Number of Total Members – 653
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – No Listing on ACP
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 194
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 88,603.00

2012
(Revitalization of Beulah Baptist Church began)*
Total Number of Baptisms – 3
Number of Additions – 9
Number of Members Lost – No Listing on ACP
*Number in AM Worship – New Item on ACP - 159
Number of Total Members – 642
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – No Listing on ACP
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 142
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 75,654.00

2013
Total Number of Baptisms – 5
Number of Additions – 27
Number of Members Lost – No Listing on ACP
*Number in AM Worship – New Item on ACP - 188
Number of Total Members – 637
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – No Listing on ACP
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 136
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 107,485.00
2014
Total Number of Baptisms – 4
Number of Additions – 32
Number of Members Lost – No Listing on ACP
*Number in AM Worship – New Item on ACP - 176
Number of Total Members – 649
Total Number Enrolled in Sunday School – No Listing on ACP
Average Attendance in Sunday School – 132
Total Missions Expenditures - $ 100,657.00
APPENDIX B

Survey Conducted of Senior Pastors, Staff Pastors, Denominational Leaders, Revitalization Specialists, and Lay Leadership.

Survey: Overcoming Church Euthanasia: A Plan to Revitalize Dead and Dying SBC Churches

1. Do you agree or disagree that before a SBC church can be revitalized, it must first become healthy in prayer, preaching, and possibility?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Agree</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>79.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Not Sure</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. The North American Mission Board has been making a great spiritual investment in the local church by supporting new church planters in support of new church plants. This investment is called “Send North America.” Do you agree or disagree that the North American Mission Board should make the same type of investment in dead or dying SBC churches as they are in new church starts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. I Agree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. I Disagree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Currently, most SBC state conventions have a person dedicated to helping churches with a revitalization. What areas of help are most needed in revitalizing a dead or dying church?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Resources and Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Finances to help pay staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. A Mentor or Advisor in the process</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. A Partnering Church</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. All of the Above</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. None of the Above</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Historically SBC Churches have generally agreed to Text Driven Preaching, Salvation through Repentance and Faith, Baptism by Immersion, Priesthood of the Believer, Church Discipline and the Power of Prayer. How many of these doctrines of the faith can a healthy SBC church leave out and still remain a healthy congregation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – All are necessary in order to be truly healthy</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – At least one could be left out and the church could still be considered healthy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – At least two could be left out and the church could still be considered healthy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or More and the church could still be considered healthy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of them because doctrine is dead in today’s culture</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Should the NAMB begin a national initiative like “Send North America” in church planting for churches that are in need of revitalization?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Yes, a national emphasis would help expose and help to rescue dead or dying SBC churches</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. No, a national emphasis is not needed because local associations and state conventions are equipped to meet current and future needs better.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Not sure, but would like further study on the subject</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. In Revitalizing a dead or dying church, how important are foundational building blocks, such as: theology, prayer, mission, leadership, and vision?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Extremely important</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>95.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Important</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Less important</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Not important</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. If an SBC church decides it needs to revitalize, but it desires to keep the name the same and focus on the community in which it sits, what are the steps it can take to get the help it needs from SBC entities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Contact its local Baptist association</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Contact its state Baptist convention</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Contact the NAMB</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Contact a representative from a private revitalization consulting group with SBC ties</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. As a church revitalization pastor or leader, how helpful are conferences such as NAMB’s conferences with Johnny Hunt or Tom Cheyney’s RENOVATE conferences?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Extremely helpful</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Encouraging, but most information I already knew</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Not helpful</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. I have not attended either conference</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. Knowing that each church is different and no revitalization is the same, out of these areas listed below, which have you found to be why the church is in need of revitalization?

- A. Spiritual depth and dynamic is lacking 30.2%
- B. Congregation is dysfunctional 20.9%
- C. Pastoral leadership is inadequate 16.3%
- D. Lack of vision 23.3%
- E. None 9.3%

16. If you had to identify generally the third greatest need in a revitalization process, first and second being an assessment and choice of direction the church chooses, which one of these items below do you believe is the third most important aspect in the revitalization process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Pastoral and church leadership</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Finding out what kind of budget one has to work with</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. How much debt does the church have</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Church demographics</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
18. In a revitalization church, how important is it for the pastor to preach text-driven messages?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Extremely important</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>88.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Important</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Less important</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Not important</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. What is the greatest physical need when beginning a revitalization process in a SBC church?

- B. New people 62.8%
- A. Finances 27.9%
- C. Additional staff 4.7%
- D. Overcoming obstacles of an old building 4.7%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Finances</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. New people</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Additional staff</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Overcoming obstacles of an old building</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20. In the strategic vision of a revitalization church, how important is it to have a clear and visible chart or outline for such items as vision, outreach, welcoming, connecting, assimilating, and discipling current or new members?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Extremely important</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>72.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Important</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Less important</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Not important</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. In church revitalization, what roadblock has given you more trouble in motivating the congregation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. A change of attitude</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Getting people to mobilize and make a difference in the community</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Staying focused on the main strategic plan</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Looking backward</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
23. Which one of these four characteristics of a healthy church is the most important in the success of a church? 1. A commitment to loving and caring relationships 2. Servant leadership development 3. Keeping an outward focus 4. Wise administration and stewardship

26. Out of the four suggestions below, which one is the most common reason why a church might not be able to smoothly transition or change to a revitalization mindset?

- A. Past and current history of church dysfunction
- B. Negative leadership
- C. Mentality of pushing against change
- D. Controllers scared of losing power
27. If you had to choose one as the most important in a new revitalization work, noting both are important, which one is the most important?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. You are able to trust church leadership as you prepare for transition.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The church body is able to trust you and your leadership as you prepare for transition.</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28. In moving forward in a church revitalization process, which group is more important out of the four listed below in the success of the revitalization?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Deacons</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Sunday-school teachers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Fellowship team</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Music leader</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29. Out of these five transformations of change in a church revitalization, which one is the most important?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Prayer</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Evangelism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Worship</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Ministry</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Mission</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
30. In your opinion, if the neighborhood the church is located in has drastically changed from an Anglo community to an Asian community, what should the church of 20 Anglo's over the age of 70 do? Without knowing specifics, please choose the best advice listed below out of the four.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Contact NAMB and begin the Legacy Process for revitalization</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Contact the local association or state convention about starting an Asian Congregations and begin to transition to that end</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Close the church and donate the building to the local association for a later use</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Call a bi-vocational pastor and begin reaching out into the community, and ask for help from the association and state convention</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

31. Rate these three factors in church revitalization from one (1) to three (3) with one being the most important and two and three being less important. 1. Prayer 2. Evangelism 3. Preaching (text-driven)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 1 - Prayer - Most Important, Evangelism - 2nd Most Important, and 3rd Most Important is Preaching</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 2 - Evangelism - Most Important, Preaching - 2nd Most Important, and Prayer - 3rd Most Important</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 3 - Preaching - Most Important, Prayer - 2nd Most Important, Evangelism - 3rd Most Important</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 4 - All Three are equally important</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 5 - I have a different selection in ranking importances</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
32. How important is the understanding of the “Priesthood of the Believer” in a revitalization work especially with new attenders?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Extremely important</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Important</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Less important</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Not important</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
33. How important is “Church Discipline” as outlined in the New Testament for a revitalized church?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Extremely important</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Important</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Less important</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Not important</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
34. How important is it to come up with a plan before entering into a revitalization process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Extremely important</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>72.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Important</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Less Important</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Not Important</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

35. How important is “Scripture-fed prayer” or “worship-based prayer” in teaching and re-teaching our churches in revitalization on how better to pray?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Extremely Important</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>72.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Important</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Less Important</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Not Important</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
36. Please check the most accurate position you currently hold.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Senior pastor</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Staff pastor</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Denominational leader</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Revitalization specialist</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Lay church leader</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

Beulah Baptist Church – Survey on Revitalization Process

1. What led to the decline in church membership and attendance at Beulah Baptist Church?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor economy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor pastoral leadership</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divided church congregation</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood demographic change</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Prior to Pastor Dennis being called to Beulah Baptist Church as pastor, did the congregation have an opportunity to voice their concerns and desires for a new direction within the revitalization process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but I did not agree with the decision</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Did the church do an assessment to determine what needed to change in order to revitalize Beulah Baptist Church?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not sure</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. How important is text driven preaching or expositional preaching of the Bible in order to see individual spiritual growth at Beulah Baptist Church?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Important</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Important</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important because any type of preaching will do</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. How important is having new people join and become members of Beulah Baptist Church?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely important</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less important</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. How important is Believer’s Baptism by immersion for new Christians who profess Christ?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely important</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less important</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not important</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Can a person join and become a member of Beulah Baptist Church if he or she is not a Christian?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Can a person who is a member of Beulah Baptist Church live in open rebellion to the teachings of Scripture (homosexuality or such abomination) and still hold a leadership position in the church?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>82.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Can a person who professes to be a Christian but who is living in open rebellion to the teachings of Scripture (homosexuality or such abomination) and refuses to repent of said sin, join the church?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. What is the greatest struggle as a member of Beulah Baptist Church in the revitalization process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looking back at the way things used to be</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current financial struggles</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know where we are going or how we are going to get there</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are an older congregation with not much energy</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. As a member or attender of Beulah Baptist Church, do you know what the vision for the future is for the church?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. Is the Senior Pastor, Director of Music, and Youth Pastor on the same “page” as far as vision and direction of Beulah Baptist Church?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>74.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. As a member or attender of Beulah Baptist Church, do you believe you receive clear communication from the church office or pastoral leadership about upcoming events?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>87.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They could do a better job</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. As a member or attender of Beulah Baptist Church, has a church official contacted you about being a “Legacy Leaver” through a memorial gift when you go to be with the Lord?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes and I have already made arrangements for a memorial gift at my death</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes but I have not yet decided what to do</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, but I would love to talk to someone about becoming a “Legacy Leaver”</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, and I am not interested</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. Revitalization churches are notorious for being short on budgetary giving; if an anonymous giver donated one million dollars to Beulah Baptist Church, what do you think the money should go toward?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A portion to upgrade our fulltime staff and the rest for our ministries</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>61.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A portion to upgrade our fulltime staff and the rest toward our building projects</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All goes to upgrade our buildings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use to kick-off a new educational and fellowship building program</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put it in the bank for a “rainy day”</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
20. If you as a member or attender had to pick one item you would like to see accomplished as a church family over the next five years, what would it be?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 salvations in the faith and our church membership increase by 200</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our budget grows and our income gives us a surplus</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in our community know that Beulah Baptist members care for them</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All our buildings are updated with less stairs, and more bathrooms</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. As a member or attender, do you tithe at least a tenth of your income?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, and I give out of joy and obedience</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, but I surely could use the money more than the church</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, but I know I should, but I need help in learning how</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, because I have bills that take precedent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. As a member or attender of Beulah Baptist Church, how many minutes of time would you say that you spend in daily prayer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 min or less</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-7 min</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-15 min</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 15 min per day</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
25. As a member or attender at Beulah Baptist Church, what would make your Sunday morning experience more spiritually uplifting?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A more balanced approach to musical style</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less formal and more personal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More evangelistic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus more on prayer</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the above</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the above</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

ACP Growth and Decline

Note: Figures are based on total membership gain or decline in previous five years. Growing implies more than 10 percent growth, while declining implies more than 10 percent loss.
Source: Annual Church Profile, Lifeway Christian Resources, Nashville, TN. Compiled by the Center for Missional Research, North American Mission Board, Alpharetta, GA.

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7 Pillars from Renovateconference.org
Permission to reproduce given by Tom Cheyney of National Church Revitalization Conference

[i] Hartford Institute for Religious Research (hirr.hartsem.edu/research)
The Emergence of a Solitary Key Leader for Church Revitalization

When looking to revitalize a church it is vital to see the hand of God raise up a the surfacing of a solitary key unrelenting as well as sure leader.

- Think about the times within military conflicts where a key individual leader was able to bring out of a stalemate a resolution which eventually turned around the conflict and brought about a victorious solution.
- How many Fortune 500 companies once they faced the need for new growth and vitality sought out a key self assured leader to bring them through the crisis and onto eventual growth?

http://renovateconference.org/seven-pillars-church-revitalization; April 7, 2015.
Used by permission from Tom Cheyney.

The Emergence of a Solitary Key Leader for Church Revitalization

- Eventually these strong assured and equipped leaders were being exalted for their willingness to face the challenges and return them to the age of vitality and success.
- Like industry, often the emergence of key leader in a revitalized church is one who has vision and tenacity to see it through to accomplishment!

http://renovateconference.org/seven-pillars-church-revitalization; April 7, 2015.
Used by permission from Tom Cheyney.
The Emergence of a Solitary Key Leader for Revitalization

- Granted all churches have a certain degree of religious underpinnings which should actually lift us above the human actions of arguments, self-interests, and the like, but in the end churches are made up of people.
- Even in Biblical times there was a tiny remnant that emerged and brought the Israelites out to safety and into the promised land!
- There are other examples as well, but it appears to me that in every case the Lord God called upon, made powerful, taught, and encouraged a key solitary leader to revitalize the situation.

The Emergence of a Solitary Key Leader for Revitalization

- Moses, Nehemiah, Gideon, Paul and even Peter were examples of such emergence of a key solitary leader to revitalize a particular state of affairs.

Revitalization Lesson: Churches can and will thrive in vitality when the right individual leader comes into sight! Furthermore, the Lord God will assist church leaders who are willing to step forward, accept authority, learn key principles, keep on keeping on, and take responsibility.
The Emergence of a Solitary Key Leader for Revitalization

- Nothing is worse than church renewal programs which do not offer helps for unsticking a stuck church and fail to deliver results.

- Remember that initially a key church revitalization is the surfacing of a solitary leader to lead a church through revitalization and into vitality.

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The Emergence of a Solitary Key Leader for Revitalization

- I would err if I did not say from the outset that there are some churches that have been revitalized by outside forces such as a huge influx of new people into a community. During those infusions, usually no new leader leads the way but it just happens! Cultural shifts into ones ministry target area is one of the exceptions to the rule sort of thing. Be glad if that is happening to you and your church right now. If it is not then let’s continue further in the journey of Church Revitalization.

http://renovateconference.org/seven-pillars-church-revitalization; April 7, 2015. Used by permission from Tom Cheyney.
The Basics of Church Revitalization & Renewal

If the lost are to be found and added to the church renewal effort, a price must be paid by both church revitalizer and people.

Jesus paid the first price through His suffering and death on the cross.

http://renovateconference.org/seven-pillars-church-revitalization; April 7, 2015. Used by permission from Tom Cheyney.

The Basics of Church Revitalization & Renewal

Faithful Church Revitalization never comes cheaply. Whatever the cost, reaching and finding lost men and women must be seen as the will of the Master and the “Call to arms” of His church.

http://renovateconference.org/seven-pillars-church-revitalization; April 7, 2015. Used by permission from Tom Cheyney.
April 6, 2015

Dear Pastor Rogers,
You are given permission to use the *Seven Pillars of Church Revitalization* within your Dissertation/Thesis for academic purposes. Anything outside of academic purposes must be requested in a separate correspondence. Be sure to footnote the Renovate National Church Revitalization Conference and use the url: RenovateConference.org.

Blessings,

Tom Cheyney, Founder & Directional Leader
Renovate National Church Revitalization Conference


Hwang, GeunBae. “An Effective Prayer Training Model for Church Growth: Centered on Wangsung Presbyterian Church in South Korea” DMin *thesis,* Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013.


January 29, 2015

Wayne E. Rogers
IRB Approval 2039.012915: Overcoming Church Euthanasia: A Plan to Revitalize Dead or Dying Southern Baptist Churches

Dear Wayne,

We are pleased to inform you that your above study has been approved by the Liberty IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling

(434) 592-4054

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