

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

**ESSENTIAL STRATEGIES FOR LEADERS TO DEVELOP
A HEALTHY CHURCH**

A Thesis Project Submitted to

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Doctor of Ministry

by

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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Many churches are dying as they fail to grow and produce disciples. As with the human body, a church's overall health must be maintained to operate effectively for the Kingdom. In today's world, experts predict that nearly 4,000 churches will close every year in America, and well over 3,500 people will leave churches every single day. Although these numbers are staggering, many churches still produce disciples, grow, and remain vibrant year after year. The overall health of a church plays a critical role in retaining and spiritually growing members. This thesis project will give biblical definitions of the spiritual health and purpose of the church described by experts. This thesis will present a brief history and vision of Miracle Faith Ministries Church while evaluating its current condition based on *Becoming a Healthy Church* by Stephen Macchia. Pastors will also be surveyed to determine the overall health of their churches. Finally, this thesis will offer strategies to help pastors and leaders develop a healthy congregation.

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xiv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Statement of Limitations.....	2
Theoretical Basis.....	3
Statement of Methodology.....	7
Review of Literature.....	8
CHAPTER 2: ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH IN TODAY'S	
LITERATURE.....	23
The Power of Prayer.....	25
The Power of Vision.....	29
The Experts.....	33

The Principles of Dann Spader.....	33
The Principles of Rick Rusaw.....	36
The Principles of Mark Dever.....	37
The Principles of Ed Stetzer.....	38
The Principles of Dennis Bickers.....	39
The Principles of Thabiti Anyabwile.....	40
The Principles of Rick Warren.....	41
The Principles of Bob Whitesel.....	44
The Principles of Greg Ogden.....	45
Summary.....	47
CHAPTER 3: SURVEY RESPONSES, ANALYSIS, AND INTERVIEWS.....	49
Pastoral Survey Responses.....	51
Response and Analysis to Question 1.....	52
Response and Analysis to Question 2.....	53
Response and Analysis to Question 3.....	54
Response and Analysis to Question 4.....	56
Response and Analysis to Question 5.....	57

Response and Analysis to Question 6.....	58
Response and Analysis to Question 7.....	60
Response and Analysis to Question 8.....	62
Response and Analysis to Question 9.....	63
Response and Analysis to Question 10.....	65
Pastoral Interview Questions.....	67
Pastoral Interview Responses to Questions 1–5.....	67
Pastoral Chart Responses to Questions 6–10.....	74
Summary.....	75
CHAPTER 4: A STRATEGIC PLAN TO CREATE A HEALTHY CHURCH.....	76
Miracle Faith Ministries Church History and Assessment.....	77
Founding.....	77
Purpose.....	79
Mission.....	80
Vision.....	81
Values.....	85
Biblical Values Guiding the Core Values.....	86

Core Values.....	88
Views.....	88
The Current Health of Miracle Faith Ministries.....	89
Pastor Staff.....	89
Deacons/Deaconess.....	90
Missionaries.....	90
Paid Staff.....	90
Volunteer Staff.....	91
Congregation.....	91
Strengths	91
Weaknesses.....	91
Reason to be Optimistic.....	92
Reason to be Pessimistic.....	92
A Strategic Plan to Develop a Healthy Church.....	92
Strategy One: Create Church Structure.....	93
Strategy Two: Create Calendar of Events.....	94
Strategy Three: Create Evaluation Process.....	95

Strategy Four: Setting Priorities.....	96
Strategy Five: Create Goals.....	100
Strategy Six: Create Objectives.....	103
Strategy Seven: Create Fundraising Plans.....	104
Outlook for Change.....	105
Conclusions.....	106
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	108
APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL.....	114
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW AND HEALTHY CHURCH SURVEY QUESTIONS.....	115

LIST OF TABLES

1. Table 1. Spader's thirteen steps to a healthy church.....	35
2. Table 2. Rusaw's eleven characteristics of a healthy church.....	36
3. Table 3. Dever's nine marks of a healthy church.....	38
4. Table 4. Stetzer's ten characteristics of a healthy church.....	38
5. Table 5. Bicker's thirteen treatments for the healthy small church.....	39
6. Table 6. Anyabwile's ten traits of a healthy church member.....	40
7. Table 7. Whitesel's seven exercises of a healthy church member.....	45
8. Table 8. Ogden's nine characteristics of a healthy church.....	46
9. Table 9. Ten characteristics of a healthy church among experts.....	47
10. Table 10. The six stages of leadership.....	50
11. Table 11. Pastoral responses to question 1.....	52
12. Table 12. Pastoral responses to question 2.....	53
13. Table 13. Pastoral responses to question 3.....	55
14. Table 14. Pastoral responses to question 4.....	56
15. Table 15. Pastoral responses to question 5.....	57
16. Table 16. Pastoral responses to question 6.....	59
17. Table 17. Pastoral responses to question 7.....	61
18. Table 18. Pastoral responses to question 8.....	63
19. Table 19. Pastoral responses to question 9.....	64
20. Table 20. Pastoral responses to question 10.....	65
21. Table 21. Welsh's six-step evaluation system.....	96

22. Table 22. Three dimensions to disciple-making.....101

23. Table 23. Allison and Kaye’s seven steps to developing fundraisers.....105

List of Figures

1. Figure 1. Essential ingredients of a healthy ministry.....	24
2. Figure 2. Purposeful programming chart.....	34
3. Figure 3. Warren’s five purposes of the church.....	44
4. Figure 4. The church: Organism versus institution.....	46
5. Figure 5. Years as pastor.....	52
6. Figure 6. Overall health.....	53
7. Figure 7. Healthy relationships.....	54
8. Figure 8. Evangelism/outreach.....	56
9. Figure 9. Church prayer and study.....	57
10. Figure 10. The Gospel.....	58
11. Figure 11. Active versus inactive members.....	60
12. Figure 12. Paid staff.....	62
13. Figure 13. Conflict resolution.....	63
14. Figure 14. Characteristics.....	65
15. Figure 15. Church survey.....	97

List of Abbreviations

DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
IRB	<i>Institutional Review Board</i>
LUSOD	<i>Liberty University School of Divinity</i>
MFMC	<i>Miracle Faith Ministries Church</i>
Q	<i>Question</i>

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Staying healthy has become one of the most important goals of most people in the United States. Therefore, gyms and fitness centers across the nation sell thousands of dollars of memberships each year. Although this writer has only recently joined the gym, staying healthy has always been a growing concern. Many statistics prove repeatedly that exercising and eating healthy foods can give you a better quality of life and enable you to live healthier and longer. Because of exercise and a healthy diet, this writer has been able to stay within his suggested weight and remain off medications that others the same age are prescribed to.

This writer has not always been interested in exercise or eating healthy. Once upon a time, he ate all the wrong foods and did very little exercise. Because he is naturally thin, the importance of exercise was an afterthought. However, as this writer began to get older, he soon discovered that the body just does not function the same way as it did when it was younger, not to mention that the stresses of life begin to weigh one down, and it seems a good night's sleep is impossible to achieve. After this writer suffered for a period, he learned an important lesson. You can get away with a lot of poor choices when you are young, but as you get older, the body no longer cooperates with foolish behavior. Time will simply catch up with you, and poor habits will ultimately cause you to become unhealthy.

Although many Christian believers do not subscribe to being physically fit, the truth of the matter is, many believers die before their time because they have not taken very good care of themselves. Just as people who have been undisciplined about physical exercise will become ill, those who are undisciplined regarding spiritual needs can become spiritually ill. The body is

indeed, the temple of God, and we must do all we can to properly maintain it. God wants us to prosper in all areas: body, soul, and spirit.

Statement of the Problem

Most of us clearly understand what unhealthy means as it pertains to the human body. When the human body is sick or full of disease, there are warning signs that let us know there is a problem, and we may have to take a trip to the doctor's office or even the hospital. However, many are unaware of the similarities between the health of the church and that of the human body. Thus, many churches are unhealthy and warning signs are ignored, some to the point of the actual closing of the church. Rick Warren, the author of *The Purpose Driven Church*, spent over twenty years observing churches around the world. In each instance, he gathered notes on why some churches were healthy and growing while other remained unhealthy, had plateaued, or were dying.¹ Warren argues, "I believe the key issues for churches in the twenty-first century will be church health, not church growth."² The principles in his book are not theories but have been tested not only in Warren's congregation, Saddleback Church, but in hundreds of churches across the country that desire to become healthy.³ The overall goal of this thesis project is to equip pastors with strategies to transform their churches into healthy places of worship for the kingdom.

Statement of Limitations

The title of this thesis suggests that there will be several limitations. First, the thesis will share limited information concerning overall church health. This thesis will provide a biblical foundation that will guide the structure and theme of the project. It will also provide some but

¹ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 17.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

not all the details of the history, vision, mission, and ministry of Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC).

Second, this thesis is designed to help us better understand the importance of church health based on the past mistakes of other churches and pastors. It will survey and interview other churches and pastors, but their names will not be disclosed to protect their privacy. The information is gathered only to learn from and not to criticize those interviewed.

Finally, this thesis will provide the methods and strategies that MFMC will use for becoming healthy church and remaining healthy. However, the methods that worked for MFMC may or may not work for other churches located in different demographic areas with dissimilar circumstances.

Theoretical Basis

Like the traditional health care system in America and other places around the world, our churches initiate the lifestyles of church health. The study of both types of health should lead to a much better understanding of how they go hand in hand for the believer. There is no perfect human body that never gets sick or can live forever. However, there are generally healthy people and there are unhealthy people. We all know that because of man's fallen state, our flesh was sentenced to death, which eventually causes us to get sick. We also know that if we do nothing, we will get sick fast and die before our time. Regardless, at our very best, we cannot escape sickness or death in its entirety.

Like the human body, there is no such thing as a "perfect" church. That would be nearly impossible because the church is made up of imperfect people. Many people are desire to have a balance between being physically and spiritually healthy while also being made whole in the process. The Holy Spirit and the preaching of the gospel is what perfects believers in the church.

Although there is no perfect church on the planet, there are healthy churches that produce disciples and unhealthy churches that do not produce disciples. In recent years, many experts have studied the concept of a healthy church, which has allowed us to better understand how to change the pattern from unhealthy to healthy or to put biblical teaching in place to remain healthy.

To have and maintain a healthy Christian model of health, people must be willing to change. They must have true repentance, prayer, and a surrendering that allows the Holy Spirit to change hearts and minds. While there is no escaping change, real transformation takes place in the heart of the believer. Many times, we do not have to do anything for change to take place; it happens automatically without our even realizing it. Although we cannot stop change, we can decide whether we will welcome it or resist it. We can trust God to change us in a way that will make us healthier for the advancement of the kingdom. In the twenty-first century, because of the information on the Internet, we have a great opportunity for change, change that is capable of changing individuals, households, churches, and communities. The question is, what will the church do? Will it reject change or become engaged?

The Old Testament

In the Old Testament, we can see how the state of being spiritually unhealthy was related to “generational sin” that was passed down through family history, including lies, character flaws, disobedience, secrets, and unhealthy behavior toward others. Health was also related to direct obedience to the law of the land and obedience to your parents. Thus, obedience was thought to be a guarantee of a long and prosperous life.

The Old Testament brings to light why God thought the Ten Commandments were necessary for His new nation to become and remain healthy. The commandments were designed

to lead Israel into a life of practical holiness whereby others could see the nature of God and His plan for how they should live. However, in Jesus's time, there were some who viewed the law incorrectly, as a means to have prosperity in this world and the world to come. The Israelites had to learn the hard way that worshipping idol gods was spiritually unhealthy and that God alone should be worshipped. In those times, each god represented a different aspect of life, so it was widespread practice to worship many gods in order get as many blessings as possible. When God requested for them to believe and worship Him only, it was difficult because they were accustomed to worshipping so many gods at one time (Exodus 20:3). They should have believed by then that it was God who led them out of Egypt and was the only true God. Thus, God made this His first commandment: "Thou shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3).

Today if we are not prayerful, we, like the Israelites, can allow many things to become gods to us, preventing us from having healthy relationships with God, including money, fame, work, pleasure of sin, and many others. Many Christians do not start out with the intention of worshipping these things. It is dangerous to devote time to anything more than we devote to God. They can grow into idol gods that will in the long run control our thoughts, energies, and actions. Allowing God to hold the central place within our lives allows us to remain healthy by keeping these things from turning into idol gods in the first place.

The Old Testament also viewed the concept of health as having long life and flourishing in God's presence. "With long life, will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation" (Psalm 91:16). The people of God are compared to palm trees and the cedars of Lebanon (Psalm 92:12). Palm trees at that time were known for their long life; to flourish like palm trees would mean to stand tall and live long. The cedars of Lebanon were known to have grown to 120 feet in height and over 30 feet in circumference. Thus, they were strong, solid, and unmovable by the intense

winds of circumstance. These trees display fruitfulness and vitality under God's hand, while the wicked may flourish like grass their prosperity is short-lived.⁴

The New Testament

Within the New Testament, Jesus in the book of John makes the claim, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). Christ offers the believer safety and security, which many equate with being made whole or healthy. In contrast to the thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy, Jesus gives life and life more abundantly. Life in Christ is expressed as healthy in this passage because the believer is given overflowing forgiveness, love, and personal guidance.

The Beatitudes in the book of Matthew, wherein Jesus introduces His Sermon on the Mount, shows the importance of spiritual health as it pertains to the kingdom of God and not the kingdom of this world (Matthew 5: 3–12). Jesus states His attitude toward the law, proclaiming that position, authority, and money are not what matter in His kingdom. What matters the most in His kingdom is faithful obedience within the heart. The Sermon on the Mount challenges the proud and legalistic religious leaders of that time. The sermon did not present salvation, but showed how a person who is in right standing with God should conduct their life.⁵

Finally, in the New Testament Peter's letter to Christians teaches us the standard for spiritual health by growing in the knowledge of God (2 Peter 1:3–8). Peter recognizes that God's divine power provides us with everything we need to become spiritually healthy and to grow through having full access to his divine nature, which can prevent us from operating in sin and

⁴ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary Old Testament*, (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook, 1985), 860.

⁵ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary New Testament*, (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook, 2004), 28.

help us live holy. After we receive the Holy Spirit in our hearts, God's Spirit empowers us with His own goodness. To become and remain spiritually healthy, we must have more than just faith. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone" (James 2:17). Faith must entail more than a belief in certain facts; it must result in action to experience results, growth in Christian character, and the everyday practice of moral discipline, or we will become unhealthy and eventually die spiritually.

Statement of Methodology

Chapter one of this thesis will serve as an introduction, presenting the reader with the foundation of what a healthy church is and its importance today. This chapter will give examples of what a healthy church looks like, its mission and vision, and the biblical principles that support it. This chapter will also clarify any misconceptions of what a healthy church is and is not by presenting evidence from experts in the church health field.

Chapter two will introduce the reader to this project's applied research. It will list all the characteristics of a healthy church and explain in detail why the research is necessary. This section will share most of the information obtained in the interviews with other pastors pertaining to the overall health of their churches. It will present the concept of how healthy leaders create a healthy church while unhealthy leaders create unhealthy churches.

Based on many authors and experts in the field, chapter three will disclose the overall results of this research project and the results obtained in evaluating the condition of Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) in Fredericksburg, Virginia. This evaluation will also include the history, vision, mission, and ministry of MFMC, which will serve as an outline to aid this church in becoming healthier now and in the future for the kingdom.

Chapter four will provide an overall conclusion to the research project. It will summarize all the major points made throughout the thesis and make a conclusive statement regarding the solution for a healthy church. It will also provide opportunities and strategies to further improve the overall health condition of MFMC in Fredericksburg, Virginia, as well as offer advice for a future ongoing undertaking about church health.

Review of Literature

Books

*The Emotionally Healthy Church*⁶ addresses one of the greatest challenges church pastors and leaders face: how to be healthy people who create healthy communities. This is accomplished by applying six principles: (1) look beneath the surface of problems; (2) break the power of past wounds, failures, sins, and circumstances; (3) live a life of brokenness and vulnerability; (4) recognize and have personal limitations and boundaries; (5) embrace grief and loss; (6) make incarnation your model to love others; and (7) slow down to lead with integrity.

*Deliberate Simplicity: How the Church Does More by Doing Less*⁷ is a guide for pastors or church leaders who are open to new strategies for more effective ministry. Browning's message of deliberate simplicity offers important strategies for ministries of all sizes by placing the emphasis on the church becoming natural, simple, and effective.

*Power House: A Step by Step Guide to Building a Church That Prays*⁸ offers skills for spiritual leaders on how to identify exactly where they are in their prayer life both individually

⁶ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship That Actually Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010).

⁷ Dave Browning, *Deliberate Simplicity: How the Church Does More by Doing Less* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009).

⁸ Glen Martin, *Power House: A Step-By-Step Guide to Building a Church That Prays* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 1994).

and corporately while strategically helping them to take steps to strengthen and broaden prayer in their personal life and the life of the church.

*Becoming a Healthy Church: 10 Traits of a Vital Ministry*⁹ provides the ten most outstanding characteristics of a healthy church implemented by hundreds of churches all over the country. Macchia's book is a practical, hands-on manual that can be applied to churches anywhere regardless of their size, denomination, ethnic diversity, or geography.

*Multi-Site Churches*¹⁰ offers valuable information on creating a multi-site church based on extensive research of forty congregations that have experienced growth in faith and often numbers by opening additional worship locations. McConnell offers the next generation of churches with other options to stay healthy as well as win souls for Christ.

*Church Administration: Creating Efficiency for Effective Ministry*¹¹ presents from the front desk to the back-office a thorough guide to organization and administration for churches and religious nonprofit companies. Welch offers instructions to help pastors and church staff members become effective and efficient leaders, managers, and administrators by striving to live by biblical admonitions for administration and ministry practice. Some of the topics discussed are administration documents; organizing the church; administering personnel, financial, and physical resources; administering ministry programs; the church office; and administering risk management.

⁹ Stephen A. Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church: Ten Traits of a Vital Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999).

¹⁰ Scott McConnell, *Multi-Site Churches: Guidance for the Movement's Next Generation* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2009).

¹¹ Robert H. Welch, *Church Administration: Creating Efficiency for Effective Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2005).

*I Will: Nine Traits of the Outwardly Focused Christian*¹² offers solutions on how to become more outwardly focused for the Kingdom. Rainer effectively presents nine traits that all disciples of Christ can incorporate into their lives no matter their background, age, or sense of capability.

*The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message & Vision*¹³ offers tremendous potential for churches to grow without compromising their message and mission. Warren charts a course on how the church can become one that God can be pleased with by offering straightforward, balanced teaching on church health presented in a way all can understand.

*Next Generation Leader: Five Essentials for Those Who Will Shape the Future*¹⁴ reveals five essential characteristics for next-generation leaders: courage, competence, character, clarity, and coachability. Stanley empowers men and women to discover and play to their strengths, leverage uncertainty, maintain moral authority, harness their fears, and enlist a leadership coach.

In *Church 3.0: Upgrades for the Future of the Church*,¹⁵ Cole examines the twenty-first-century church and offers organic insights to reawaken it to operate within its full potential. Cole's book is focused on the goal of releasing healthy church movements across the globe and does so by offering guidance to leaders on how to arrive there.

¹² Thom Rainer, *I Will: Nine Traits of the Outwardly Focused Christian* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2015).

¹³ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 1995.

¹⁴ Andy Stanley, *Next Generation Leader: Five Essentials for Those Who Will Shape the Future* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books), 2003.

¹⁵ Neil Cole, *Church 3.0: Upgrades for the Future of the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass), 2010.

*Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations: A Practical Guide and Workbook*¹⁶

offers guidance and hands-on teaching on effective strategic planning for nonprofit organizations. Allison and Kaye provide a complete framework for adapting to future challenges while helping board members and staff members stay focused on the organization's priorities.

*Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*¹⁷

aids church leaders in creating a model for strategic planning that can adapt to the realities of the community a pastor lives in and be effective enough to keep a pastor and staff on task in carrying out the established mission. Malphurs suggests that understanding the importance of strategic planning enables leaders to answer the following questions: Who we are? Where are we going? And how will we get there?

*Transformational Church*¹⁸ outlines a comprehensive study, including a survey of over seven thousand churches and hundreds of on-site interviews with pastors from all over the country. Stetzer and Rainer explain in detail the importance of disciple-making by applying biblical principles and prayerful dependence on God, and planned participation in mission and ministry activities.

*What's Best Next: How the Gospel Transforms the Way You Get Things Done*¹⁹ offers a wealth of ways to maximize personal productivity, all centered on the gospel. Perman proves that productivity is more than a set of skills; it requires a certain approach and worldview that he provides for getting more done and making the most of your time.

¹⁶ Michael Allison and Jude Kaye, *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations: A Practical Guide and Workbook* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons), 2005.

¹⁷ Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books), 2013.

¹⁸ Ed Stetzer and Thom S. Rainer, *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group), 2010.

¹⁹ Matt Perman, *What's Best Next: How the Gospel Transforms the Way You Get Things Done* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 2014.

*Humilitas: A Lost Key to Life, Love, and Leadership*²⁰ is a personal guidebook for leaders who want to learn how to experience the power of humility as demonstrated through Jesus Christ. Although high achievement can be obtained without humility, Dickson shows how throughout history, some of the most inspiring and influential figures have been people of immense humility.

*Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving*²¹ teaches pastors how to deal with the stresses of being a pastor. Burns interviewed many pastors and has uncovered five key themes that promote healthy, sustainable ministries that will promote longevity and give a better understanding of how to help sustain pastors in ministry.

*Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens*²² describes many ways the church can become more effective in reaching more souls. Cole reminds us that Jesus lived among people and offers key concepts on how we can return to those roots by allowing the church to become alive, organic, and growing, and to spread in all directions of life.

*Every Body Matters: Strengthening Your Body to Strengthen your Soul*²³ discusses the issues of physical fitness as it pertains to spiritual and emotional growth. Thomas engages his readers by using the stories of average people. He illustrates how becoming physically fit can lead to increased sensitivity to God's voice, renewed energy for God's work, greater joy for living, and a fortified soul more equipped and more willing to serve and love other people.

²⁰ John Dickson, *Humilitas: A Lost Key to Life, Love, and Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 2011.

²¹ Bob Burns, *Resilient Ministry: What Pastors Told Us About Surviving and Thriving*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press), 2013.

²² Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass), 2005.

²³ Gary Thomas, *Every Body Matters: Strengthening Your Body to Strengthen Your Soul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 2011.

*Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda*²⁴ gives church leaders ways in which they can discover God's vision for making a positive impact on those they lead. Blackaby offers insights on a leader's biggest challenges, character requirements, exerting influence, decision-making techniques, and moving leaders to God's agenda.

*Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City*²⁵ is a practical book that outlines a theological vision for twenty-first-century churches centered on three core commitments: (1) gospel-centered: the gospel of grace in Jesus Christ changes everything we do from our hearts to the community by completely reshaping the content, tone, and strategy of all we are involved in; (2) city-centered: cities continuously influence the world and affect the way in which we do ministry; (3) movement-centered: allowing the Holy Spirit to teach us how to win over the community.

*The Power of Vision, Discover and Apply God's Plan for Your Life and Ministry*²⁶ is a practical book that offers proven tools for capturing, casting and implementing the vision that God gives leaders for their ministry. Offering the examples of visionaries from both ancient and modern times. The principles that Barna shares with his readers will help them to understand, communicate and accomplish the unique vision that God has for leaders for their life and the church that they lead. Barna expands on nine key components of what vision is: (1) Vision is clear. (2) Vision is preferable to the current state. (3) Vision concentrates on the future. (4) Vision is from God (5) Vision is a gift to leaders that is tailored to their circumstance. (6) Vision

²⁴ Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People to God's Agenda* (Nashville TN: Broadman & Holman), 2001).

²⁵ Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 2012.

²⁶ George Barna, *The Power of Vision: Discover and Apply God's Plan for Your Life and Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books), 2009.

reflects a realistic perspective. (7) Vision is dreaming the most possible dream. (8) Vision is built on reality. (9) A visionary pastor is a successful pastor.

Handouts

*Healthy Church Check-Up*²⁷ is a handout that surveys the overall health of a church. The categories include evangelism, fellowship, serving, community, discipleship, and worship. Using a series of questions and a scale from 1–10, it will diagnose the health of each church.

Scripture Passages²⁸

New Testament

Matthew 28:19–20

This Scripture we call the Great Commission requires that we preach the gospel all over the world. That same gospel that began in Jerusalem must now be spread to every nation. Emphasis is placed on making disciples. Disciples are to baptize people because baptism unites believers with Jesus Christ in their death to sin and their resurrection to new life. Baptism symbolizes total submission to Christ and a willingness to live God's way, and to identify with a body of believers. Thus, in fulfilling the Great Commission, we must not become satisfied until every ear has heard the good news. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe how being obedient to the Great Commission is an outward sign of being spiritually healthy.

Mark 10:21–27

²⁷ Handout, EVCP 820 Leading a Healthy Church Class.

²⁸ All Scripture passages are from the King James Version of the Bible.

This passage of scripture shows the genuine love that Jesus has for people even though He knows everyone will not follow Him. Jesus teaches that it is difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God because being rich can cause some to become self-reliant. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe how when we rely totally on God, we become spiritually healthy, and all things our possible!

Acts 1:8

This section announces that after the Holy Ghost has come, we shall have power. The power of the Holy Ghost is not limited to strength of the ordinary but also includes the courage, boldness, confidence, and authority that we need to fulfill our purpose in witnessing to a lost world. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe spiritual health as it pertains to the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:10

The foundation of the church and of all believers is Jesus Christ. Paul laid the foundation by preaching Christ when he began the church in Corinth. In order for it to last, whoever builds the church must build it with high-quality materials that meet God's standards. Paul urges future leaders to have sound preaching and teaching if they want to have a strong foundation. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe the importance of having a strong foundation as it pertains to spiritual health.

3 John 1:2

John in this passage had a genuine concern for Gaius's physical and spiritual well-being. This was the opposite of the popular heresy that was being taught: the separation of spirit and matter while despising the physical side of life. Thus, many people today still fall into this way

of thinking. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe the importance of spiritual health as it pertains to caring for the spiritual and physical needs of others.

Colossians 1:28

Telling everyone we meet about Jesus should be our everyday goal. Paul desired to see each believer mature spiritually. Thus, like Paul, we must work honestly at attempting to learn and grow daily, motivated by love and being confident that God gives the power to become mature. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe how believers who have a desire to become healthy must be moving toward spiritual maturity in Christ.

Matthew 9:29

This verse shares the importance of having total faith in God. Many factors in ministry that a pastor has no control over can bring about uncertainty, but faith is the one thing that we always can control. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe the importance of having faith in order to please God to remain.

Philippians 1:6

God does not start anything without finishing it. He has no beginning and no ending. He will continue to fulfill his purpose in our lives if we stay in His will. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe the hope that we have in Christ Jesus as it pertains to completion.

Philippians 3:12

Paul expresses his desire to know Christ, to be like Christ, and to be all Christ had in mind for him to be. This goal consumed Paul's mind and kept him focused on the things of Christ. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe the importance of every believer laying aside everything that may distract him or her from being effective in ministry.

Ephesians 4:13

Many great things happen spiritually when believers are operating in their gifts. But as the body of Christ, we can accomplish so much more together than we could ever imagine possible working by ourselves. By working together, the church is able to express the fullness of Christ. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe that being unified is the standard of measuring our spiritual health.

Acts 13:36–38

Every believer should serve God's purpose in his or her generation, as David did. The secret to effective ministry is to fulfill His purpose for our life. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe the importance of being spiritually healthy and purpose driven so that God will be able to use us mightily in our generation.

Romans 8:26–27

The Holy Spirit will comfort us in suffering. These verses suggest that we all are weak because we live in the flesh. However, as believers, we are not left to our own resources to solve our problems. Even when we do not know the right words to pray, the Holy Spirit prays with and for us, and God hears and answers our prayers. The Holy Spirit intercedes for us in harmony with God's own will for our lives. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe the importance of relying on the Holy Spirit as it pertains to becoming healthy.

Matthew 5:3–12

The Beatitudes can be understood in several ways: they can be thought of as a code of ethics for disciples and a standard of living for all believers. They contrast Kingdom values with worldly values, they contrast superficial faith with the real faith that Christians have, and they show how the Old Testament expectations will be fulfilled in the new Kingdom. This scriptural

reference will be used in the thesis to describe the importance of spiritual health as it pertains to the Beatitudes.

John 10:10

In contrast to the thief who takes away life, Jesus gives life. He not only came to bring us spiritual life, but He also came to make every area of our life better. The believer's life is made better because of God's overflowing forgiveness, love, and guidance. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe spiritual health as it pertains to living in God's fullness.

Old Testament

Ezekiel 37

There are times in life when situations may seem hopeless. But in this passage of scripture, we find that no matter how dry or dead the bones are, God has the ability to breathe new life into them. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe the importance of allowing the Holy Spirit to infuse us with a renewed sense of purpose.

Proverbs 3:12

For us to live holy, the believer must have discipline over the power of sin. God does not punish us because He enjoys seeing us suffer but because He is deeply committed to developing us into His own image. Thus, He further knows that for us to become morally strong and good, we must learn how to decipher right from wrong. His discipline in love allows us to do that. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe the process of being disciplined for God.

Psalms 145:17–20

The Lord makes no mistakes, and everything he does for us is done in kindness. To remain close to Him, we must pray to Him, and He will hear our prayers and answer them. He

offers protection to those who love Him but will destroy the wicked. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe the righteousness of God.

Exodus 23:20–26

Following the laws of right living can be hard enough with friends. But when we apply God's laws of fairness and kindness to our enemies, we show the world how different we are. God warns the Israelites about their neighbors whose beliefs and actions could turn them away from Him. God gave them a set of promises and precepts they were to obey. Our Christian walk should show that we place obeying God at the top of the list rather than doing what is praised and accepted by the world's standards. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe the consequences of disobedience versus obedience as it pertains to church health.

Deuteronomy 7:12–15

Just as God has chosen the nation of Israel, He has chosen all believers today to be a part of His treasured possession. Thus, as with the Israelites, it is not through our own merit that we have come to faith in Christ. Instead, God chose us out of His goodness and grace toward us. The Lord offers protections to the Israelites from all sickness, unlike the diseases they knew in Egypt, but will now place them on their enemies. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis to describe God's promises as they pertain to obedience.

Deuteronomy 28:27–29

Israelites would suffer severely because of their disobedience. The judgment of God was now unleashed on them, and their enemies would defeat them in battle as they went crazy in the process. One of the curses of God is that He will turn His back on you and cause you to lose your mind completely because no one else is there to save you. This scriptural reference will be used

in the thesis to describe the judgment of God and sin's oppression as a roadblock to being healthy.

Genesis 15:15

Abraham and his ancestors did not fully understand death or what was beyond the grave, but God gives them hope that there is a plan in place for those who live godly. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis project to describe how the promises made to Abraham by God still holds true today for the people of God today. God's promises enable the church to live prosperous and healthy lives.

Exodus 15:26

The Words of the Lord spoken in verse 26 describes the provision that God has for his people when they do the things that are pleasing to his sight, listen to his commandments, and keep all his statutes. The Israelites would not suffer diseases like their enemies the Egyptians did for he is the Lord that would heal them. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis project to demonstrate how being obedient to Gods word can cause leaders and followers to enjoy a healthy life.

Leviticus 26:14-26

This scriptural verse continues to place emphases on the importance of being obedient to God's Word. There are profound consequences when we do not obey Gods, he punishes those who he loves. God has in place for his people a covenant that must be obeyed to experience the blessings of God. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis project to describe how the leader and the church can be healthy by obeying Gods Word.

Deuteronomy 6:2

This one verse states the result of fearing the Lord, keeping all his statues and commands. One would experience generational blessing; prosperity, peace, and a prolonged life. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis project to describe what a healthy church looks like.

1Kings 3:14

This one verse describes the answer to Solomon’s prayer and what will happen to him if continued to walk in a way that is pleasing to God such as father David did. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis project to describe God’s consistency in blessing obedience. When it comes to the health of a church leader or church members, obedience is a must.

Psalm 34:12-14

God promises Israel desired life, long life, and to see good. If they would keep their tongue from evil, do charitable deeds, keep their lips from speaking guile, and have a peaceful conduct. This scriptural reference will be used in the thesis project to describe how the people of God can experience a healthy life if they practice godly spiritual behavior.

Internet Sources

“5 Signs You’re Part of an Unhealthy Church”²⁹ gives great insight on what to look for in an unhealthy church. Marielle Thomas points out that there will never be a “perfect” church because the church is made up of imperfect people. However, the message and purity of the Gospel is perfect and we should strive for perfection in that knowledge.

“Healthy Pastor, Healthy Church”³⁰ presents useful knowledge about why pastoral turnover is attributed to unhealthy patterns within the church. Lenny Luchetti teaches that the

²⁹ Marielle Thomas, “5 Signs You’re Part of an Unhealthy Church,” (January 2017), <http://www.crossmap.com/news/marielle-thomas-5-signs-youre-part-of-an-unhealthy-church-4222>, accessed February 2, 2017.

³⁰ Lenny Luchetti, “Healthy Pastor, Healthy Church,” (March 2014), <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2014/january/healthy-pastor-healthy-church.html>, accessed February 2, 2017

only way pastors can survive in an unhealthy church is for them to be extremely healthy themselves.

“How to Recognize a Healthy Church”³¹ outlines what to look for in a church before you ever set foot in the church building. Charles Swindoll teaches that if we ask God first, He will direct you to the right church by recognizing what is healthy and what is unhealthy in a church.

Dissertations

Changhwan Choi’s DMin thesis approved by Liberty University in 2015, “The Worship Experience: Five Essential Ways a Pastor Leads a Congregation to Respond,” lays a foundation that pastors can build on to better understand and develop a congregational response through examining biblical and theological backgrounds. The researcher offers great tools for approaching biblical worship, creating awareness of the necessity for human response to God.

Jeffrey L. Hackley’s DMin thesis approved by Liberty University in 2016, “A Strategic Plan to Develop a Healthy Church,” offers great strategies to create a healthy church by clarifying biblical definition and purpose of the church. The researcher shares a brief history, vision, and ministry example of church health by evaluating the church that he currently pastors.

³¹ Charles Swindell. “*How to Recognize a Healthy Church.*” (May 2010), <http://www.insight.org/resources/articles/church/how-to-recognize-a-healthy.html?l=church&print=t>, accessed on February 2, 2017.

CHAPTER 2
ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH
IN TODAY'S LITERATURE

The researcher has explored what is required for a leader to create a healthy church per the Bible and from experts in the field. To produce a healthy church, one must have the correct ingredients or risk failure. The researcher has chosen the topic *Essential Ingredients of a Healthy Church* to equip leaders and pastors with knowledge to create healthy churches for the Kingdom. This chapter is centered on the practical, hands-on teachings of Stephen Macchia, author of *Becoming a Healthy Church*. Macchia is founding president of Leadership Transformations, Inc., a ministry that focuses on the spiritual formation needs of leaders and the spiritual discernment processes of leadership teams in local church and churches worldwide.

In *Becoming a Healthy Church*, Macchia provides complete illustrations on how to move beyond church growth and begin to achieve church health. He asserts that we can learn lessons from healthy churches.³² One way to find out what those lessons are is to survey healthy churches to learn exactly what they are doing. Aside from prayer and God's Word, Macchia believes that there are ten characteristics of a healthy church.³³ The author states, "Yes, the Scriptures and prayer are the bedrock of our existence as Christ's followers, yesterday, today, and forever."³⁴

Macchia believes that the centrality of the Bible and prayer is in every one of the ten characteristics, and they are essential ingredients for our personal lives and for our community,

³² Stephen Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church: Ten Traits of a Vital Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 19.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

ministry, and life in general.³⁵ In order to become a healthy church, members must gather regularly as the local expression of the body of Christ to worship God in ways that will engage the heart, mind, soul, and strength of the people.³⁶ Out of the hundreds of healthy churches surveyed by Macchia, they all seem to have many of the same characteristics in common:

With very few exceptions—and regardless of the race, gender, denomination, age, number of years as a believer, responsibility in the church (pastor, ministry leader, or laity)—the basic rank order of the ten characteristics held constant. Demography, attitudes, behaviors, affiliations, and so forth did not appear to make a difference in how respondents rated these characteristics.³⁷

Macchia states, “The healthy church is intentional in its efforts to build loving, caring relationships within the families, between members, and within the community they serve.”³⁸

The ten characteristics that Macchia believes make up the healthy church are ranked in figure 1.

Figure 1. Essential ingredients of a healthy ministry³⁹

Ten Characteristics of a Healthy Church
1. God’s Empowering Presence
2. God-Exalting Worship
3. Spiritual Disciplines
4. Learning and Growing in the Community
5. A commitment to Loving and Caring Relationships
6. Servant-Leadership Development
7. An Outward Focus
8. Wise Administration and Accountability
9. Networking with the Body of Christ
10. Stewardship and Generosity

³⁵ Stephen Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church: Ten Traits of a Vital Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 19.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 95.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

The Power of Prayer

Prayer forms the foundation of obtaining and retaining a healthy church in many ways. Throughout the Bible are examples of men and women who sought the help of God through prayer. For the church to be healthy today, prayer is still necessary. Jesus Himself was a great example of one who prayed to the Father on many occasions. Although Jesus was a man who did not need to pray because He knew the Father's heart, He knew His mission, He was a master at discerning needs, and He was the second member of the Trinity, yet He fully devoted time to pray to the Father.⁴⁰

Glen Martin describes prayer as "God's oil for relationships"⁴¹ He believes that if we properly apply the wonderful oil that God has provided, it will help all members in a church work together despite any differences.⁴² Martin states, "Prayer provides the lubrication so that as a church, made up of various parts, all members can fit together perfectly, working together without friction to perform a job which they could never accomplish on their own."⁴³

Some examples of prayer in the Bible:

(1)

And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed (Mark 1:35).

(2)

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day

⁴⁰ Glenn Martin, *Power House: A Step-By-Step Guide to Building a Church That Prays* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishers, 1994), 95.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴² Glenn Martin, *Power House: A Step-By-Step Guide to Building a Church That Prays* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishers, 1994), 95.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen⁴⁴

(3)

And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.⁴⁵

(4)

These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be

⁴⁴ Matthew 6:9–13.

⁴⁵ Luke 22:41–44.

made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.⁴⁶

(5)

Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God (Philippians 4:6).

(6)

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you (John 15:7)

(7)

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive [them], and ye shall have [them] (Mark 11:24).

(8)

Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

(9)

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (Romans 8:26).

(10)

⁴⁶ John 17:1–16.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly (Matthew 6:6).

(11)

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen [do]: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking (Matthew 6:7).

(12)

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you (Luke 11:9).

(13)

Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not (Jeremiah 33:3).

(14)

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed [is] willing, but the flesh [is] weak (Matthew 26:41).

(15)

Confess [your] faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5:16).

(16)

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; (Ephesians 6:18).

(17)

And he spake a parable unto them [to this end], that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; (Luke 18:1).

The Power of Vision

For any leader to be effective in leading people, they must have a vision. When one examines the great leaders in the Bible one thing that they all had in common was, God supplied them all with a vision. Webster's dictionary describes vision as, an experience of seeing someone or something in a dream or trance, or as a supernatural apparition. But for ministry the definition goes even farther. Per Barna, "Vision for ministry is a clear mental image of a preferable future imparted by God to His chosen servants and is based upon an accurate understanding of God, self and circumstances"⁴⁷

Barna believes that ministry vision has five major components:

(1) A Clear Mental Image. Vision becomes a picture locked into the mind of the visionary, of the way things could become in the future. The picture is personal and is not anyone else's view of the future but one that uniquely belongs to the visionary. When it's time for the vision to materialize, the visionary must paint a mental portrait for others to see. The same way you use your imagination to create this vision for the future, you will need to use your

⁴⁷ George Barna. *The Power of Vision: Discover and Apply God's Plan for Your Life and Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 26.

imagination to lead others to catch the same vision so that they, too, can become partakers of the vision.

(2) A Preferable Change. Vision is all about change and is never interested in maintaining the status quo. When it comes to the church vision is never satisfied where the church is today, but stretching reality to extend past the existing state. For that very reason vision is required even when the church is perceived as being in an acceptable position; vision is not just for struggling churches with their present state. Based on God's empowerment and direction one can create a better situation in which to minister and make a better future.

(3) A Future Focus. Vision is all about focusing on the future. It focusses on moving ahead rather than dwelling on the past or repeating on the past. Successful ministries are ones that could focus on God and be committed whole heartily to His vision for their ministry and to what He will do with them and through them in the future.

(4) An Impartation by God. Vision for ministry a reflection of what God wants to achieve through you to impact His Kingdom. Instead of relying on the abilities of humans for the future, God conveys His view of that future to the mind of the leader. The future of the church and the leader is simply too important to God to allow people to lean on their own understanding or abilities. Visionary leaders receive their vision for ministry directly from God.

(5) A Chosen Leader. Leadership is very important within the church. God has gifted certain individuals to emerge and serve as leaders in the church. He then entrusts them with His most precious and treasured gifts: vision. Only leaders that God has chosen will know what to do with vision, because it is tailored to his or her circumstances.⁴⁸

Some examples of vision in the Bible.

⁴⁸ George Barna. *The Power of Vision: Discover and Apply God's Plan for Your Life and Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009), 28.

(1)

And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make [it] plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision [is] yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry (Habakkuk 2:2-3).

(2)

Proverbs 29:18 Where [there is] no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy [is] he (Proverb 29:18).

(3)

And it shall come to pass afterward, [that] I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: (Joel 2:28).

(4)

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, [one] like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him (Daniel 7:13).

(5)

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end (Jeremiah 29:11).

(6)

Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets (Amos 3:7).

(7)

Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: (Act 18:19).

(8)

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world (1 John 4:1).

(10)

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, [and] not out of the mouth of the LORD (Jeremiah 23:16).

(11)

And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I [am here], Lord (Acts 9:10).

(12)

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: (Acts 2:17).

(13)

And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, [I] the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, [and] will speak unto him in a dream (Numbers 12:6).

(14)

And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; [there was] no open vision (1 Samuel 3:1).

The Experts

The Principles of Dann Spader

Dann Spader is director of SonLife Ministries and a former youth pastor. Spader's book entitled *Growing a Healthy Church* gives great insight on how to develop a healthy church from the inside out. Spader addresses the fact that many churches across the country are filling their calendars up with programs that almost exclusively minister to Christians and leave no room for the seeker to become involved. Spader states, "Our only hope lies in the supernatural work that God alone can do. It is time for us to wrestle with God, that He might pour Himself out upon us."⁴⁹ Spader introduces the four stages of spiritual growth as it relates to outreach by using the M-level system. This system has been proven to be effective in churches regardless of their level of maturity by enabling them to build an effective discipline strategy.⁵⁰

Spader believes that to be successful at creating a healthy church, we must be able to answer the question, where are we going and whom do we follow? He points out that Christ is our perfect example to follow. The good news gives us clear purpose, and we can examine the pattern of Christ that will enable us to stay on purpose. Spader states, "Jesus was very careful

⁴⁹ Dann Spader, *Growing a Healthy Church: Complete with Study Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 101.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

and deliberate in developing His ministry.”⁵¹ He never tried to do everything, He never appeared to be stressed, and He always moved to new locations although crowds wanted Him to remain.⁵²

Spader believes that if we carefully plan four types of regular programs, we can develop a ministry that can meet people wherever they are:

1. Outreach programming is designed to expose non-Christians to Jesus Christ. This is practiced church-wide to see non-Christians accept Christ or move closer to accepting Him.
2. Growth programming helps Christians to become more spiritually mature.
3. Ministry training programming equips workers to participate in the work of the ministry.
4. Leadership training programming is designed to equip leaders so that they can multiply themselves and multiply the impact of the ministry.⁵³

Figure 2. Purposeful programming chart⁵⁴

PURPOSEFUL PROGRAMMING	
The People	The Program Challenge
Leadership Multiplication	
The Shepherd	Shepherd the Flock
Ministry Training	

⁵¹ Dann Spader, *Growing a Healthy Church: Complete with Study Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 33.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 28.

⁵⁴ Dann Spader, *Growing a Healthy Church: Complete with Study Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 29.

The Committed	Minister to Others
Growth Level	
The Convinced	Come and Grow
Outreach Level	
The Curious	Come and See
A “Great Commission” ministry is on that has a balance of winning, building, and equipping-ministering to individuals at their level of interest.	

After a lay member discovers where they are going and whom they are following, Spader then implements the thirteen steps to a healthy church, divided into four phases. Each phase enables the church to go to a deeper level of healthy growth, moving from building a foundation to becoming mature enough to multiply the number of leaders. These four phases and thirteen steps are listed below.

Table 1. Spader’s thirteen steps to a healthy church⁵⁵

Phase 1: Building a Foundation
1. An environment for growth
2. An atmosphere of love
3. Relational ministry
4. Communicating Christ clearly
5. A healthy group image
6. A prayer base
7. Communicating the Word
Phase 2: Equipping the Team
8. The nature of ministry
9. Identifying the responsive
10. Training the team
Phase 3: Winning the Masses
11. Rethinking evangelism

⁵⁵ Dann Spader, *Growing a Healthy Church: Complete with Study Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 29.

12. Mobilizing for evangelism
Phase 4: Restructuring for Multiplication
13. Leadership multiplication

The Principles of Rick Rusaw

Rick Rusaw is the senior minister at LifeBridge Christian Church in Longmont, Colorado. He serves on the board of directors of Christian Network International and Hope International University. He is also the on-air host for *Worship*, seen nightly on eighty PAX TV stations. He is also one of the driving forces behind the new church-wide initiative “Living a Life on Loan.” Rusaw believes that being externally focused is what makes a church become healthy. Every church can be externally focused regardless of its size, location, or denomination because being externally focus has more to do with the vision and mind-set of the leader.⁵⁶ Rusaw states, “Once a church decides to become externally focused by joining in the life and conversation of the community, the possibilities of how it engages the community are endless.”⁵⁷ In his book *The Externally Focused Church*, Rusaw provides eleven characteristics of what a healthy church does:

Table 2. Rusaw’s eleven characteristics of a healthy church⁵⁸

1. Defining what an externally focused church is
2. Becoming externally focused
3. The power of service
4. Helping people grow
5. Creating relationships
6. Good news and good deeds
7. From mercy to justice
8. Casting vision
9. The needs of the community
10. Organizing for usefulness
11. The best is yet to come

⁵⁶ Rick Rusaw, *The Externally Focused Church* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, 2004), 24.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

The Principles of Mark Dever

Mark Dever is senior pastor of Capital Hill Baptist Church in Washington, DC, and president of 9Marks. He has written several books on church health and church leadership. While there is no perfect church, Dever believes that thanks to God, many imperfect churches are healthy.⁵⁹ Dever's book introduces a plan for recovering biblical preaching and church leadership at a time when many congregations are falling short in that area. Dever argues that membership draws a boundary line around the healthy church, separating it from the world. Dever states, "Discipline helps the church that lives inside of that boundary line stay true to the very things that are cause for drawing the line in the first place."⁶⁰ Bible verses pertaining to church discipline include the following:

1. Let all things be done decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40).
2. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (2 Timothy 3:16).
3. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth (Hebrews 12:5–6).

Dever introduces nine marks of a healthy church, beginning with expositional preaching, which he feels is the most important of the nine. Table 3 displays the nine marks Dever thinks are necessary for a healthy church.

⁵⁹ Mark Dever, *What Is a Healthy Church?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 29.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 101.

Table 3. Dever's nine marks of a healthy church⁶¹

1. Expository preaching
2. Biblical theology
3. The Gospel
4. A biblical understanding of conversion
5. A biblical understanding of evangelism
6. A biblical understanding of church membership
7. Biblical church discipline
8. A concern for discipleship and growth
9. Biblical church leadership

The Principles of Ed Stetzer and Thom Rainer

Ed Stetzer is vice president of research and ministry development at Lifeway Christian Resources in Nashville, Tennessee. Thom Rainer is the president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources, one of the largest Christian resource providers in the world. In their book entitled *Transformational Church*, the authors believe that transformation happens when (1) people live like Christ, (2) churches act like the body of Christ, and (3) communities are impacted by the Kingdom of God.⁶² The authors offer ten characteristics that will allow a church to transform into a healthy church (table 4).

Table 4. Stetzer's and Rainer's ten characteristics of a healthy church⁶³

1. Hope for transformation
2. Change the scorecard
3. Missionary mentality
4. Vibrant leadership
5. Relational intentionality
6. Prayerful dependence
7. Worship: Actively embracing Jesus
8. Community: Connect people with people

⁶¹ Mark Dever, *What Is a Healthy Church?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 101.

⁶² Ed Stetzer and Thom Rainer, *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group), 22.

⁶³ Ibid.

9. Mission: Show Jesus through word and action
10. Not the final word

The Principles of Dennis Bickers

Dennis Bickers serves as an area minister with the American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky. For over twenty years, he was a bivocational pastor in an Indiana church. He is a graduate of Indiana University Southeast and serves on the advisory board of the Center for Bivocational Ministries at Campbellsville University. In his and Thom S. Rainer's book entitled *The Healthy Small Church*, Bickers emphasizes that sustaining a healthy church involves preventing complications by recognizing their symptoms first. Bickers diagnoses many of the things that can harm the life of the church and offers thirteen practical remedies (table 5).

Table 5. Bickers's thirteen treatments for the healthy small church⁶⁴

1. The importance of proper theology and doctrine
2. The value of vision
3. Transformational worship
4. Acceptance of change
5. The ability to handle conflict
6. Spiritual leadership
7. A sense of community
8. Finance health
9. Mission-mindedness
10. Long pastoral tenure
11. Involvement in outreach

⁶⁴ Dennis Bickers, *The Healthy Small Church: Diagnosis and Treatment for the Big Issues* (Kansas City, KS: Beacon Hill Press, 2005).

12. Pursuit of excellence in ministry
13. Lay ministry involvement

The Principles of Thabiti Anyabwile

Thabiti M. Anyabwile is senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Grand Cayman Islands. He holds BA and MS degrees in psychology from North Carolina State University and previously worked as an assistant pastor at Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, DC. The healthy church feels responsible for providing training, models, and resources for its members of every age to develop their spiritual disciplines.⁶⁵ Per Anyabwile, discipline leads to the rare polished jewel of Christlikeness through educating, learning, development, and providing an atmosphere for growth.⁶⁶ Anyabwile further asserts that healthy church members will not only accept the Lord's chastisement humbly, but they will also accept correction from others. Because they recognize that the Lord's correction will often come through other members of the church, believers care enough not only to encourage in good times but to comfort and correct when it is necessary.⁶⁷ In his book entitled *What Is a Healthy Church Member?* Anyabwile offers ten traits of a healthy church member (Table 6).

Table 6. Anyabwile's ten traits of a healthy church member⁶⁸

1. A healthy church member is an expositional listener.
2. A healthy church member is a biblical theologian.
3. A healthy church member is Gospel saturated.
4. A healthy church member is genuinely converted.
5. A healthy church member is a biblical evangelist.
6. A healthy church member is a committed member.

⁶⁵ Thabiti Anyabwile, *What Is a Healthy Church Member?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 75.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 79.

⁶⁸ Thabiti Anyabwile, *What Is a Healthy Church Member?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 79.

7. A healthy church member seeks discipline.
8. A healthy church member is a growing disciple.
9. A healthy church member is a humble follower.
10. A healthy church member is a prayer warrior.

The Principles of Rick Warren

Rick Warren is an innovative pastor, renowned author, and world influencer. Warren is the founder of the Saddleback Church located in Forest, California, which is the eighth largest church in the United States. Warren in his book entitled *The Purpose Driven Church* believes that the church has five dimensions of church growth: (1) Churches grow warmer through fellowship. (2) Churches grow deeper through discipleship. (3) Churches grow stronger through worship. (4) Churches grow broader through ministry. (5) Churches grow larger through evangelism.⁶⁹

Warren maintains that the church has five purposes. Purpose #1 is described as *worship*. Warren believes there is no correct style of worship because Jesus gave only two requirements for legitimate worship: worship in spirit and in truth.⁷⁰ Worship can become a powerful witness to the unsaved in church. Unbelievers can see firsthand the joy that believers feel while they can sense when God is supernaturally moving in a service, although they will not be able to fully understand it.⁷¹ Warren feels that there is an intimate connection between worship and evangelism, and it should be the goal of evangelism to produce worshippers of God.⁷² Bible verses pertaining to worship include the following:

⁶⁹ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 49.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 240.

⁷¹ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 241.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 242.

- (1) But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23–24).
- (2) All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name (Psalm 86:9–10).
- (3) Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations. For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone (Psalm 100).

Purpose #2 is described as *ministry*. Warren states, “Ministry is demonstrating God’s love to others by meeting their needs and healing their hurts in the name of Jesus.”⁷³ The church has the responsibility to reach out in love and minister to the needs of the people. The church is to equip the saints for diverse types of needs such as spiritual, emotional, relational, and physical.⁷⁴ Scripture says this is for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12).

Purpose #3 is described as *evangelism*. Warren maintains that the church exists to communicate God’s Word because we are ambassadors for Christ, and it is our mission to

⁷³ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 104.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

evangelize the world.⁷⁵ Every believer has the responsibility to spread the gospel, so much so that God gave us five Great Commissions in the New Testament. In Matthew 28:19–20, Mark 16:16, Luke 24:47–49, John 20:21, and Acts 1:8, Jesus commands us to spread the gospel to the entire world.

Purpose #4 is described as *fellowship*. Fellowship is important because we are not just called to believe; we are also called to belong.⁷⁶ Warren feels that baptism is not only a symbol of salvation but also of fellowship, and it displays a person's incorporation into the body of Christ.⁷⁷ Scripture says, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

Purpose #5 is described as *discipleship*. Warren describes discipleship as the process of helping people be more like Christ in their thinking, feelings, and actions.⁷⁸ For the believer, this is a never-ending process. It begins the moment we become saved and continues throughout our entire life.⁷⁹ Scripture says, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28). The five purposes of the church are displayed in figure 3 below.

⁷⁵ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 104.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Figure 3. Warren's five purposes of the church⁸⁰

Explaining the Church's Purpose (Based on Acts 2:42-47)							
Purpose	Task	Objective	Target	Life Component	Human Needs	Church Provides	Emotional Benefit
Outreach	Evang.	Mission	Community	My Witness	Purpose	Focus	Significance
Worship	Exalt	Magnify	Crowd	My Worship	Power	Force	Stimulation
Fellowship	Encourage	Membership	Congregation	My Relationship	People	Family	Support
Discipleship	Edify	Maturity	Committed	My Walk	Principles	Foundation	Stability
Service	Equip	Ministry	Core	My Work	Profession	Function	Self-Expression

The Principles of Bob Whitesel

Bob Whitesel is the professor of Christian ministry and missional leadership at Wesley Seminary at Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana, and president of C3 International (Creative Church Consulting). He is the author of several books including *Care for the Common Church*, *Spiritual Waypoints*, *Waypoint*, and *Preparing for Change Reaction*. Whitesel believes that an ordinary church can indeed become uncommonly healthy. In his book entitled *The Healthy Church*, along with practical biblical teaching based on recent research, Whitesel sets out to answer the question, how can a church strengthen its heart, and what are healthy churches doing differently to remain vibrant, flexible, and healthy while the culture and community may change around them? Whitesel offers seven exercises to give a church the strength to become healthy. The seven exercises are illustrated in table 7.

⁸⁰ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 119.

Table 7. Whitesel's seven exercises of a healthy church⁸¹

1. The Church as a tribe: Exercises for unity
2. The Church as a harbor of safety: Exercises for safe havens
3. The Church as a mosaic: Exercises for cultural diversity
4. The Church as a heart-to-heart group: Exercises for team building
5. The Church as a worshipping community: Encountering God
6. The Church in mission: Exercises for engagement
7. The Church and spiritual transformation: Exercises in new life

The Principles of Greg Ogden

Greg Ogden is the executive pastor of discipleship at Christ Church in Oak Brook, Illinois. He previously served as director of the doctor of ministry program at Fuller Theological Seminary. Ogden has more than twenty-four years of experience in pastoral ministry in churches in California and Pennsylvania. With degrees from UCLA and Fuller Theological Seminary, Ogden is also the author of several books. He believes that the church is an organism, not an institution. He feels that before we can consider the changes that need to be made for the organism's reality to take hold, we must understand that the church is the living extension of Jesus's ministry.⁸²

Ogden states, "An organism view of ministry begins with the people of God as the place where ministry resides, and it conceives of leadership from within the one body."⁸³ In contrast, "An institutional view of ministry defines the territory occupied by its ordained leadership and then attempts to tack on a role for lay ministry."⁸⁴ Figure 4 displays a comparison of the organism of the church and the institution of the church.

⁸¹ Bob Whitesel, *The Healthy Church: Practical Ways to Strengthen a Church's Heart* (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2013).

⁸² Greg Ogden, *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 94.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Figure 4. The church: Organism versus institution⁸⁵

THE CHURCH	
Organism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Starting point: The body of Christ. The church is the whole people of God in whom Christ dwells. 2. Bottom-up: The church's ministry is shaped by the gifts and callings distributed by the Holy Spirit to the whole body of Christ. 3. All ministry is lay ministry. 4. Conclusion: One people/one ministry
Institution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Starting point: Leadership offices in the church. The true church is found where (a) the Word of God is rightly proclaimed; (b) the sacraments are rightly administered. 2. Top-down: The ministry is the province of the ordained offices of the church. 3. Lay ministry supplements and is secondary to ordained ministry. 4. Conclusions: Two people (clergy/laity)/two ministries.

In his book, *Unfinished Business*, Ogden proposes nine characteristics of a healthy church, which are shown in table 8. The nine characteristics of a healthy church are shown below.

Table 8. Ogden's nine characteristics of a healthy church⁸⁶

1. The church as organism: Together we have it all.
2. The institutional entrapment of the church
3. Unveiling our institutional mind-set
4. Shifting from institution to organism
5. Dependency: A counterproductive model of ministry
6. A biblical vision of an equipping ministry
7. Implementing the equipping model of ministry
8. Who are the equippers?
9. Servant leadership: Empowering the body for its ministry

⁸⁵ Greg Ogden, *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 76.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Stewardship Generosity	X				X				
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CHAPTER 3

SURVEY RESPONSE, ANALYSIS, AND INTERVIEWS

Healthy leaders have a greater chance of creating a healthy church because they lead by example. The church continues to face many challenges it must overcome in order to become healthy. Most experts agree that the primary reason a church becomes unhealthy is the lack of healthy leadership. According to Henry Blackaby, “Today’s pastors must deal with controversial dilemmas much more complex and divisive than clerics faced a generation ago.”⁸⁷ In the midst of enormous challenges, leaders are still required to attract new members as well as obtain the resources to finance a more expensive organization.⁸⁸ As leaders practice the discipline of becoming healthy through obeying the Word of God and prayer, the church will ultimately become more healthy as well. 1 Peter 5:1–7 is a scriptural representation of healthy leadership that results in a healthy following.

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.⁸⁹

The leadership in 1 Peter is a fitting example of how healthy leadership affects the overall health of the church and the community it serves. This does not happen overnight but is a process that develops over time. According to Blackaby, God can draw character development and

⁸⁷ Henry Blackaby, and Richard Blackaby. *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People to God’s Agenda*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 15.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ 1 Peter 5:1–7.

personal growth out of any situation that we may go through.⁹⁰ Blackaby further states, “Whether he does so is conditional on people’s willingness to submit to his will throughout the process.”⁹¹ He believes that Clinton’s six stages of leadership provide a great example of how God matures leaders over a lifetime.

Table 10. The six stages of leadership⁹²

1.	Phase one: Sovereign foundations
2.	Phase two: Inner life growth
3.	Phase three: Ministry maturing
4.	Phase four: Life maturing
5.	Phase five: Convergence
6.	Phase six: Afterglow or celebration

This chapter will show the results of the applied research that has resulted from surveying ten currently active pastors of ministries regarding church health in an active church ministry. A survey questionnaire and an informal interview were the measuring instruments used. The researcher developed the measurement instruments.

First, the pastors were all presented with ten questions pertaining to the importance of the number of years as pastor, the church vision statement, the church mission, the pastor’s role in shaping the health of the church, factors that would cause a decline in church health, accountability to be more evangelistic, organizational structure, praying for lost souls, overall health of the church, and evangelizing to different ethnic groups.

⁹⁰ Henry Blackaby, and Richard Blackaby. *Spiritual Leadership: Moving God’s People on to God’s Agenda* (Nashville TN: Broadman and Holman, 2001), 70.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

Second, the answers were gathered using Google Forms and placed on graphs revealing each answer while giving brief descriptions, comparisons, and learning from the different answers of each pastor. Third, results of the informal interview were collected into a descriptive narrative to illustrate the answers for each question asked.

Finally, the results of the complete research were utilized as a learning tool and to evaluate the current health of Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) in Stafford, Virginia, with the guidance of the experts in this field of ministry. The results of the research will also be utilized to aid MFMC in the lengthy process of not only becoming healthy but remaining so in the years to come.

Acts 4:32–37 is a great biblical example of what church health is and can be:

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the LORD Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.⁹³

Pastoral Survey Responses

Response and Analysis to Question 1

⁹³ Acts 4:32–37.

Figure 5. Years as pastor

Health Church survey

1. How many years have you served as Pastor/been a member at your current church?

(10 responses)

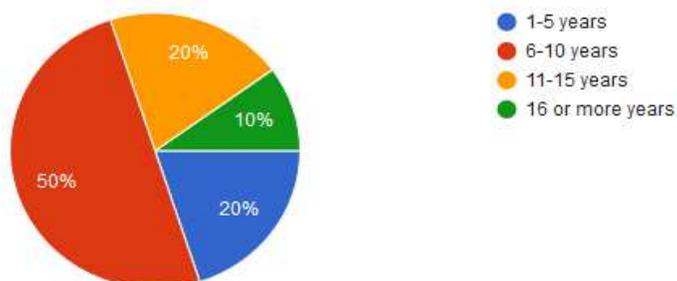


Table 11. Pastoral responses to question 1

Answer Choices	Pastoral Responses
1–5 years	2
6–10 years	5
11–15 years	2
16 or more years	1
Total	10

Figure 5 (Q1) shows the responses on the graph from all ten pastors. Pastor 8 and Pastor 10 have been pastoring for one to five years. Pastor 1, Pastor 2, Pastor 3, Pastor 5, and Pastor 7 have been pastoring for six to ten years. Pastor 4 and Pastor 6 have been pastoring for eleven to fifteen years. Pastor 9 has been pastoring for sixteen or more years.

This question addresses the number of years of experience each pastor brings to the table. It will also show how the number of years one has pastored may affect the overall answers of the survey. Being able to lead people is no easy task, and no matter how long one has been pastoring, there are skills one must possess in order to be effective. One of the ways leaders can

learn to become more effective is to study and learn from the behavior of other leaders.

According to Stanley, when you learn from the experience of others, you can go farther, faster.

“The more you know about leadership, the faster you grow as a leaders and the farther you are able to go as a leader.”⁹⁴

Response and Analysis to Question 2

Figure 6. Overall

Health

2. Describe the overall health of your church? (10 responses)

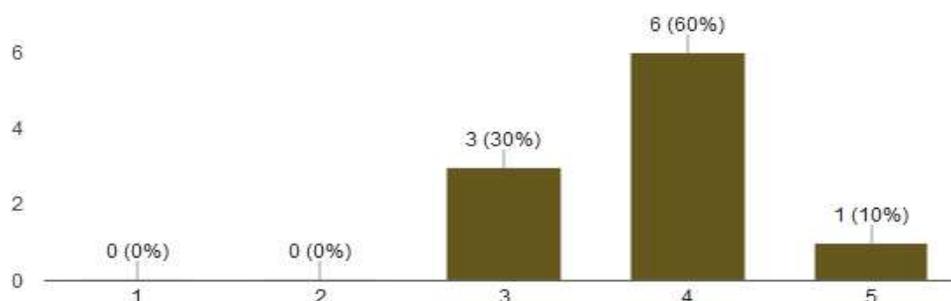


Table 12. Pastoral responses to question 2

Answer Choices	Pastoral Responses
Scale 1–5 (3)	3
Scale 1–5 (4)	6
Scale 1–5 (5)	1
Total	10

Figure 6 (Q2) shows the results of the ten pastors surveyed for question 2 based on this writer’s definition of a healthy church using a scale from 1 to 5 (1=unhealthy, 5=very healthy).

The graph shows that Pastor 5, Pastor 7, and Pastor 8, on a scale from 1 to 5, answered with the

⁹⁴ Andy Stanley, *Next Generation Leader: Five Essentials for Those Who Will Shape the Future* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2003), 9.

number 3. However, Pastor 1, Pastor 2, Pastor 3, Pastor 6, Pastor 9, and Pastor 10 answered with the number 4, while Pastor 4 answered with the number 5.

The overall health of the church is an important question to survey. However, the overall health of the leader plays a huge part in the overall health of the church. This affords pastors the opportunity to make the church healthier by making themselves healthier. Healthy bodies play a significant role in the overall health of a leader. Per Thomas, “Biblical admonitions to pursue a physical holiness suggest that even our bodies should proclaim Christ’s lordship.”⁹⁵

Thomas further believes that we cannot be faithful or healthy leaders if we neglect our bodies.⁹⁶ Paul taught the people of Philippi that Christ should be magnified in our bodies (Philippians 1:20). Paul further reminds us that we are our souls have been brought with a price: therefore, we should glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which belong to God (1 Corinthians 6:20). Acts 2:41-47 is a scriptural example of church health.

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.⁹⁷

Response and Analysis to Question 3

Figure 7. Healthy relationships

⁹⁵ Gary Thomas, *Every Body Matters: Strengthening Your Body to Strengthen Your Soul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 34.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

⁹⁷ Acts 2:41-47

3. How often are members encouraged to build healthy relationships with each other?

(10 responses)

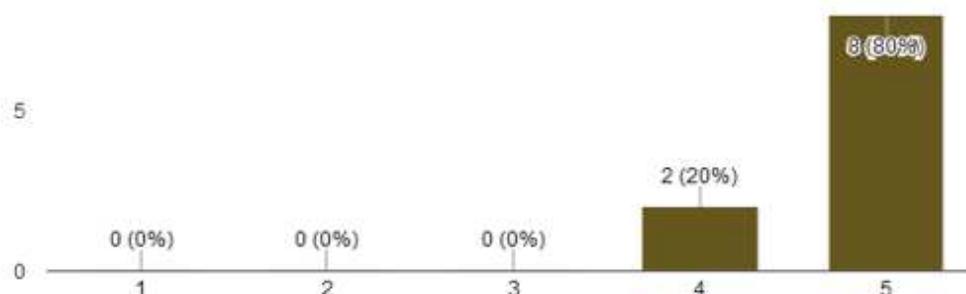


Table 13. Pastoral responses to question 3

Answer Choices	Pastoral Responses
Scale 1–5 (4)	2
Scale 1–5 (5)	8
Total	10

Figure 7 (Q3) shows the results of the ten pastors surveyed on a scale from 1 to 5 (representing how many times the pastor has encouraged members in a 30-day period to build healthy relationships from the pulpit). The graph for question 3 shows that Pastor 1 and Pastor 6, on a scale from 1 to 5, answered 4, while Pastor 2, Pastor 3, Pastor 4, Pastor 5, Pastor 7, Pastor 8, Pastor 9, and Pastor 10 all answered 5.

This question addresses the importance of developing healthy relationships with the hope of creating disciples in the process. Earley and Dempsey state, “Disciple making is not running a program; it is investing in people”⁹⁸ They compare relationships to bank accounts because every positive interaction makes a deposit in that account while every negative encounter causes a

⁹⁸ Dave Earley and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is...: How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academy, 2010), 148.

withdrawal. Effective disciple makers can master relational banking by constantly thinking of ways to make deposits into the lives of those they hope to disciple.⁹⁹

Response and Analysis to Question 4

Figure 8. Evangelism/outreach

4. How often in a 30-day period does the church perform evangelism/outreach in the community?

(10 responses)

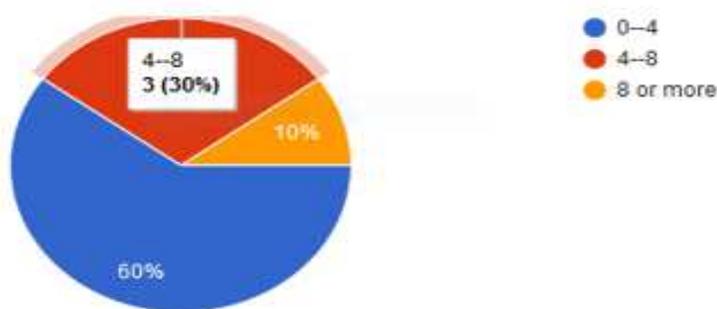


Table 14. Pastoral responses to question 4

Answer Choices	Pastoral Responses
0-4	6
4-8	3
8 or more	1
Total	10

Figure 8 (Q4) shows the results of the ten pastors surveyed. The graph for question 4 shows that Pastor 1, Pastor 2, Pastor 3, Pastor 5, Pastor 7, and Pastor 8 answered with 0-4. Pastor 4, Pastor 6, and Pastor 10 answered with 4-8. Pastor 9 answered with 8 or more.

This question addresses the importance of spreading the gospel in the community. Per Fay, one of the biggest obstacles to overcome when spreading the gospel in the community is fear. However, he argues that you never fail when you take the gospel to the community because

⁹⁹ Ibid., 149.

it has nothing to do with bringing anyone to the Lord, but it is rather an act of obedience.¹⁰⁰ Fay offers five questions that can be shared with people that you may meet in the community:

1. Do you have any kind of spiritual belief?
2. To you, who is Jesus?
3. Do you think there is a heaven or a hell?
4. If you died, where would you go? If heaven, why?
5. If what you are believing is not true, would you want to know?¹⁰¹

Response and Analysis to Question 5

Figure 9. Church pray/study

5. How many times in a 30-day period does your church pray/study the bible together?

(10 responses)

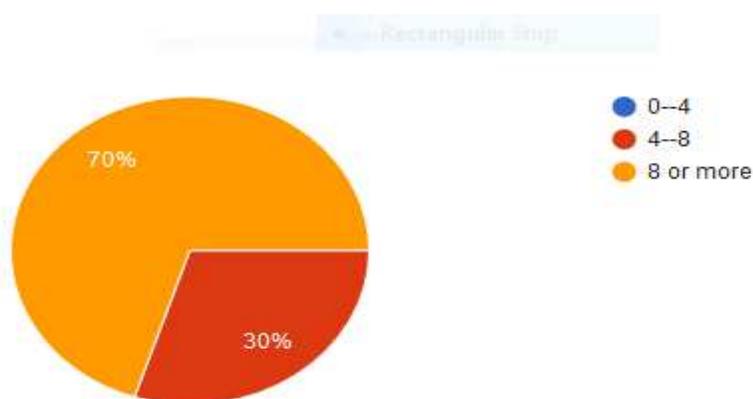


Table 15. Pastoral responses to question 5

Answer Choices	Pastoral Responses
0-4	0
4-8	3

¹⁰⁰ William Fay, *Share Jesus without Fear* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 1999), 37.

¹⁰¹ William Fay, *Share Jesus without Fear* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 1999), 39.

8 or more	7
Total	10

Figure 9 (Q5) shows the results of the ten pastors surveyed. The graph for question 5 shows that no pastor chose 0–4. Pastor 1, Pastor 3, and Pastor 6, answered with 4–8. Pastor 2, Pastor 4, Pastor 5, Pastor 7, Pastor 8, Pastor 9, and Pastor 10 answered with 8 or more.

For a church to be empowered to become healthy prayer is necessary. According to Keller, the number of people praying is not what is important but the nature of the praying. He feels that “extraordinary prayer” (i.e., united, persistent, and kingdom-centered) is imperative.¹⁰² He further states, “Maintenance prayer meetings are short, mechanical, and focused on physical needs inside the church.”¹⁰³ In contrast, Keller suggests that these three basic traits be used as frontline prayers:

1. A request for grace to confess sins and to humble ourselves.
2. A compassion and seal for the flourishing of the church and the reaching of the lost.
3. A yearning to know God, to see His face, to glimpse His glory.¹⁰⁴

Response and Analysis to Question 6

Figure 10. The gospel

¹⁰² Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 73.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

6. Do your sermons regularly communicate the gospel? (10 responses)

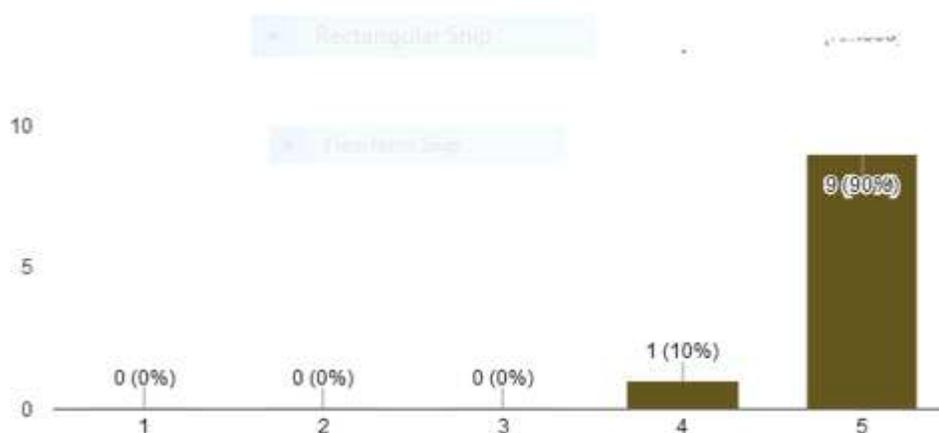


Table 16. Pastoral responses to question 6

Answer Choices	Pastoral Responses
Scale 1–5 (5)	9
Scale 1–5 (4)	1
Total	10

Figure 10 (Q6) shows the results of the ten pastors surveyed on how regularly their sermons communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ using a scale from 1 to 5 (1=seldom, 5=always). The graph for question 6 shows that Pastor 1, Pastor 2, Pastor 3, Pastor 4, Pastor 5, Pastor 6, Pastor 8, Pastor 9, and Pastor 10 answered with 5, while Pastor 7 answered with 4.

This question shows the importance of preaching the gospel. Wax describes the gospel as a three-legged stool:

1. The Gospel story—the overarching grand narrative found in the Scriptures.
2. The Gospel announcement—namely that God in the person of Jesus Christ lived a perfect life in our place, bore the penalty for our sin through His death, was raised from the dead, and is now exalted as Lord.

3. The Gospel community—our response to the gospel announcement; repentance and faith.¹⁰⁵

Wax maintains that if you cut off one of these legs, the whole stool will tip over. He refers to messages that resemble the gospel as “counterfeit gospel” because they fail to incorporate all the things that the Bible says about the good news.¹⁰⁶ Paul gives one of the greatest definitions of the gospel. He says:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.¹⁰⁷

The power of the gospel cannot be underestimated. The same way rotten food is harmful to our natural bodies, defective gospels can and will threaten our spiritual health. Counterfeit gospels must be exposed and brought to the attention of the believers to live according to God’s word. The true biblical gospel of the atoning death and marvelous resurrection of Jesus Christ still has saving power to this day, and it will never lose its power. However, there are many counterfeit gospels that leave out the cross and make no mention of the empty tomb. Such gospels lack the power of God manifested through Jesus Christ. When the working of Jesus Christ is left out it also leaves out the power that keeps us every day from falling from His grace.

Response and Analysis to Question 7

Figure 11. Active versus inactive members

¹⁰⁵ Trevin Wax, *Counterfeit Gospels: Rediscovering the Good News in a World of False Hope* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2011), 17.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ 1 Corinthians 15:1–4.

7. What is the ratio of active members versus inactive members? Example (120/20)

10 responses

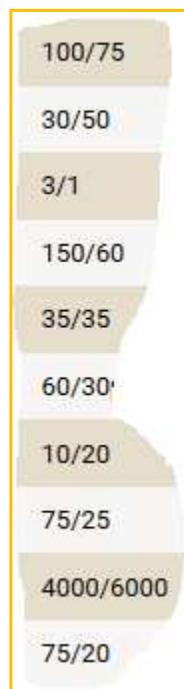


Table 17. Pastoral responses to question 7

Answer Choices	Pastoral Responses
100/75	1
50/30	2
3/1	3
150/60	4
70/35	5
60/30	6
20/10	7
75/25	8
6,000/4,000	9
75/20	10
Total	10

Figure 11 (Q7) shows the results of the ten pastors surveyed. The graph for question 7 shows that Pastor 1 answered with 100/75, Pastor 2 answered with 50/30, Pastor 3 answered with 3/1, Pastor 4 answered with 150/60, Pastor 5 answered with 70/35, Pastor 6 answered with

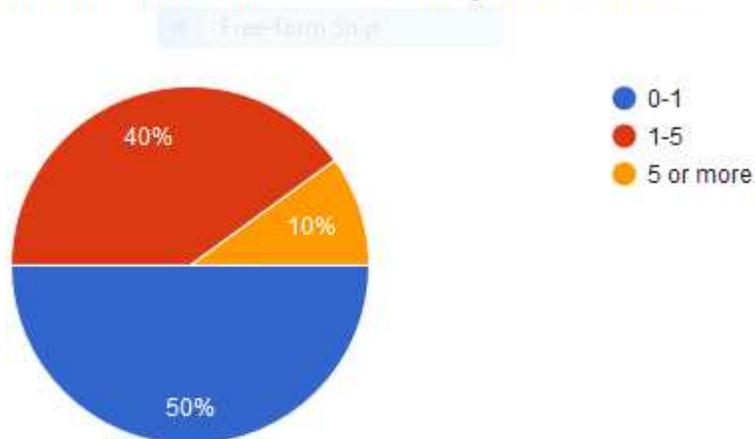
60/30, Pastor 7 answered with 20/10, Pastor 8 answered with 75/25, Pastor 9 answered with 600/400, and Pastor 10 answered with 75/20.

This question addresses the issue of member retention in a church and is something that every pastor has to deal with. People leave a particular church for many reasons. However, Rainer believes that the majority of church dropouts happen for two reasons: (1) church members become overcommitted and burn out, and (2) they do not serve at all for a number of reasons.¹⁰⁸ Rainer calls the Christian who comes in a flame and quickly disappears the “comet Christian”; he or she may start out serving very well, but the effort is short lived.¹⁰⁹ According to Rainer, members do not serve for three reasons: (1) they have not been asked to serve, (2) they are not comfortable with their spectator status, or (3) they may not really be a believer in Christ.¹¹⁰

Response and Analysis to Question 8

Figure 12. Paid staff

8. Now many paid staff members exist at your church? (10 responses)



¹⁰⁸ Thom Rainer, *I Will: Nine Traits of the Outwardly Focused Christian* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2015), 89.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

Table 18. Pastoral responses to question 8

Answer Choices	Pastoral Responses
0–1	5
1–5	4
5 or more	1
Total	10

Figure 12 (Q8) shows the results of the ten pastors surveyed. The graph for question 8 shows that Pastor 1, Pastor 2, Pastor 5, Pastor 7, and Pastor 8 answered with 0–1. Pastor 3, Pastor 4, Pastor 6, and Pastor 10 answered with 1–5. Pastor 9 answered with 5 or more.

This question addresses the importance of having a paid staff and how it plays a part in church health. Webster’s dictionary defines *staff* as a group of personnel who carry out a designated function or activity of the organization under the direct leadership of the head. Per Welch, “The development of a philosophy for creating a staff organization must flow out of the constituting documents that describe the church—its theology, doctrine, and statement of dogma.”¹¹¹ The church staff will not remain the same but may change over time. As the church grows, decisions should be made about when and what ministerial and support staff are needed.¹¹² “The wise church will begin to think about the potential for an organized church long before the need for that organization presents itself.”¹¹³

Response and Analysis to Question 9

Figure 13. Conflict resolution

¹¹¹ Robert Welch, *Church Administration: Creating Efficiency for Effective Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 77.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

9. How quickly are conflicts resolved at your church? (10 responses)

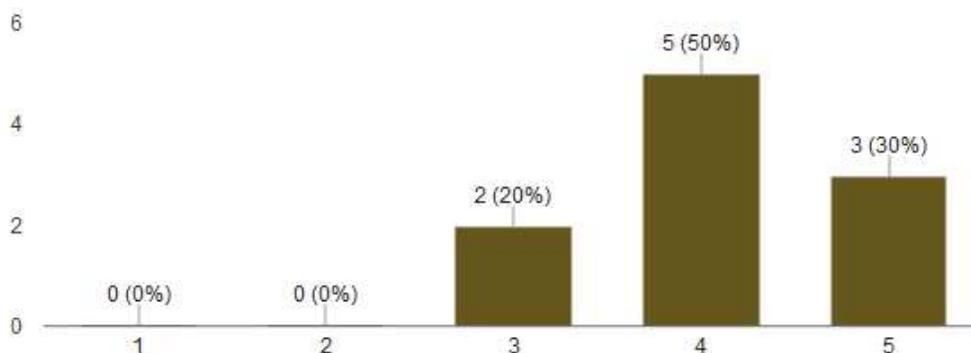


Table 19. Pastoral responses to question 9

Answer Choices	Pastoral Responses
Scale 1–5	pastors 1, 7 answered 3
Scale 1–5	pastors 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 answered 4
Scale 1–5	pastors 2, 8, 10 answered 5
Total	10

Figure 13 (Q9) shows the results of the ten pastors surveyed on a scale from 1 to 5 (1=very slow, 2= slow, 3=moderate, 4= quickly, 5=very quickly). The graph for question 9 shows that Pastor 1 and Pastor 7, on a scale from 1–5, answered with the number 2. Pastor 3, Pastor 4, Pastor 5, Pastor 6, and Pastor 9 answered with the number 4. Pastor 2, Pastor 8, and Pastor 10 answered with the number 5.

This question addresses the importance of leaders handling conflicts quickly. The spiritual leader will always seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to resolve conflicts before its poison spreads. The inability to resolve conflicts can have an adverse effect on the entire church. Per Blackaby, “True spiritual leaders recognize their utter dependence on God so they regularly

fill their heart and mind with his Word.”¹¹⁴ When serious problems occur, leaders should (1) recruit a variety of God-fearing counselors, and (2) give their advisors the opportunity to speak directly and honestly to them.¹¹⁵

Response and Analysis to Question 10

Figure 14. Characteristics

10. What are the most important characteristics of a healthy church to you?

Members attend Sunday School, Bible Study and prayer services. Attending these services I believe will naturally lead to consistent attendance of Sunday morning worship service. When members show love to weak members that are going through difficult times, by contacting them and praying for them and doing whatever they can to strengthen them.
One where the gospel is preached One where praise and worship is experienced One where corporate and individual prayer practiced One in which evangelism is encouraged
Communication, Unity, Integrity,
communication vision execution of planning
Preach salvation
Dissemination of God's will
Preaching the unaltered gospel of Jesus Christ to see lives transformed for the up building of the Kingdom. Developing disciplines for kingdom building and seeing the 5 fold ministry unfold. Having a church existing of all
Dicipleship
One where the gospel is preach, a vision & mission is in place, love is expressed, authentic praise and worship takes place and involvement in the community

Table 20. Pastoral responses to question 10

¹¹⁴ Henry Blackaby, and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People to God's Agenda* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 223.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

Answer Choices	Pastoral Responses
Attend church regularly	1
Gospel is preached	3
Good communication	2
Worship takes place	2
Vision	1
Making disciples	1
Total	10

Figure 14 (Q10) shows the results of the ten pastors surveyed. The graph for question 10 shows that Pastor 1 answered with “attend church regularly,” Pastor 2 answered with “vision,” Pastor 3 answered with “gospel is preached,” Pastor 4 answered with “good communication,” Pastor 5 answered with “good communication,” Pastor 6 answered with “gospel is preached,” Pastor 7 answered with “gospel is preached,” Pastor 8 answered with “gospel is preached,” Pastor 9 answered with “discipleship,” and Pastor 10 answered with “gospel is preached.”

This question addresses the reality that pastors do not feel the same way about what makes the church healthy. However, most of the pastors agree that the most crucial element that makes a healthy church is indeed the preaching of the gospel. Greear states, “The gospel is an announcement that Jesus is Lord and that He has won the battle for your salvation.”¹¹⁶ Greear gives three fitting examples of what a “gospel-centered” church looks like:

1. In a gospel-centered church, preaching the message of the gospel is the top priority.
2. In a gospel-centered church, the emphasis of the message is more on what Christ has done than on what we are to do.
3. In a gospel-centered church, the members demonstrate the beauty of the gospel in the community.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ J. D. Greear, *Gospel: Recovering the Power that Made Christianity Revolutionary* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 222.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

Pastoral Interview Questions

All the results of the informal interviews will be displayed in the order of questions 1 through 5; the answers to questions 6 through 10 will then follow with a graph displaying the results.

This researcher has gained vast knowledge from interviewing the ten pastors. All the pastors interviewed brought something unique to the table. This writer has received plenty of advice on how to avoid pitfalls as a new pastor and what to watch out for. Learning from others' mistakes is a lesson learned without the scars. Learning and building relationships with other pastors and leaders is key to becoming a successful leader.

DeYmaz believes that relationship-building for leaders is important to the overall development and well-being of the church. He states, "Should we fail to develop such relationships, we will fail to realize the very church we have committed ourselves to building."¹¹⁸ Leaders should always carry themselves in such a way that others would want to build a relationship to help advance the kingdom of God. Paul speaks of this when he says, "With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling."¹¹⁹ God Himself is a relational being as well. In the beginning in the Garden of Eden, He desired to have a relationship with both Adam and Eve.

Pastoral Interview Responses to Questions 1–5

1. How long have you served as the pastor/been a member at your current location?

¹¹⁸ Mark De Ymaz, *Building a Healthy Church Multi-Ethnic Church: Mandate, Commitments, and Practices of a Diverse Congregation* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2007), 83.

¹¹⁹ Ephesians 4:2–4.

After interviewing the ten pastors, this pastor group gave the following answers: Pastor 1, Pastor 5, and Pastor 7 had all been pastors for 11–15 years. Pastor 2, Pastor 8, and Pastor 10 had all been pastors for 6–10 years. Pastor 4, Pastor 6, and Pastor 9 had been pastors for 1–5 years. Pastor 2 had been a pastor for 16 or more years.

Because pastor turnover is high in some churches, pastors must be prayerful that they do not become overwhelmed by the needs of the people. This writer was very impressed with Pastor 3 because he had been a pastor for nearly 30 years and was just as enthusiastic as the younger pastors. This problem was prevalent with Moses in the Old Testament, as illustrated in the relationship between Jethro and Moses in the book of Exodus.

The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?” Moses answered him, “Because the people come to me to seek God’s will. Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God’s decrees and instructions.” Moses’ father-in-law replied, “What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people’s representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.”¹²⁰

Moses learns a valuable lesson from his father-in-law. He learns the importance of sharing the load of ministry. This remarkable story shows how Jethro stood back and watched Moses work relentlessly for a day. People lined up all day long to bring matters to Moses for judgment. One might imagine for such things as; domestic issues, property disputes, or interpersonal conflicts. By the end of the day Moses was exhausted and Jethro was wise enough to realize that Moses could not go on in this manner. Jethro understood the power of delegation.

¹²⁰ Exodus 18:13–21.

Pastor burnout is real, and many pastors have given up or are thinking about giving up because of the stress of pastoring. Pastors suffer from burnout for many reasons. Experts feel that the top three are (1) the job of the pastor is never finished, (2) it is sometimes difficult for the pastor to tell if he or she is making a difference, and (3) the work of a pastor is very repetitive.

Despite the possibility of burnout, pastoring does have positives. Sanford argues that although there are many dark sides of the life of a pastor, there is a bright side as well. Sanford states, “There is also the positive side: the fine people with whom the ministering person works, the support one gets, the Church, the variety of work to do in a parish, and many other benefits.”¹²¹ Although pastoring has a dark side, it is important for pastors to realize that God can still work through our dark side to accomplish His kingdom’s purposes and to elevate us to positions of leadership that we would not have aspired to if it were not for the influence of our dark side.¹²²

2. Does your church have a current vision statement?

All the pastors answered yes to this question except Pastor 9. The more experienced pastors understood the importance of having a written vision statement and quoting it often to the congregation. The pastors who were church planters found it easier to cast a vision versus those who took over some else’s church. Pastor 9 stated that he did not have a vision yet because he was a new pastor. However, this writer feels that a vision is necessary the moment you become pastor if not sooner. Blackaby believes that vision is crucial because if you cannot see where you are going, you are unlikely to reach your destination. He calls vision the “North Star,” guiding leaders and helping them to move people forward, and if it is missing, becoming sidetracked is

¹²¹ John Sanford, *Ministry Burnout* (Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1982), 15.

¹²² Gary McIntosh, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership: How to Become an Effective Leader by Confronting Potential Failures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 155.

inevitable.¹²³ It is vital that leaders not just carry their vision in their head, but it should also be in writing. Malphurs states, “Writing a vision statement forces vision clarity from the vision navigator.”¹²⁴

Bickers believes that vision allows the church to be proactive rather than reactive. He states, “Without a vision, a church will usually spend its time responding to situations rather than proactively shaping its future.”¹²⁵ Vision is powerful because it allows us to focus on God’s future for us and the people we lead. But despite a vision’s many benefits, many pastors are still attempting to lead without one, and they will soon experience frustration. Bickers says, “They hope something they do will produce good results, but they never spend time determining what God would have them to do.”¹²⁶

3. Does your church have a current mission statement?

Once again, all the pastors said yes to having a mission statement except Pastor 9. Pastor 3, Pastor 6, and Pastor 10 stated that their mission had evolved over the years because of a change of direction in the ministry. However, they were never without a mission. Pastor 9 had recently been hired as pastor in an older existing church and is very unclear on what his mission is or the importance of having a mission in place. Pastor 9 did not realize that moving forward without a mission in place can cause the future growth of the church he pastors to stagnate. The mission statement encourages the church to become unified as a body of believers. The scripture

¹²³ Henry Blackaby, and Richard Blackaby, *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People to God’s Agenda*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 85.

¹²⁴ Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 137.

¹²⁵ Dennis Bickers. *The Healthy Small Church: Diagnosis and Treatment for the Big Issues*. (Kansas City, KS: Beacon Hill Press, 2005), 36.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

makes it clear how important unity is for believers when Jesus prays for unity in the book of John.

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one. I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”¹²⁷

4. What part does a pastor play in shaping the health of a church?

Pastor 1 stated that the pastor plays the lead role in shaping the health of a church. Pastor 2 stated the pastor plays a vital part in shaping the health of a church. Pastor 3, Pastor 5, Pastor 6, Pastor 9, and Pastor 10 stated that the pastor plays the significant role in shaping the health of a church. Pastor 4 stated that the pastor plays a nurturing role in shaping the health of a church by being the example. Pastor 7 stated that the pastor’s role in shaping the health of the church is by delivering the word. Pastor 8 stated that the pastor plays the key role in shaping the health of the church.

Although the pastors’ responses were slightly different, all of them agreed that the pastor plays a significant role in shaping the overall health of the church. Many pastors do not realize that their physical health plays a significant role in their effectiveness. Many people stay in shape to impress others, but as leaders, we should stay in shape physically so that God can use us. Thomas says, “The reason I want to get in shape then, the reason I long for God’s church to get in shape, is not to impress anyone, not to make others feel inferior, not to demonstrate our own personal discipline and self-control.”¹²⁸

¹²⁷ John 17:20–23.

¹²⁸ Gary Thomas, *Every Body Matters: Strengthening Your Body to Strengthen Your Soul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 15.

On the contrary, we should strive to become, as Paul writes, “But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work. We must be vigilant and have healthy bodies to perform effectively as a pastor.”¹²⁹ Thomas argues that we are called to be all of the following:

- Instruments for special purpose.
- Made holy.
- Useful to the Master.
- Prepared to do any good work.¹³⁰

The overall emotional health of the leader also plays an important part in the overall health of the church. Scazzero believes that “as go the leaders, so goes the church.” He states, “The key to successful spiritual leadership has much more to do with the leader’s internal life than with the leader’s expertise, gifts, or experience.”¹³¹ The experts all agree that any real change in a nation, church, or people cannot be achieved without a strong leader, proof that “as go the leaders, so goes the church.”¹³² Every success in life can be attributed to someone performing effectively in the leadership role. Jesus Christ was our greatest example when He took on the leadership role as Savior of the world.

¹²⁹ 2 Timothy 2:20–21.

¹³⁰ Gary Thomas, *Every Body Matters: Strengthening Your Body to Strengthen Your Soul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 15.

¹³¹ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship That Actually Changes Lives* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 20.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 36.

Thomas argues that whether we have strong or weak bodies, healthy or sick, over-nourished or undernourished, the question becomes, how do we begin moving from where we are now to more purposefully building bodies that function like instruments?¹³³ The fact is we must be vigilant and have healthy bodies to perform effectively as a pastor. Thomas believes that laziness is the great silent murderer of our time because it kills our bodies, our relationships, and our bank accounts. Thomas states, “Laziness is more than a sin—it’s an attitude that undercuts our sense of duty to God and our obligation to our neighbor, and an attitude that wastes our lives.”¹³⁴

5. What are factors that cause a decline in the health of a church?

Pastor 1 stated that the lack of vision, lack of unity, and poor communication all cause a decline in the health of a church. Pastor 2 stated that the lack of vision, lack of purpose, lack of administration, and lack of staffing all cause a decline in the health of a church. Pastor 3 stated that the lack of dedication, commitment, and ministries all cause a decline in the health of a church. Pastor 4 stated that the lack of training and the lack of pastoral experience are what cause a decline in the health of a church. Pastor 5 stated that the lack of leadership training is what causes a decline in the health of a church. Pastor 6, Pastor 7, and Pastor 8 stated that the lack of obedience to God’s Word is what causes a decline in the health of a church. Pastor 9 and Pastor 10 stated that the lack of effective communication is what causes a decline in the health of a church.

The ten pastors gave different answers regarding what they thought would cause a decline in the health of a church. The truth is there are many factors that can cause a church’s

¹³³ Gary Thomas, *Every Body Matters: Strengthening Your Body to Strengthen Your Soul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 15.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 101.

health to decline. It is good to identify what the problems are so that they can be corrected because a healthy church cannot produce good ministry. Jesus states, “A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit”¹³⁵ Bickers describes the following as factors in the decline of a church’s health:

- Conflict: Unresolved conflict in a congregation will resurface and prevent the church from growing.
- Focusing inward: Unhealthy churches focus most of their attention on satisfying the needs of its members.
- Cultural indifference: Unhealthy churches do not understand the culture in which we live today, nor do they want to.
- Poor leadership: Poor leadership, both pastoral and lay, severely limits a church’s effectiveness.
- Lack of vision and purpose: Too many churches are content merely to survive.¹³⁶

Pastoral Chart Responses to Questions 6–10

Interviewed Pastor	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
Pastor 1	Yes	Yes	Every day	7	Yes
Pastor 2	Yes	Yes	Every day	7	Yes
Pastor 3	Yes	Yes	Weekly	8	Yes
Pastor 4	Yes	Yes	Every Sunday	8	Yes
Pastor 5	Yes	Yes	Weekly	8	Yes
Pastor 6	Yes	Yes	Every day	8	Yes
Pastor 7	Yes	Yes	Every Service	7	Yes
Pastor 8	No	Yes	Weekly	7	Yes
Pastor 9	No	No	Weekly	8	Yes
Pastor 10	No	Yes	Monthly	7	Yes

¹³⁵ Matthew 7:18.

¹³⁶ Dennis Bickers, Dennis. *The Healthy Small Church: Diagnosis and Treatment for the Big Issues* (Kansas City, KS: Beacon Hill Press, 2005), 20.

Summary

The surveys and interviews conducted with the pastors in this chapter have brought several things to the surface while revealing their thoughts and behaviors regarding how they pastor. It was revealed that every leader leads differently yet they still can all be healthy and successful if they have a strategic plan. The questions that each pastor was asked give us clear insight as to why a pastor may feel a certain way based on how the questions were answered.

Pastoral styles are different, no two leaders pastor the same. However, the desire to be better should be the goal of every pastor. All the pastors who were surveyed and interviewed wanted to become better pastors, but all of them did not know how to achieve that goal. Interviewing these pastors has showed this writer the importance of strategic planning and how much it is misunderstood. This chapter further shows the importance of incorporating prayer, Gods Word, accountability, delegation, conflict resolution, evangelism, and healthy relationships. Thus, pastors need to find a way to incorporate these elements into their everyday life to become a healthy leader and to lead a healthy church.

CHAPTER 4

A STRATEGIC PLAN TO CREATE A HEALTHY CHURCH

Malphurs defines strategic planning as “the fourfold process that a point leader, such as a pastor, works through regularly with a team of leaders to envision or re-envision and revitalize his church by developing a biblical mission and a compelling vision, discovering its core values, and crafting a strategy that implements a unique, authentic church model.”¹³⁷ Strategic planning plays a vital role in any ministry. It can make a difference in whether a church survives, effectively or healthy.

Many experts agree that successful churches that are making a difference are led by strategic thinkers. Per Malphurs, strategic planning is needed because it enables leaders to answer three basic organizational questions: (1) Who are we? This question leads to the church’s core values, or DNA. (2) Where are we going? This question identifies the church’s mission and vision. (3) How do we get there? This question addresses how the church will accomplish its mission and vision.¹³⁸

Strategic planning affects the long-term life of the church. Malphurs states, “To survive, churches must change and adapt their ministry methods, using strategic planning as their vehicle.”¹³⁹ There are some who refer to strategic planning as a road map that leaders can use to navigate their way for the benefit of those who are following them. “Strategic planning is the map that directs the church into the future.”¹⁴⁰

Miracle Faith Ministries Church History and Assessment

¹³⁷ Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 28.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Founding

In Stafford County, Virginia, on September 14, 2013, Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) was established as a new church plant by this writer along with his wife and two children. Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) is a biblical faith-based church made up of vibrant and active Christians. The church gladly invites all people of all races through its doors to transform them into having a wholesome and loving relationship with God through Jesus Christ. As we march forward into our fourth year, we are thankfully growing in membership, finances, leadership, and ministries. Our strategic plan contains our purpose, values, mission, vision, strategy, calendar, and budget. These elements are all the ingredients that we deem necessary to witness to a dying world.

Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) is a family of believers who have been called into a living and working relationship with Jesus Christ. The members and attendees alike comprise people from all walks of life (senior citizens, young adults, married couples, singles, teens, children, and infants), all coming together to display a balanced picture of a church family that truly desires to reflect the body of Christ. We envision people in our church to be so in love with Jesus Christ that they are no longer comfortable with the short-lived American dream; rather, they are gripped by a vision to fulfill the Great Commission.

Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) views itself as being passionate about the world's nations, living and giving generously to fulfill the Great Commission, having its sons and daughters go to the ends of the earth as short-term and career missionaries, and seeing every member of our church empowered to fulfill a personal life of mission in the world. The goal is to create an atmosphere that will allow everyone who enters our doors to view our church as a place to "Belong, Believe, and Become" all that God would have him or her to be. The transformation

of people is the greatest joy of this writer as a pastor. There is nothing more satisfying than to see others reach their full spiritual potential for the kingdom.

It is wonderful to launch a new church and witness the beauty of its birth. New church plants are indeed a sign of a healthy church. Earley and Dempsey argue that despite the rise of megachurches in America, there is no county in our nation that has a larger church population than it did ten years ago.¹⁴¹ They maintain that during the last ten years combined, communicant membership of all Protestant denominations declined by 9.5 percent (4,498,242) while the national population increased by 11.4 percent (24,153,000). In 1990, 20.4 percent of all Americans attended church on any given Sunday, and by the year 2000, only 18.7 percent attended church.¹⁴² Earley and Dempsey believe that this declining trend is continuing, and if the trend is not turned around soon their fear is that, only 6 percent of Americans will attend church each week.¹⁴³

Having said all of this, new church plants are necessary in this country. Experts maintain that even though America has more people today, it has fewer churches per person than any time in its history, and although the number of churches in America has increased by 50 percent in the last century, the population has increased by a staggering 300 percent. Some even suggest that there are now nearly 60 percent fewer churches per 10,000 Americans than there were in 1920. These incredible numbers make it easy to understand why new church plants are needed, and most agree that they can reach more people effectively than existing churches do.

¹⁴¹ Dave Earley, and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is: How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academy, 2010), 217.

¹⁴² Ibid., 340.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

Per Earley and Dempsey, churches that are more than fifteen years old win an average of only three people to Christ per year for every one-hundred church members, but churches between three and fifteen years old win an average of five people to Christ per year for every one-hundred member.¹⁴⁴ Early and Dempsey state, “Truly when the church exhales churches it inhales converts.”¹⁴⁵

Purpose

Being able to state your purpose is important because if you expect people to fully grasp and understand your mission and vision statements, they must be certain of your motives.

Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMA) has adopted the five purpose principles of Rick Warren’s *The Purpose Driven Church* to fulfill the five tasks that Christ ordained for His church to be complete:

1. Love the Lord with all your heart. We love God with our heart through worshipping Him.
2. Love your neighbor as yourself. We accomplish this through ministry and meeting the needs of others in love.
3. Go make disciples. The church exists to communicate God’s Word, authorized by the Great Commission.
4. Baptize disciples. Baptism symbolizes fellowship and identification with the body of Christ.
5. Teach disciples to obey. This task is achieved through the process of discipleship.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Dave Earley, and Rod Dempsey. *Disciple Making Is: How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academy, 2010), 341.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 342.

¹⁴⁶ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 106.

Warren argues that it is simply not enough to define the purpose of your church; it must also be communicated to everyone in the church through methods such as scripture, symbols, slogans, stories, and specifics. He further suggests that the purposes of the church should be personalized as God's five goals for every believer because these goals are what God expects from every believer on earth.¹⁴⁷

Browning's idea of a purposed church is one in which ministry is carried out by ordinary people, and the pastor's job is to simply identify, deploy, train, and support the ministers.¹⁴⁸ Browning believes that the church should be intentionally structured to the point that it has no limits to spreading the gospel, and sometimes this is accomplished by doing less.

Mission

The mission statement is vital when it comes to the health of a church and creating a strategic plan. The mission statement serves the purpose of communicating to the world what you do and your motives for doing it. The goal is for the mission statement to answer questions pertaining to why you exist. This writer believes that when the mission statement is fully understood by the pastor, congregants, and visitors, it will guide the strategy to accomplish the church's goals. Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) believes including God in the mission statement leaves little room for failure.

The mission of Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) is stated thusly: "Our mission is to be missional in our quest to win souls for the Kingdom and to show God's love, and to fulfill the Great Commission by reaching out to all people of all races who seek a new beginning and desire to become Christ like through repentance, worship, teaching, and holy living." We

¹⁴⁷ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 114.

¹⁴⁸ Dave Browning, *Deliberate Simplicity: How the Church Does More by Doing Less* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 15.

believe that we are more than just a group of people coming together in an evangelistic program. We are a spiritual family that loves people, the community, the country, and the world.

The goal is to talk positively about all these while walking in love, showing concern for those less fortunate than us. Keller states, “A missional mind-set can and should pervade every area of the church.”¹⁴⁹ He maintains a church should be more than just a group of people involved in a specific evangelistic program, but rather its members should love the city and talk positively about it while showing concern for the hungry and the poor alike.¹⁵⁰

When a church is heavily involved in its mission, it is one of the true signs that it is indeed healthy. Dempsey argues that the mission of Christ should be accomplished locally, regionally, nationally, and globally through the members of the local church.¹⁵¹ The book of Acts states, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”¹⁵² Dempsey believes that the Bible makes it clear that the Lord wants us to go spread the gospel and make disciples locally as well as globally, and a healthy church works aggressively to accomplish this goal with the disciples who are inside the local church.¹⁵³

Vision

Placing a vision before the people is a very important place to start when organizing a plan to develop a healthy church. The members of Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) are constantly asked to do their best, and to do so, they must have an unclouded vision, which

¹⁴⁹ Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 260.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Dave Earley, and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is: How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academy, 2010), 217.

¹⁵² Acts 1:8.

¹⁵³ Dave Earley, and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is: How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academy, 2010), 218.

provides members with a clear picture of the good that will be birthed from their efforts.

Blackaby states, “Why would employees or volunteers make a great sacrifice on behalf of a puny vision?”¹⁵⁴ Leaders are setting themselves up for failure when they demand others to give their best but they in turn fail to produce clear, compelling benefits. Per Blackaby, when this happens, those laboring in support of the vision can possibly perceive that their effort is benefitting only the ones at the top promoting the vision.¹⁵⁵

The book of Proverbs states, “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law is happy.”¹⁵⁶ The Great Commission comes to mind when one thinks about the vision for the church. It says, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”¹⁵⁷

The Great Commission is powerful because it gives precise instructions for what God wants and proves how important disciple-making is to Him. Hull states, “When God issued the Great Commission, he could have spoken about contemplation, study, worship services, or gathering people together for revival meetings in the temple.”¹⁵⁸ But he did not; instead, he revealed his heart and priority while indicating a method to fulfill God’s agenda to rescue the

¹⁵⁴ Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby. *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People to God’s Agenda* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 107.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 108.

¹⁵⁶ Proverbs 29:18.

¹⁵⁷ Matthew 28:19–20.

¹⁵⁸ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 25.

world.¹⁵⁹ Most experts believe that the commitment to become and make disciples should be the central act of every believer and every church.

The vision of Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) is stated thusly: “Our vision is to develop, teach, and empower God’s people to become disciple-makers for Christ as He has commanded us in the Great Commission.” At Miracle Faith Ministries, we teach that the Great Commission is more than instructions; it is about being obedient. Many Christians have the wrong idea about the Great Commission as well as disciple-making. Some are more concerned about others taking on their way of thinking.

Per Hull, making disciples has nothing to do with winning others over to a philosophy or turning them into nice people who smile a lot. Rather, the Great Commission launches a rescue mission for lost souls; all followers receive orders with full authority to act wherever they happen to be.¹⁶⁰ There are some pastors who view disciple-making as a means to collect members, but Hull further points out that disciple-making involves saving people from themselves and eternal oblivion, permitting the transforming power of God to transform them from the inside out.¹⁶¹

Pastors are obligated to teach lay members everything that God has commanded of them in the Bible, especially in the Great Commission. Earley and Dempsey argue that because Jesus commanded all His disciples to teach everyone in the world to obey all His commands, we cannot say that we are fulfilling the Great Commission until we are teaching disciples to

¹⁵⁹ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 25.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

“observe everything Jesus commanded.”¹⁶² When we fail to teach that in its entirety and obey it all, Earley and Dempsey refer to it as the “Great Omission in the Great Commission.”¹⁶³

In a healthy church, congregants must be taught and trained, and they must fully develop themselves first so that they are equipped to disciple others. This is what Jesus meant when He asked the disciples to follow Him; He was equipping them in as much as they followed Him. Earley and Dempsey challenge their readers to ask four important questions concerning Jesus’s commands: (1) Do you even know everything Jesus commanded? (2) Are you obeying everything Jesus commanded? Are there some commands you avoid because they are too difficult? (3) Have you taught your disciples to obey everything Jesus commanded? (4) Do they know what He commanded, and are they living it out?¹⁶⁴

Equipping the saints is necessary to obtain a healthy church. According to Neil Cole, leaders are not called to teach the saints but rather to equip them to teach others. Cole states, “This is how we remain steadfast in doctrine and not easily led astray: not by the great teaching of a few exceptional teachers but by the people themselves being prepared as a teacher.”¹⁶⁵ The Bible often speaks about teaching and its importance.

There are two key scriptures that come to mind: (1) “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”¹⁶⁶ (2) “How is it, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an

¹⁶² Dave Earley, and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is: How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academy, 2010), 48.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 49.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Neil Cole, *Church Transfusion: Changing Your Church Organically from the Inside Out* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 92.

¹⁶⁶ Colossians 3:16.

interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.”¹⁶⁷ According to Cole, teachers have done their job successfully only when the people they teach can in turn teach others.¹⁶⁸ This is the beauty of discipleship; there is no ending to the spreading of the gospel.

Values

Experts agree that the values of the church are very important because they are the set of guiding principles that guide and inspire the board and staff. Once the core values of an organization are in place, the organization has a greater chance of being successful. The goal is that the personal values of staff, as well as those of external constituents and supporters, will align with the organization’s values. The values of leadership are tied to character. Stowell argues that Scripture calls for us to have character-driven leadership.¹⁶⁹ He uses Paul as an example when the apostle compares his leadership to a race; he concludes that winning the race largely depends on the issue of character.¹⁷⁰

According to Allison and Kaye, when developing a written statement of the organization’s values, it is a clever idea for the members to contribute to the articulation of those values and evaluate how well their personal values and motivations mirror those of the organization.¹⁷¹ This process will do several things: (1) It can increase the members’

¹⁶⁷ 1 Corinthians 14:26.

¹⁶⁸ Neil Cole, *Church Transfusion: Changing Your Church Organically from the Inside Out* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012), 93.

¹⁶⁹ Joseph Stowell, *Redefining Leadership: Character-Driven Habits of Effective Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 27.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁷¹ Michael Allison, and Jude Kaye, *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations: A Practical Guide and Workbook* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2005), 111.

commitment to the organization. (2) It can strengthen alignment between individuals and the institution. (3) It can aid in selecting other key members of the group.¹⁷²

As this writer was putting together the core values of Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC), key members participated in the articulation and evaluation process. The hope was that this would increase the overall moral of the members involved as well as strengthen alignment between the staff members and the church. Sampling the values of the staff also assisted in recruiting efforts because when their values matched the organization's, a good fit was discovered.

Allison and Kay argue that gap analysis is a good exercise to compare the organization's current values being modeled to the core values that the church wishes to personify.¹⁷³ They feel this is especially valuable if a church's staff is operating with a separate set of values from what they wish to personify in the future; the strategic plan will then become the vehicle that will bridge the two.¹⁷⁴

Biblical Values Guiding the Core Values

To Evangelize

We believe that God has called us to fulfill the Great Commission by proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ, to place emphasis on the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus for the sins of the world. The goal is that we will compel men and women to believe, as stated in Mark 16:15–16.

To Baptize

¹⁷² Michael Allison and Jude Kaye, *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations: A Practical Guide and Workbook* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2005), 111.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

We believe that the action that we must take in fulfilling the Great Commission is “baptizing disciples in name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).

To Teach

We believe there is a clear biblical mandate on discipleship teaching. With the Word of God as our guide, we are committed to properly teaching disciples to observe all the commands of Christ as stated in Matthew 28:19–20.

To Love

Disciple-making is an impossible task if one does not have the love that Jesus had. Jesus’s new commandment states, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34–35).

To Make Disciples

It is the responsibility of every believer to make other disciples. According to Hull, three dimensions distinguish disciple-making from discipleship: (1) Deliverance: The first step in creating disciple-making disciples is evangelism, the part of the Great Commission that instructs us to “baptize them.” (2) Development: Once a disciple makes a commitment to Christ, the next step is developing character and capacity. (3) Deployment: Once a disciple is trained, the final step is sending.¹⁷⁵

To Pray

Prayer is one of the most powerful weapons that we have against the enemy. Paul prayed for the Colossians that God would fill them with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual

¹⁷⁵ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 34.

wisdom and understanding (Colossians 1:9). He also asked God to help the Colossians' understanding of Scriptures, which would enable them to, "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:10).

Core Values

The core values of Miracle Faith Ministries are as follows:

1. Commitment to minister to each other's needs. Because iron sharpens iron, the church is equipped to minister to the needs and challenges of each other.
2. Commitment to serving God. By committing ourselves to God as a group, we give the Holy Spirit permission to work within the group.
3. Commitment to become a godly leader in our family. As we commit ourselves to God, He will equip us with the wisdom to lead our entire family.
4. Commitment to serve the community. When we commit to serving the community, we become an agent of change for that community and a beacon of light for them as well.
5. Commitment to worship. We will commit to worship Him with the full knowledge that worship is much more than singing and praying to Him. Worship is more of a lifestyle for the believer.

Views

Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) is viewed as purpose driven, adopted from Rick Warren's philosophy in his book entitled *The Purpose Driven Church*. Warren believes that what is needed today are churches that are driven by purpose instead of all the other things that can drive the church. Warren feels that this is accomplished by, initiating a new perspective and

creating a process for fulfilling God’s purpose for the church¹⁷⁶ He argues that strong churches are built by focusing equally on all five of the New Testament purposes of the church.¹⁷⁷ Most experts agree that the church is responsible for establishing a solid foundation to ensure building a healthy, strong, and growing ministry. Warren reveals that his church has experienced unusually high morale and an atmosphere of harmony because people working together for a great purpose do not have any time left to argue over small things.¹⁷⁸ Warren boasts that his church continues to maintain a warm fellowship despite enormous growth because the members are totally committed to a common purpose.¹⁷⁹

Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) views itself as called to be a witness to the nations. Stedman contends that the church is called to be a witness, a witness being one who is willing to declare and demonstrate the message of Jesus Christ with humility, patience, love, unity, and peace. These are all the marks of Jesus.¹⁸⁰ According to Stedman, the church is to be lowly, not boasting its power or seeking to advance its prestige within the community.¹⁸¹ He states, “The church cannot save the world—but the Lord of the church can. The church cannot exalt its Lord while it seeks to exalt itself.”¹⁸²

The Current Health of Miracle Faith Ministries

Pastoral Staff

¹⁷⁶ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 80.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁸⁰ Ray Stedman, *Body Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Discover House, 1995), 32.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

The pastoral staff at Miracle Faith Ministries International consists of five people, including the pastor. The age range of the pastoral staff is from fifty-three to sixty-five years. Currently there are two men and three women on this staff, which consists of four ordained ministers and one licensed minister. The pastoral staff members are grounded in biblical principles, and all speak the same things per the Bible. They minister and meet the many needs of the church through many modes of service; therefore, the church is perceived as having a healthy ministry.

Deacons/Deaconesses

The deacons' and deaconess's ministry consist of three active deacons and two in training. The age range of the deacons' ministry is from forty-two to sixty-three years. The deacons serve at many levels of the church. They are active in and faithful to the church, and their ministry is perceived as healthy.

Missionaries

The missionaries' department consists of four active members and one in training. The age of the missionaries ranges from forty to sixty-six years old. The missionaries do a great job with their duties inside the church. However, they could stand to improve on visiting the sick in hospitals and making house calls for prayer. Because they are new and have much room for growth, it is the opinion of this writer that they are moving toward becoming healthy.

Paid Staff

The church budget for the paid staff at Miracle Faith Ministries supports four persons, who range in age from twenty-three to fifty-three, and they are paid monthly. The salary amounts range from two hundred to fifteen hundred dollars a month. Paid staff consist of; the pastor, church administrator, and musicians. In this analysis, the paid staff is healthy at this present time.

Volunteer Staff

The volunteer staff of Miracle Faith Ministries Church includes the pastoral staff (except the pastor), board members, treasurer, adjutants, and secretary. All of them are faithful and ready to serve the church in all its needs. When the quality of their service is evaluated, the volunteer staff is proven to be a healthy ministry.

Congregation

The congregation of Miracle Faith Ministries Church is growing and maturing on a weekly basis, in their numerical as well as spiritual growth. The congregation places emphasis on loving one another in Christ and spreading that same love abroad to visitors, the community, and everyone they encounter using Jesus's new commandment as our guide: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."¹⁸³

Strengths

The strengths of Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) are love for one another, prayer, teaching, and worship. These qualities attract many to visit and eventually join the ministry. The outreach ministries the church offers are another of its strengths. Miracle Faith Ministries has become a saving station for new converts and has baptized many in its brief existence.

Weaknesses

The weaknesses of Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) is its lack of participation by some of the members in attending Sunday school and midweek Bible class. Many of our members commute to the Washington, DC, area to work, and because of the heavy traffic by the time they get home it is too late for them to attend Bible class. Sunday school is poorly attended

¹⁸³ John 13:34–35.

as well. Most of the commuting members use that time to catch up on their rest so that they may be refreshed for the morning worship service.

Reason to Be Optimistic

There are many reasons to be optimistic about Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC). One of the greatest reasons is that congregants are constantly giving their lives to Christ and joining the ministry. Hardly a Sunday goes by that someone is not joining. Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) youth are actively engaged in outreach, praise, and worship. Members have bought into the idea that it is everyone's responsibility to go and make other disciples.

Reason to Be Pessimistic

A cause for pessimism is when people join the church and miss a lot of Sunday services or we do not see them anymore. You do not know if something was said to offend them or if they had a change of heart about joining the ministry. The enemy is famous for discouraging people when they make a commitment to join and serve in a local church. However, we continue to pray that God will direct them in all areas of their life.

A Strategic Plan to Develop a Healthy Church

Having a strategy is vital when it comes to developing a healthy church. When defining a corporate strategy, Malphurs makes it clear that several sub-strategies exist: (1) A personal strategy; all Christians should have a personal strategy to accomplish God's purpose for their life. (2) The church's corporate strategy; this does not relieve the individual Christian of his or her individual responsibility to become spiritually mature. (3) Departmental strategy; each ministry department needs a strategy just as they all need to know their own core values,

mission, and vision.¹⁸⁴ Although these sub-strategies are different, they should all come under the authority of the corporate strategy and not compete with it. Any church that desires to become or remain healthy should have a clear strategy. Macchia states, “The healthy church is intentional in its efforts to build loving, caring relationships within families, between members, and within the community they serve.”¹⁸⁵

The many gifts that God gives the church are important in its overall strategies. We all have different gifts in the church, but all of them are used for the body of Christ. According to Ogden, it is through our spiritual gifts that we make our contribution to the health of the whole body.¹⁸⁶ The book of 1 Corinthians teaches us about the importance of the variety of gifts from God, stating, “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit”¹⁸⁷ Ogden believes that each of us is given a ministry through the spiritual gifts that we have been assigned with no gradation or hierarchy of value or importance being placed on the members of the body.¹⁸⁸

Strategy One: Create Church Structure

The first strategy to develop a healthy church that will be implemented at Miracle Faith Ministries will be to create church structure. For any church to be healthy, it must be structured around Jesus Christ and His teachings. Neil Cole argues that the presence of Jesus is crucial to

¹⁸⁴ Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 181.

¹⁸⁵ Stephen Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church: Ten Traits of a Vital Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 112.

¹⁸⁶ Greg Ogden, *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 49.

¹⁸⁷ 1 Corinthians 12:4.

¹⁸⁸ Greg Ogden, *Unfinished Business: Returning the Ministry to the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 49.

the structure of the church because His presence is life while His absence is death.¹⁸⁹ When people encounter Jesus alive and present as King, they get a taste of God’s Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Cole feels that Jesus should be our most recognizable aspect that the world sees because He is the most essential part of who and what we are.¹⁹⁰ Cole states, “If Jesus is missing in the structure of the church, He will likely be missing in the expression of the church as well.”¹⁹¹

In the early church, there was evidence of structure for the discipleship, and on most occasions, it started in the home with children. For example, the Law of Moses emphasized the parental duty to train children. In the book of Deuteronomy, the people of God were instructed, “And thou shalt teach them, diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deuteronomy 6:7). Miracle Faith Ministry is structured for growth by creating and training leaders. Shortly after launch, as our staff began to grow, we added a leadership team that consisted of most of the more seasoned staff.

Strategy Two: Create Calendar of Events

The second strategy to develop a healthy church that will be implemented at Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) is creating a calendar of events centered on evangelism. Having a calendar of events is an important way to become organized to serve because it is a reminder of what God has called us to do at Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC). According to Welch, the value of a church calendar, weekly staff and church leadership

¹⁸⁹ Neil Cole, *Church 3.0: Upgrades for the Future of the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 57.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

meetings, and a communication process is obvious; it aids the church in being organized.¹⁹²

Welch maintains that the sole purpose of a church function should be to bring people together in God's love, and it glorifies the Father when it is done in a spirit of excellence, avoiding confusion and conflict.¹⁹³

Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) calendar of outreach events for the year is as follows: For the month of May, we will begin to survey the community to see what the needs of the people are to better serve them for the summer. We have several events on the books to feed the hungry in the community and at the homeless shelter. We will sponsor a neighborhood outdoor community potluck outreach program with games, moon bounces, and music, and offering prayer, Bibles, and Christian flyers to the adults. We also plan to schedule a kid's back-to-school day. The goal is to pack one hundred backpacks with school supplies to give to needy kids in the fall. We plan to sponsor a prayer walk in downtown Fredericksburg, at which we will wear our Miracle Faith Ministries T-shirts and pass out bottled water to all we meet with the church's information labels on them. Around the Thanksgiving holiday, we are scheduled to sponsor a project give-back at our church in which we will attempt to provide one hundred families with a Thanksgiving dinner. And for the Christmas holiday, we will sponsor a community Christmas play and give gifts to the neighborhood kids and families in need.

Strategy Three: Create Evaluation Process

The third strategy to develop a healthy church that will be implemented at Miracle Faith Ministries is to create an evaluation process. Evaluation is an important part of the strategic model for a healthy church because without it, determining whether the church is achieving its goals would be impossible. Without an evaluation, the leaders who were placed over the

¹⁹² Robert Welch, *Church Administration: Creating Efficiency for Effective Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 343.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

different auxiliaries would not be able to assess the process and make sure that everything is getting done. Miracle Faith Ministries will adopt Welch’s six-step evaluation system for the church.

Table 21. Welch’s six-step evaluation system¹⁹⁴

1. Develop a job description that outlines responsibilities and establishes who the leader is.
2. Establish performance standards for each of the job description items so that both the leaders and the workers know what the expectations are.
3. Create an instrument that will aid the leader in measuring job performance.
4. Establish a process that will routinely evaluate job performance.
5. Discuss the evaluation both from the leader’s perspective as well as the workers’.
6. Design a process for recognizing underperformance or for correcting unsatisfactory performance.

Stetzer and Rainer believe that measurement is also important to make sure that men and women are being changed by the power of the gospel.¹⁹⁵ They call this way of measuring the “new score card,” which will count what’s important (i.e., people coming to Christ and living in Christian communities) as well as how many leaders are being produced.¹⁹⁶

Strategy Four: Setting Priorities

The fourth strategy to develop a healthy church that will be implemented at Miracle Faith Ministries is setting priorities. Now that Miracle Faith Ministries has affirmed its mission and identified critical issues, now we must make important decisions about the future direction of the church, including its short-term and long-term plans.

Short-Range Plan, 1–3 Months

Build better relationships with the staff/leadership team:

¹⁹⁴ Robert Welch, *Church Administration: Creating Efficiency for Effective Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 146.

¹⁹⁵ Ed Stetzer, and Thom S. Rainer, *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 25.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

The leaders of Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) must be unified with their staff to foster unity among the small groups. It may take some time for the vision to become a reality for everyone, but eventually the planning process should be able to answer only a few critical questions.¹⁹⁷ Allison and Kaye recommend that you resist any temptation to pursue all the various questions at this point because there will not be enough time or energy to answer them all.¹⁹⁸

Make sure the strategic plan is clear:

Most experts agree that to understand what is most important in the current situation and the near future, an old assumption about what is important can now be challenged.¹⁹⁹

Give assessments/surveys.

Figure 15. Miracle Faith Ministries Church Survey²⁰⁰

MIRACLE FAITH MINISTRIES CHURCH Church Member Satisfaction Survey	
Please circle the number that corresponds with your level of agreement Strongly Disagree = 1 Disagree = 5 Strongly Agree = 10	
1. Overall, I am satisfied as a member of MFM Church.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2. MFM Church cares about its members.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3. I clearly understand the mission and vision of MFM Church.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4. MFM Church meets my spiritual needs.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5. I believe our mission and vision drives church decisions.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6. MFM Church welcomes visitors and new membership.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
7. Please tell us one thing you would like to see happen at MFM Church	

¹⁹⁷ Michael Allison, and Jude Kaye, *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations: A Practical Guide and Workbook* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2005), 5.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Miracle Faith Ministries Church Survey

The above survey is an example of a survey that was given to the members of Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC). We were then able to implement changes according the results of the surveys. The survey was done twice over a three-month period. After the first survey we discovered several things: (1) Many members did not clearly understand the mission and vision of the church. (2) Some members were not happy with the times of some of the services. (3) There were some who wanted to see new ministries birthed within the church. The survey was given to fifty-five of the members twice. Members who did not take the first survey was not allowed to take the second survey. We wanted to measure a change using the same group.

The results of the first survey:

Survey Results	
1. Overall, I am satisfied as a member of MFM Church.	All 55 members scored 10
2. MFM Church cares about its members.	All 55 members scored 10
3. I clearly understand the mission and vision of MFM Church.	40 members scored 10, 7 members scored 6, and 8 scored 7
4. MFM Church meets my spiritual needs.	All 55 members scored 10
5. I believe our mission and vision drives church decisions.	45 members scored 10, 4 members scored 6, and 6 members scored 7
6. MFM Church welcomes visitors and new membership.	All 55 members scored 10
7. Please tell us one thing you would like to see happen at MFM Church	Praise team ministry, adult choir, bible class to start earlier, conference call for bible class, class on vision and mission statement, 2 nd early Sunday morning service.

The results of the second survey:

Survey Results	
1. Overall, I am satisfied as a member of MFM Church.	All 55 members scored 10
2. MFM Church cares about its members.	All 55 members scored 10

3. I clearly understand the mission and vision of MFM Church.	50 members scored 10, 3 members scored 8, 2 members scored 2
4. MFM Church meets my spiritual needs.	All 55 members scored 10
5. I believe our mission and vision drives church decisions.	53 members scored 10, 1 member scored 8, 1 member scored 9
6. MFM Church welcomes visitors and new membership.	All 55 members scored 10
7. Please tell us one thing you would like to see happen at MFM Church	Would like to see 2 nd early Sunday morning service.

The results from the surveys were organized and we began to prepare a priority-setting process that helped us to decide what we could and could not do. As a result, we started a series teaching on the mission and vision of the church. We also did more in-depth teaching on the mission and vision of the church in the new members class. We adjusted the time of bible study and Sunday School to accommodate some of the members who lived a great distance from the church. We also started offering our bible study on a conference call so that some who could not come could now participate. The results from the survey also gave birth to two new ministries in the church, a praise dance ministry and an adult choir. As a result, the second survey we gave the members were happier and the scores were much higher. We now plan to give this survey quarterly, four times a year in the church to ensure that we are maintaining a standard of excellence.

Long-Range Plan, 6–9 Months

Increase ministry attendance:

Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) has increased its attendance by increasing evangelism within the community. When attendance increased, membership, offerings, and productivity increased as well.

Develop a larger operational budget.

As membership and revenues increase, new operational budgets are now being created.

Bring in high-profile guest speakers:

Bringing in high-profile speakers to Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) would benefit the church in many ways. If advertised correctly, they could attract many people, but extra money and planning would also be needed.

Long-Range Plan, 9–12 Months

Explore plans for international evangelism:

At this point, Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) is ready to consider sponsoring an overseas mission to support the vision of becoming international. We are in the process of partnering up with another ministry who is already involved in overseas missions.

Plan a leadership conference to train new emerging leaders:

At this point, Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) is also ready to sponsor a leadership conference focusing on workshops to prepare future leaders of the church.

Strategy Five: Create Goals

The fifth strategy to develop a healthy church that will be implemented at Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) is creating goals. Goals are important to Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) but must be written so that they can be monitored to detect if changes need to take place. Allison and Kaye suggest that when developing language that will allow goals to be monitored, key areas of potential ambiguity are likely to happen.²⁰¹ Work done in the beginning of the process will ensure clearly articulated goals that can be actively monitored and will save countless hours of frustration after the fact during plan implementation.²⁰²

²⁰¹ Michael Allison and Jude Kaye, *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations: A Practical Guide and Workbook* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2005), 237.

²⁰² Ibid.

When this writer began to discuss some of the goals with the church staff, the top three goals that we came up with were (1) win more souls for Christ through discipleship, (2) become better Christians individually, and (3) become healthier as a church. Koessler argues that the cross should be the most recognizable symbol in the church; we preach about it, sing about it, and even wear it around our neck.²⁰³ Koessler states, “Of all the images Jesus used when calling His disciples to commitment, none was more powerful than the image of the cross.”²⁰⁴ If discipleship is a goal at Miracle Faith Ministries, then the image of the cross should be at the center.

Winning souls for Christ through discipleship is an important goal for the kingdom. Bill Hull describes *discipleship* as the primary term used in the Gospel referring to Jesus’s followers, and disciples is a common referent for those known in the early church as believers, Christians, brothers and sisters through Christ Jesus.²⁰⁵ Hull believes that there are three dimensions to disciple-making:

Table 22. Three dimensions to disciple-making²⁰⁶

1. Deliverance. The first step in making a disciple is evangelism, the part of the Great Commission that instructs us to “baptize them.”
2. Development. Once a disciple makes a commitment to Christ, the next step is developing character and capacity.
3. Deployment. Once training has been given, the last step is sending.

Every Christian should want to become better, and we do not have to do it on our own; the Holy Spirit will help us. Osteen believes that we can achieve this goal by feeding good

²⁰³ John Koessler, *True Discipleship: The Art of Following Jesus* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2003), 25.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Bill Hull, *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2006), 32.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 14.

habits. He argues that if we start feeding peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, humility, and self-control, we will begin to see those character traits develop in our lives.²⁰⁷ Experts agree that many of our unhealthy habits stem from the culture in which we were raised.

Osteen believes that if you are raised around sloppiness, you become sloppy; if you are raised around rude people, you become rude; and many times, you do not even realize that it is immoral behavior.²⁰⁸ But if your goal is to become a better person and you develop good habits, behavior can be changed. Osteen calls them *positive learned behavior patterns*, and our habits, good or bad, will in fact determine our future.²⁰⁹

The goal to become a healthier church is one that every church should aspire to, and experts agree that for this to happen, the process must start with the pastor. Scazzero states, “The starting point for change in any nation, church, or ministry has always been with the leader, because as go the leaders, so goes the church.”²¹⁰ Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) goals to become a healthy church are guided by Macchia’s ten characteristics of a healthy church: (1) God’s empowering presence, (2) God-exalted worship, (3) Spiritual discipline, (4) Learning and growing in the community, (5) Commitment to loving and caring relationships, (6) Servant leadership development, (7) an outward focus, (8) wise administration and accountability, (9) networking with the body of Christ, and (10) stewardship and generosity.²¹¹ Goals of this magnitude cannot happen overnight; they require a process. We will encounter

²⁰⁷ Joel Osteen, *Becoming a Better You: 7 Steps to Improving Your Life Every Day* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2007), 197.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 198.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship That Actually Changes Lives*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 36.

²¹¹ Stephen Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church: Ten Traits of a Vital Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 7.

shortcomings until the Lord returns to usher us into a perfect heaven; however, in the meantime, we should help each other in the goal of becoming a healthy church regardless of our limited conditions.²¹²

Strategy Six: Create Objectives

The sixth strategy to develop a healthy church that will be implemented at Miracle Faith Ministries is creating objectives. Having objectives in a church is very important to its spiritual health. Objectives are statements of ultimate end by which the church focuses its activities. Per Welch, goals and strategies for accomplishment will be developed out of objectives.²¹³ Welch maintains that the development of objectives is a vital step and should be taken into consideration with the mission statement; the specific results expected; who will be expected to accomplish the objectives; and the where, when, and how of the process.²¹⁴

One of the most important objectives of Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) is to be pleasing in God's sight. If that objective is met, everything else is secondary. The objectives are as follows:

1. Glorifying God. To exhibit His Spirit, temper, and character as Christ did. When Jesus was on earth, He was faithful in glorifying the Father. We will glorify Him by remembering His precepts, being an example of true light to the world and spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. Learning to honor God. We will strive to honor God by living a life according to the Word of God, one that is pleasing in His sight.

²¹² Stephen Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church: Ten Traits of a Vital Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 7

²¹³ Robert Welch, *Church Administration: Creating Efficiency for Effective Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 25.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

3. Learning to fear God. The fear of the Lord will form the foundation of the ministry. As the church matures in grace, we will realize more and more that although we have been delivered from the fear of God's wrath (1 John 4:18), we have not been delivered from the discipline of God concerning sinful conduct.
4. Learning to love God. Jesus instructs us to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with your entire mind, and with all your strength (Matthew 22:27). The members of Miracle Faith Ministries will come to the realization that this is a process that does not happen instantaneously but by maintaining a constant relationship with Jesus Christ.

Strategy Seven: Create Fundraising Plans

The seventh and last strategy to develop a healthy church that will be implemented at Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) is to create fundraising plans. To perform effectively in ministry, you must have funds to promote the vision, especially when it comes to youth and outreach. Fundraising is also good because it is a morale booster that fosters comradery among church members. In the infancy stages of Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC), the few members that we had would try to pay for everything and do everything themselves. But this can be dangerous because it can cause stress and burnout within the ministry.

Stanley argues, "It is both natural and necessary for young leaders to try proving themselves by doing everything themselves."²¹⁵ He believes it is natural because as a leader, you want to set the example even as you prove that nothing is beneath you. But he warns ultimately it will limit effectiveness.²¹⁶ Stanley shares two of the best-kept secrets of leadership: (1) The less

²¹⁵Andy Stanley, *Next Generation Leader: Five Essentials for Those Who Will Shape the Future* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2003), 17.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

you do, the more you can accomplish. (2) The less you do, the more you enable others to accomplish.²¹⁷ Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) first fundraiser was to purchase a van for outreach. This endeavor was very successful and has proven to be a worthwhile investment. Now we are in the process of having another fundraiser to purchase a second van.

Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) will follow Allison and Kaye's seven steps to develop future fundraisers at the church.

Table 23. Allison and Kaye's seven steps to develop fundraisers²¹⁸

1. Review. Review past fundraising performances as well as trends, and make educated decisions about the key factors that influenced the revenue.
2. Gather and analyze stakeholder information. Use the meetings as opportunities to educate, cultivate, and further network with partners.
3. Review current and potential fundraising vehicles to see which ones you want, can maintain, or increase.
4. Select primary revenue sources. After assessing the full potential of each revenue source, decide on strategies to realize the full potential of each vehicle.
5. Set fundraising targets. Based on the previous analysis, you can start to prepare long-term and short-term goals for each funding.
6. Write the development plan by summarizing the targets in a long-term fundraising plan with an annual fundraising plan for the first year of the strategic plan's implementation.
7. Adopt the development plan. After the strategic plan and supporting development plan have been agreed upon, the board can take the first step in implementing the fund development plan.

Outlook for Change

The potential for Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) to be and remain a healthy church is conceivable when it will apply the seven strategies implemented. These strategies, along with the purpose, vision, and mission statements of Miracle Faith Ministries Church

²¹⁷ Andy Stanley, *Next Generation Leader: Five Essentials for Those Who Will Shape the Future* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2003), 17.

²¹⁸ Michael Allison and Jude Kaye, *Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations: A Practical Guide and Workbook* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2005), 245.

(MFMC), will empower the church to reach its fullest potential for the kingdom. This writer believes in the health of the pastor and members to minister to a sick and dying world. It is this writer's further belief that it is simply impossible to separate the health of the local church from the health of its individual congregants. Building a healthy church is not something that can happen overnight; it takes time. Everyone must have patience.

Conclusions

Creating a strategic plan for a church can be a long and tedious job, but in the end, it can prove to be very effective, and the effort put into it will pay great dividends. When it is strategic in nature, a plan will accomplish all the things to make a church healthy and flourish for the Kingdom. With proper planning and a stated mission, vision, and goals, there is no limit to what a church can achieve. A successful ministry is developing the church for the purposes of God while permitting the Holy Spirit to lead and guide in all truths. When these elements come together, success is inevitable.

Strategic planning deals with the here and now and does not predict the future. However, God knows the future, and if we do our part, He will do His part. Malphurs argues that there are simply not enough pastors who understand and practice visionary strategic planning, and those who have pursued strategic planning have done so with the help of godly Christians who have been trained in the corporate world.²¹⁹ The problem is that strategic planning for a church and pastor should be theologically prepared.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 33.

²²⁰ Ibid.

Many may ask why a strategic plan is necessary for a local church to be healthy and grow. Survey results have proven repeatedly that 85 percent of churches that have grown off the plateau are churches that have revalued their programs and priorities during the last five years, as compared to 59 percent of churches that have remained on the plateau.²²¹ In short, strategic planning accomplishes three important things: it allows the organization to articulate who they are, it is the road map for the long-term life of the church, and it will effectively address alignment issue.²²²

All the strategies presented will assist Miracle Faith Ministries Church (MFMC) in its efforts to be healthy and remain healthy until the return of Jesus Christ. Essentially successful churches have leaders who are great at leading through strategic planning. Maxwell writes, “If your vision of success includes starting an organization, owning a company, or putting together a team, you need to become good at leadership. If you cannot lead well, you will not be successful.”²²³

²²¹ Malphurs, Aubrey, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 26.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ John Maxwell, *How Successful People Lead: Taking Your Influence to the Next Level* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 1.

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APPENDIX A

February 2, 2017

Angelo D. Logan

IRB Exemption 2766.020217: Essential Strategies for Leaders to Develop a Healthy Church

Dear Angelo D. Logan,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
 - (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
 - (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

The Graduate School



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APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

1. How long have you served as the pastor/been a member at your current church?
 - a. 1–5 years
 - b. 6–10 years
 - c. 11–15 years
 - d. 16 years or more
2. Does your church have a current vision statement?
3. Does your church have a current mission statement?
4. What part does a pastor play in shaping the health of a church?
5. What are factors that cause a decline in the health of a church?
6. Is there a process of accountability in place for members to be more evangelistic?
7. Is there an organizational structure at your church?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
8. How often does your church pray for lost souls?
9. Describe the overall health of your church.
10. Are members open to evangelizing to people who don't look like them?

Healthy Church Survey Questions:

1. How long have you served as pastor/been a member at your current church?
2. Describe the overall health of your church.
3. How often are members encouraged to build healthy relationships with each other?
4. How often in a 30-day period does the church perform evangelism/outreach in the community?
5. How often in a 30-day period does the church pray/study the Bible together?
6. Do your sermons regularly communicate the gospel?
7. What is the ratio of active members versus inactive members (example: 120/20)?
8. How many paid staff members exist at your church?
9. How quickly are conflicts resolved at your church?
10. What are the most important characteristics of a healthy church to you?

MIRACLE FAITH MINISTRIES CHURCH
Church Member Satisfaction Survey

Please circle the number that corresponds with your level of agreement
 Strongly Disagree = 1 Disagree = 5 Strongly Agree = 10

1. Overall, I am satisfied as a member of MFM Church.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2. MFM Church cares about its members.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3. I clearly understand the mission and vision of MFM Church.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4. MFM Church meets my spiritual needs.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5. I believe our mission and vision drives church decisions.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6. MFM Church welcomes visitors and new membership.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
7. Please tell us one thing you would like to see happen at MFM Church	