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INTRODUCTION

Alan McMahan, General Editor

In 1955, Donald A. McGavran published a book entitled, *The Bridges of God*, that was to shake the assumptions and strategies of missionary practice in his day and would lead to the birth of modern missiology. Though McGavran's book may not have been the very first publication in the field, it was certainly one of the most significant, because it combined insights from both theology and the social sciences to examine how people actually came to Christ. What he found is that, in reality, the stories of conversion for large numbers of people stood in sharp contrast to the perceptions among missionaries as to the best strategies for bringing them to faith. Awakened by the insights in McGavran's books, missions leaders, pastors, academicians, and practitioners spanning several decades began to study the harvest with new fervor, armed with a host of new tools and driven by a passion to see the church of God grow worldwide. It was out of a sense of urgency and inquiry that the *Great Commission Research Journal*[1] was started with the mission to report on relevant research related to the practice of effective evangelism among unreached people. To this point, our first article is specifically directed.

[1] Formerly titled, *Journal for the American Society for Church Growth*. It should also be noted that the *Great Commission Research Journal* works in concert with the Great Commission Research Network, an academic society formed to further research on the harvest.

George Hunter, one of the senior statesmen of the Church Growth Movement, reflects on his own journey into this field and his discovery of more than a dozen assumptions among evangelicals that are not helpful in evangelism. The recommendations he provides offer a counterpoint to the prevailing notions, based on careful research and observation of good practice. He concludes with a charge to the next generation to continue in the research in the much-neglected field of effective apostolic practice.

If some of the assumptions and strategies in missions and evangelism are unhelpful in practice, then so are some of the terms being used to describe the actors. Cecil Stalnaker explores the increasingly common tendency to describe all Christians as missionaries. Though the motive to awaken all believers to their evangelistic responsibility may be admirable, Stalnaker shows it is not descriptively accurate of actual practice, nor is it aligned with the biblical usage of the terms. He goes on to suggest options to bring more clarity in our discussion of this important role in the body of believers.

Drawing from history, Lenny Luchetti explores the external and internal motivations that drove John Wesley to invest himself so willingly in open-air preaching as a means of reaching the lost. In this study, Luchetti especially focuses on Wesley's theological understanding of God as love, and he relates how that translated into love and empathy for others. He, then, describes the implications for evangelistic preaching and teaching in the church today.

In the next article and continuing with a focus on history, we are pleased to provide the fifth in a series of excerpts from Gary McIntosh's biography on the life of Donald McGavran. In this installment, we witness McGavran transitioning from his role as a missionary in India to becoming a professor of missiology and his founding of the Institute of Church Growth. These early beginnings were critical both in consolidating the lessons learned on how the church was actually growing and in the laying of the foundation for a worldwide movement. You will find these pages to be interesting and informative.

Using John Kotter's eight-stage model for leading change as a helpful framework for understanding congregational change, Bob Whitesel proposes that a necessary change objective for many churches should be to move more toward a heterogeneous, multicultural model. He then goes on to describe five models of multicultural churches and the steps a church should follow to arrive at that destination.

A key problem that prevents many churches from achieving their God-given potential is the mishandling of conflict. William Henard examines this topic by defining conflict, demonstrating the prevalence of it in the church, and identifying the causes and issues that give rise to it. Recognizing that the presence of conflict is not necessarily bad if it is handled correctly, he provides helpful advice for dealing with conflict as it arises and preventing unnecessary conflict from arising in the first place. This is valuable advice that churches ought to consider.

With more and more churches in decline across the U.S., congregations are increasingly turning to outside consultants to provide clarity and perspective on the problems they face and to offer effective solutions to help them once again move toward strength. William Ingram and Denise Quigley offer advice on how to select a consultant or consulting firm and what kinds of questions are helpful to evaluate their approach.

Joey Chen, in our last article in this issue of the journal, focuses our attention on the established church that wishes to multiply its efforts by planting new churches. Limiting his attention in this article to the established church in the preparation stage, he suggests four directions toward which one should direct his gaze as he considers the prospect of planting a new church. This prior preparation can help the church planting effort start out on the right foot.

In addition to the articles the *Great Commission Research Journal* regularly features in each issue, it is our custom to include critical reviews of books that inform and expand our understanding of how people come to Christ and how churches grow in the midst of the contemporary challenges we face. Mike Morris, our outstanding book review editor, has worked with a team of reviewers to provide us a thoughtful synopsis and review of five helpful books on these topics that deserve your attention. Many thanks go to Mike Morris, as well as Aaron Perry, Joey Chen, Dustin Slaton, Jamie Booth, and David Srygley for their hard work in making these available to us.

Additionally, we appreciate the work of Gary McIntosh, our dissertation and theses editor for bringing to our attention six dissertations of note that relate to the topic of church revitalization. It is our hope that the dissertation abstracts included here will provoke you to further study in this important subject as most of us work in or know of churches in need of a fresh experience of growth and spiritual vitality.

Also, quietly in the background but vital to the publication of each issue is the work of Joy Bergk, the Biola Publications Manager; Laura McIntosh, our Technical Editor; Rachel Donawerth, the Editorial Office Assistant; and our fine editorial team. Many thanks for all they do.

We all hope you are informed and encouraged by the resources offered here as you continue your work for the kingdom.

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ONE MORE TIME: WHY WE DO RESEARCH ON THE MINISTRY OF EVANGELISM

George G. Hunter III

Abstract

George Hunter has spent a lifetime studying the ministry of evangelism. Following his teenage conversion, he discovered that the ministry that helps pre-Christian people become new Christians was the most understudied of the Church's ministries. In this article, he reports on how he studied, from multiple perspectives, the Church's most essential (but most academically neglected) ministry.

Hunter gradually discovered at least a dozen assumptions about evangelism in Protestant folk-wisdom that are typically more counterproductive than productive. He interfaces with these assumptions to suggest alternative views that are more academically warranted and practically effective. He concludes by inviting a generation of younger scholars to invest their lives in studying "apostolic ministry."

— Note: The following article is based on a presentation given at the Great Commission Research Network in Fort Worth, Texas on October 11, 2016.

I have experienced, explored, observed, practiced, researched, thought, and reflected about Christian evangelism for most of a lifetime. I was raised in a nominal Christian home in Miami in the 1940s and 1950s. Our small family assumed that the civil religion in *Readers Digest* was Christianity. My mom and dad became Christians after I did.

Several Christian friends had talked with me about the faith. Although I attended churches and youth meetings occasionally, I had not yet discovered

faith. Then, in the summer of 1955, I attended the international Key Club convention in Detroit. For the program one evening, the actor Gregory Wolcott—bearded, sandaled, and robed in ancient Galilean attire—delivered the Sermon on the Mount in the original King James English!

Somewhere in Matthew 6, I sensed the presence of God. After the program, the Presence accompanied me to my hotel room. In the Gideon Bible next to the telephone, I somehow found the Sermon on the Mount. I fell asleep that night reading and rereading Matthew 5–7, still aware of the Presence.

Overnight, I became the most proactive seeker I have ever met. I found several people at the convention who were known to be Christians, and they recognized and encouraged what was happening within me.

When I returned home to Miami, I visited the four churches in our community. Three of the churches were not interested (or interesting). However, the Fulford Methodist Church welcomed me "home." That fall and winter, they loved, taught, and coached me, and then my mom and dad, into the life of the kingdom. Within months, we reached some of my friends, some of their friends, and some of my parents' friends.

Fulford church taught me three things that especially rooted me. First, the gospel is not just one thing. It is a gospel of forgiveness, justification, redemption, reconciliation, salvation, the kingdom, the new covenant, the new Israel, the new life, eternal life, and more. Second, I started studying the Scriptures and learning verses and passages by heart, and I discovered John Wesley and other reformers. Third, I learned that Fulford church's desire to reach, welcome, and minister to pre-Christian people was normal Christianity. The gospel is, after all, entrusted to the church for the sake of people who are not yet followers of the Way.

When I experienced my second birth that autumn, like Charles Wesley of old, something came with it. When Charles Wesley and his brother John both experienced justification on the same night, May 24 in 1738, Charles also experienced the gift of hymn writing. He wrote his first hymn that night; he was to write over six thousand more.

I am no poet or hymn writer, but I received another gift. My mind, after seventeen years of underachievement, was switched to "on"; I became an intellectual. Within weeks, the people in my high school who were bound for Ivy League schools included me as a peer.

Since I was a new Christian, and was pulling and praying for friends to become followers of Christ, I wanted to know more about evangelism. That was when I made my first serious intellectual discovery. Virtually no one was engaged in serious thinking about Christian evangelism.

Furthermore, I could find no serious useful literature to help me make sense of how to reach new people. I found good literature for ministries like preaching, worship, Christian education, and pastoral care and counseling, but not much on evangelism—the one ministry for which the risen Lord had especially commissioned his church.

It took some digging to discover why the study of the Great Commission was the great omission. Virtually everyone assumed that they already understood it, but their assumptions varied. You schedule a revival. Or you bring in Billy Graham to lead a crusade. Or you preach on the radio. Or you pass out gospel tracts. Or you visit house-to-house, two-by-two. Or you present "the Roman Road." Or you invite people to church.

Many Christians who "knew" how it is done added that they, however, were not wired to do "that sort of thing." I learned that no denomination has escaped this escape. In 1975, at a Baptist gathering, I heard, "We all read a book by Truett; now we know how, but we still don't do it!"

I was least impressed by the "architectural evangelism" of the 1950s. Thousands of churches put up new facilities, stating, "If you build it, they will come."

I was most impressed by the Sunday evening service that was the last institutionalized outreach expression of many churches. The Sunday evening agenda was introductory Christianity; the service and the attire were casual, and the music was inspired. Seekers were invited to attend, to inquire, to pray, to commit. I received Christ one of those evenings in October of 1955.

Four decades later, in 1995, I was amused by the controversy then swirling around Willow Creek "seeker services." Essentially, Willow Creek had only updated the old begin-where-they-are seeker-friendly Sunday evening service and rescheduled it for when the most seekers might come.

Gradually but persistently, I became a scholar wannabe in evangelization. I hoped to study evangelism in divinity school, but my seminary had no curriculum in the field; maybe because there was no such academic field. (The seminary reminded me of a medical school with no curriculum in obstetrics!)

However, I spent the summer of 1962 in ministry to the people at Muscle Beach in Southern California. That experience birthed my obsession with communicating the Christian gospel to "secular" people—roughly defined as the offspring of the secularization of the West, with no Christian memory, who often cannot tell you the name of the church their grandparents stayed away from, who have no idea what we Christians are talking about.

God rubbed my face in secularity that summer. Now with a special heart for secular people, I gradually discovered that any renaissance in "apostolic ministry" would be informed by Scripture and theology, AND by insights from wider learning. (St. Augustine was the Christian movement's interdisciplinary pioneer. He "plundered the Egyptians for their gold" by adapting Cicero's rhetorical theory to inform Christian preaching.)[1]

[1] Augustine's treatise on preaching, *De Doctrina Christiana*, was the most influential book on preaching for over a thousand years. It remains on anyone's "top ten" list.

I did a PhD in Communication Studies at Northwestern, where I read sources in Greek and Roman classics, history, rhetorical theory, cultural anthropology, psychology, social psychology, semantics, social movement studies, and other stimulating literatures. In the process, I developed the confidence to tackle, and make sense of, about any literature. I wrote my dissertation on the communication of Christianity's message to secular populations in England.[2]

I became convinced that evangelism should and could be studied and taught as an academic subject. Providence brought me in contact with perhaps the first "mainline"[3] seminary to reach a similar conclusion. I taught in a new chair of evangelism at the Perkins School of Theology at SMU. In those years, I added Sociology of Religion and Psychology of Religion to my reading list, and I discovered Donald McGavran and his Church Growth school of thought. Since McGavran was asking many of the same questions I was, and was many miles ahead of me, I learned all I could from him.[4]

I then led the evangelism staff for my denomination for six years. In those years, Michael Green's *Evangelism in the Early Church* came out; I resolved to study more of the history of evangelization.[5] Meanwhile, I was also doing field research—interviewing converts, studying the rare Christian advocates that I could find who were engaging pre-Christian populations, and studying churches that were discipling new people in significant numbers.[6]

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[2] I continued such research in the years that followed and eventually wrote, *How To Reach Secular People* (Abingdon, 1992). My later project, *Should We Change Our Game Plan? From Traditional or Contemporary to Missional and Strategic* (Abingdon, 2013), updated and advanced our thought about understanding secularity and reaching secular populations.

[3] Southern and Southwestern Baptist seminaries, as well as Asbury and Fuller, were offering courses by this time—drawing mainly from Scripture and the history of their respective ecclesial traditions.

[4] *The Contagious Congregation: Frontiers in Evangelism and Church Growth* (Abingdon, 1979) was my first attempt to express this lore in print. McGavran and I then co-authored, *Church Growth: Strategies That Work* (Abingdon, 1980). Among my later books, perhaps *To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Abingdon, 1987) and *The Apostolic Congregation: Church Growth Reconceived for a New Generation* (Abingdon, 2009) may be my most enduring contributions to this line of thought. *Should We Change Our Game Plan?* commended more generally a strategic perspective for a congregation's mission.

[5] *To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit* and *The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach the West . . . Again* (Abingdon, 2000, revised edition 2010) show how we can inform a more strategic and effective future by mining insights from the strategic geniuses of Christianity's past.

[6] *How to Reach Secular People* and especially *Church for the Unchurched* (Abingdon, 1996) are rooted in this field research, and *Radical Outreach: The Recovery of Apostolic Ministry and Evangelism* (Abingdon, 2003) is informed by biblical, historical, and field research.

I then taught in the School of World Mission and Evangelism at Asbury Seminary, as founding dean for 18 years, then as distinguished professor for 10 years, before taking "early retirement" at age 73. In those years, I continued some of the prior studies, such as the history and the social movement studies, while also absorbing the growing literature in conversion theory, intercultural communication, and the leadership of organizations and movements.[7]

Since 1979, I have published over twenty books, but I cannot pretend to have achieved anything within light years of completion. The world changes, and new literatures proliferate. Since one cannot read everything, I learned to read the normative (and readable) sources. Even so, I never got to some literatures; I know next to nothing, for instance, out of the considerable Roman Catholic literature on evangelization.

For many years, I have known that this intellectual challenge is too much for any one lifetime persistent student. There is too much to read, too much field data to gather, and the communication of Christianity to secular populations and to different cultures is a complex challenge. In the 1970s, I founded The Academy for Evangelism and, in the 1980s (as Pete Wagner's co-pilot), The American Society for Church Growth. Great Commission research and reflection became more of a team game.

In the face of the challenge's complexity, however, most church leaders are more clueless than they know. They seem to rely only on denominational folk wisdom; they *assume* they already know how people become new Christians, and they navigate their church's future even more from assumptions than convictions.

The Christian Movement cannot fulfill its calling in the next generation on folk wisdom alone. We must love the Lord of the harvest with our minds, as well as our hearts. Increasingly, the knowledge-leaders who pay the intellectual price will inform the church's effective outreach.

In this space, I cannot do justice to what I think we have learned so far, but let me state a dozen evangelical assumptions that I have often discovered and what an informed response to each might be.

1. Many church leaders seem to assume a very limited goal for people. They want to recruit a new member now, who will then go to heaven in God's good time. Actually, the Scriptures are clear that God calls lost people to enormously more than that. It is written, "Our eyes

[7] *Leading and Managing a Growing Church* (Abingdon, 2000) applied management studies to church leadership. It turned out to be the worst titled of my books. It demonstrates how churches, when effectively led and managed, experience growth. (Many people saw the title and assumed that the book was only for church leaders whose church was already growing!) *The Recovery of a Contagious Methodist Movement* (Abingdon, 2011) is informed by some of the more useful perspectives from social movement studies.

have not seen, our ears have not heard, and our hearts have never imagined, all that God has in mind for those who love Him."

2. Many mission leaders seem to assume that the goal is to establish a loving presence among a population and to indigenize (or contextualize) the faith's expression for them. Actually, that should not be the goal but a necessary means. Presence and contextualization are prerequisites for reaching a people; the mission has only adapted enough to make the gospel a live option among them.
3. Many Christians assume that we reach and convert people by preaching, witnessing, or testifying "at" them. Actually, the ministry of multiple two-way conversations is much more reproductive than a one-time, one-way presentation, and, as they become open, we include God in the conversation.
4. Many Christians shrink from apostolic ministry because they perceive the responsibility as too much, like "It's all up to us." Actually, we are merely the Holy Spirit's junior partners.
5. Other Christians assume that it is all up to God; we can only pray for lost people to be found. Actually, as Charles G. Finney rediscovered, we are called to discover and employ the "means" through which God works.
6. Still other Christians assume that evangelism is the pastor's job. Actually, laypeople have many more contacts in the community and more credibility than the pastor does, and they are called to reach across their networks. Moreover, when the pastor does win people, they often do not really join the church. They join the pastor!
7. Many church leaders believe that their outreach should target the "winners" in the community and the people most like the people we already have. Actually, the targeting of a local society's influencers is a proven strategy, but the focus on "people like us" can overlook some important history. The "Judaizers" within the early Christian movement thought that only culturally-Jewish people were fit candidates for becoming Christians; but Gentiles became disciples in Antioch, and Paul convinced the movement that this was God's will. Again, by the third or fourth century, the church assumed that only people who were "civilized" (urban, Roman speaking, Roman cultured) people could become Christians. St. Martin of Tours, however, demonstrated that rural populations could be reached, and St. Patrick demonstrated that "barbarians" could be reached.[8]

Churches should, of course, find and invite the people who are like the church members, because we already know how to serve those people. However, a congregation in mission is called to look

[8] My *Celtic Way of Evangelism* draws from this early history to reveal ways to reach the post-modern "new barbarians" that now populate Western societies.

past the winners and the people like us for no more profound reason than Christianity has demonstrated that it can reach any and all people groups, and Christian ministry mediates a Power than can transform "losers" into "winners."

8. Most groups of Christian leaders assume that "they" will become Christians like "we" did. Actually, lost people who need to be found come from many different backgrounds, with different cultures, needs, issues, and points of contact, and they will usually become Christians in somewhat different ways.
9. Many Christian leaders assume that the church will reach new people when it finds and adopts the right evangelism program. I used to assume this; I was wrong. Actually, evangelism's effectiveness substantially depends on how the church does almost everything—from parking, planning, programs, preaching, people skills, and pastoral care, to hospitality, catechesis, spiritual formation, liturgical life, music, small groups, lay ministries, and children's, youth, and seniors ministries, and much more, as well as the local church's involvement in wider concerns—like community relations, social justice, and world mission. At least a hundred known issues influence the church's outreach, so one cannot really study and teach evangelism as a sequestered ministry.
10. Many church leaders who believe in evangelism assume that it is a priority but only one of a dozen or so equal priorities. Actually, reaching and discipling new people should be a church's top priority, if for no other reason than expanding the ranks of committed disciples is the only way to expand and multiply the many ministries that the church is called to fulfill.
11. Many Christians believe that reaching pre-Christian people is very important and ought to be done, but the church must first become "revived, "renewed," "healthy," or "revitalized," and once we are renewed, we will reach out. Actually, there is a kernel of reality in this view; no one wants to put a live chick under a dead hen.

    However, the policy overlooks four realities: a) God has not left himself without witness in this church, some people are experiencing grace, and there is already more health in the church than some pagans are used to. b) Within the "renew first" paradigm, the church never *feels* renewed enough to launch into outreach. c) While the church waits to reach out and invite, membership strength declines as it loses five to seven percent of its members each year to death, transfer, and reversion. d) More renewal comes to churches as a byproduct of new grace-experiencing converts entering the church's ranks than from any (or all?) of the renewal programs.
12. Many Christian leaders assume another delay policy—that when people confess faith, then and only then should we welcome them

into the fellowship ("believing before belonging"). Actually, the forces of secularity and evil do not stack our fallen world on the side of many people finding saving faith. More and more people have to experience vital Christian fellowship before they can believe ("belonging before believing"). For most people, the Christian faith is even more caught than taught.

In summary, in a conversation in 1977, Donald McGavran asked the question that drives our research agenda: "We know how people *ought* to become Christians, but how do they *really* become Christians?"

Some of us, but not nearly enough of us, have discovered the imperative to claim, study, and teach evangelization as a serious academic field, with all of the objectivity and rigor of any other academic field. I have enough experience in this project to predict several experiences for anyone who takes it on.

First, it will take longer than you thought it would. You will be learning your whole career. Your job will always be interesting, energizing, and inspiring, but never finished.

Second, evangelism in the college or theological academy often experiences a "respect" deficit. Some professors in the more traditional disciplines, like theology or homiletics, may smugly claim superiority![9] Oh, and no matter how hard you work at the craft of writing in evangelization's service, do not expect a Nobel Prize for literature!

Third, in this field, as in others, one's commitment to academic openness and objectivity can come with social costs. As one studies Scripture, history, or studies in communication, conversion, or catechesis, for example, one may discover something that does not ratify the folk wisdom of one's church tradition.

Consider one example. In the 1980s, Win Arn researched the then-widespread assumption that Billy Graham crusades increase the membership rolls in a crusade city's churches. His post-crusade studies in several cities revealed that church membership growth from crusades was statistically negligible. His report was not popularly received in some quarters. Arn's writing and teaching were collegial and diplomatic, not at all polemical or adversarial. In time, more church leaders became open to more effective ways to help people become disciples of Christ and responsible members of his church.

Fourth, do not expect evangelical folk wisdom to go away. Our challenge is analogous to the one that obstetricians face. A professor of obstetrics informs me that his field's biggest challenge is "folk obstetrics"—most

[9] That is one reason why I started referring to my field as the study of "Apostolic Ministry." On several occasions, I suggested to stuffy colleagues, "You prepare chaplains; I prepare apostles!" (I do not commend the term as a mere ploy, however. "Apostolic Ministry" may become the field's primary name.)

expectant mothers are more likely to take their grandmother's advice than their doctor's.

Our inherited denominational folk wisdom can be so entrenched that very few church leaders are likely to accept a much better idea the first time they are exposed to it. That is why Lyle Schaller, who knew more about churches than anyone else who ever lived, featured many of the same strategic insights in book after book.

Actually, we now face a second challenge in our people's collective folk wisdom. Our post-modern people often have little interest in their tradition's wisdom; they get to redefine issues to suit themselves, and, in our society, these people inhabit the entire ideological spectrum. The shifting meanings that people attach to marriage, sexuality, and the United States' constitution's second and third amendments, are a few of many examples.

Do not assume that this post-modern sense of entitlement to redefine issues has not infiltrated our churches. We have all experienced it. How many times, for instance, have you attended a group Bible study where the leader asked, "What does this text mean to YOU?" and that was ALL that the group wanted to talk about?

Generally, however, people do not usually reach important conclusions by themselves. As people converse together in their clans, tribes, peer groups, and subcultures, they define "reality" together. When the group agrees on something, a sense of infallibility rather than humility is more likely to be attached to their conclusion.

As we recover and advance the strategic lore that can inform the church's outreach, the stakes are enormous. In the generation following McGavran's contribution, and the impact from McGavran's and Ralph Winter's theories in the first Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, several thousand new people groups were reached, and at least a hundred million people became new Christians.

As the gains of that era are forgotten, however, or dismissed with a wave of the hand, or eclipsed by whatever is new and trendy, the need and the opportunity for academic research and influence in evangelization's service is greater than ever.

About the Author

George Hunter is Dean and Distinguished Professor, Emeritus, of Asbury Theological Seminary's School of World Mission and Evangelism. He has published over twenty books related to Christian Evangelization—including How To Reach Secular People, To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit, Church For the Unchurched, The Celtic Way of Evangelism, Radical Outreach, The Apostolic Congregation: Church Growth Reconceived for a New Generation, The Recovery of a Contagious Methodist Movement, and Should We Change Our Game Plan? Abingdon Press will publish GO: The Church's Main Purpose in 2017. He hopes to publish a "Reader's Digest" primer that will summarize many of the insights of a lifetime of research, reflection, and ministry.

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RETHINKING THE TERM *MISSIONARY*: IS EVERY CHRISTIAN A MISSIONARY?

Cecil Stalnaker

Abstract

In order to emphasize the missionary nature of the local church, a new expression has emerged in recent years: "Every Christian a missionary." Is this valid? Should local churches be instructing and claiming that their church members are all missionaries? Although many mission leaders and writers claim that the Bible never uses the word *missionary*, an examination of fifty-two different English versions of the Bible shows otherwise. In order to respond to the main question, a number of avenues are explored in this paper—the identity, definitions, and origin of the term *missionary*, including old and new paradigms and their analyses. In light of the research, a third or new paradigm is proposed, that of *commissionary*. Lastly, the answer to the question in the title, "Should the local church be teaching that every Christian is a missionary?" will be offered.

Is it true that every Christian is a missionary, or is it only those who leave the country for ministry? Church organizations and individuals have different ideas of what a missionary is. One Mormon organization defines a missionary as "Someone who leaves their FAMILY for a short time, so that others may be with their families for ETERNITY."[1] A former Japanese missionary identifies missionaries as "anyone who increases by participation the

[1] Deseret Book Company, accessed November 24, 2015, https://deseretbook.com/p/missionary-definition-10x5-plaque-adams-company-91192?variant_id=4562.

concretization of the love of God in history."[2] It is not uncommon for the average person in the pew, the Christian clergy, and cross-cultural missionaries to employ the term differently. Most of us have heard of the church that has the words embossed over its inner exit doors, "You are now entering your mission field." Many of these churches claim that every person in their congregation is a missionary. Many cross-cultural missionaries that are on a home ministry assignment have heard someone voice the question, "Aren't we all missionaries?" Confusion is often the consequence.

In light of the above, many questions emerge. What is a missionary? How would we define the term? Who is and who is not a missionary? Are people who go for two or three weeks to South Africa to serve the Lord missionaries? Is everyone in a local church a missionary, or is it just those people who go overseas? What about those who stay in the United States but minister cross-culturally to Buddhists and Muslims? Is the Christian who is trying to reach his neighborhood for Jesus a missionary?

This paper attempts to answer the question, "Should the local church be teaching that every Christian is a missionary?" In doing so, the following will be examined: two basic paradigms as related to the definition of a missionary and the arguments for each, the origin of the term *missionary*, the English Bible's use of the term *missionary*, the concepts of apostle and missionary intentionality, and a new paradigm called *comissionary*.

IDENTITY AND DEFINITION OF THE MISSIONARY: TWO PARADIGMS

Historically, two main paradigms have emerged as to who and who is not a missionary. The first paradigm holds that every Christian is a missionary. The second generally says that missionaries are those who are specifically called by God and go cross-culturally, overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers.

Paradigm #1: Every Christian is a missionary.

Although the famous preacher Charles Spurgeon once declared, "Every Christian is either a missionary or an impostor," this concept is considered to be the norm today by many church leaders. One person expressed the following:

> If you preached to believers, you were called a "pastor." If you preached to non-Christians in your own culture, you were an "evangelist." If you needed a passport to get there, you were a "missionary." If those distinctions were ever helpful, they certainly aren't

[2] Kosuke Koyama, "What Makes a Missionary?" in *Mission Trends No. 1: Critical Issues in Mission Today*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky (NY: Paulist Press, 1974), 28 in Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, *Encountering Theology of Mission* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 222.

> today. Not when "the nations" are moving in next door and going to school with your kids. Not when there is yet to be an expression of Christianity that is truly free from modern rational humanism. We're all missionaries because there is no "home." . . . The new paradigm is simple: all Christians are missionaries.[3]

Emergent church leader Brian McLaren has said, "Every Christian a missionary."[4] Other advocates, Alan Hirsch and Lance Ford, state it this way: "The reality is that all Christians are not only called to be missionaries but have already been sent to the people they are called to reach. Christians who earn a living as teachers, accountants, store clerks, mechanics, plumbers, doctors, whatever—you are a missionary!"[5] "God wants to send people into their own neighborhoods and networks, suburbs and sports clubs, families and friends. If we grasp that vision, we are indeed missionaries."[6] Another church leader puts it this way, "All believers must see themselves as missionaries sent by Jesus Christ, sent into the world, and sent on a mission. If your Christian life doesn't look like this, then you need to ask the hard question, 'Am I a missionary or impostor?'"[7]

Although the following definitions were not written with the intent to defend the concept that every Christian is a missionary, they do appear to fit that purpose.

One Roman Catholic source describes a missionary as follows: "A person who is sent by Church authority to preach the Gospel, or help strengthen the faith already professed, among people in a given place or region. Essential to being a missionary, whether at home or abroad, is the desire to extend the Kingdom of Christ by preaching, teaching, or other means of evangelization and catechesis." [8]

"A missionary is a prepared disciple whom God sends into the world with his resources to make disciples for the kingdom."[9]

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[3] E. Goodman, "Everyone a Missionary?" posted May 19, 2009, accessed December 10, 2015, http://missionsmisunderstood.com/2009/05/19/everyone-a-missionary/.

[4] Brian D. McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 142.

[5] Alan Hirsch and Lance Ford, *Right Here, Right Now: Everyday Mission for Everyday People* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 63.

[6] Kim Hammond and Darren Cronshaw, *Sentness: Six Postures of Missional Christians* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2014), 55.

[7] "Are All Christians Really Missionaries?" posted by Chris Pappalardo on August 29, 2013, accessed November 24, 2015, http://www.jdgreear.com/my_weblog/2013/08/are-all-christians-really-missionaries.html.

[8] From the *Catholic Dictionary*, accessed November 24, 2015, https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/dictionary/index.cfm?id=34913.

[9] Ada Lum, *A Hitchhiker's Guide to Missions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1984), 21.

Another sees a missionary as merely one who reaches out to those who have not heard the gospel. A missionary is a person, either male or female, who "leaves his or her comfort zone to go to those who have never heard the good news."[10]

The definition of New Testament scholar Eckward J. Schnabel is that "missionaries establish contact with non-Christians, they proclaim the news of Jesus the Messiah and Savior (proclamation, preaching, teaching, instruction), they lead people to faith in Jesus Christ (conversion, baptism), and they integrate the new believers into the local community of the followers of Jesus (Lord's Supper, transformation of social and moral behavior, charity).[11]

Such definitions above involve crossing the sin barrier but have nothing to do with the crossing of linguistic, cultural, or geographic barriers.

The following support for this view is both scriptural and pragmatic.

- Biblically, all disciples of Jesus Christ have been sent into the world (Jn 20:21) and commissioned to make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:19–20). Thus, "all of God's people are sent; all of God's people are commanded to go. There is no 'special class of sent ones.'"[12]
- This paradigm eliminates the false distinction created by the older paradigm that only particular, God-chosen people are true missionaries. The old paradigm creates an elite class—distinguishing true missionaries from average Christians, which leads to false honor, esteem, and privilege of missionaries.
- This expression best fits the basic missionary nature of the local church—all are responsible to make disciples of all nations. In principle, every Christian is a missionary because all are fulfilling the apostolic nature of the church. "As a Christian, I must become a true successor of the apostles. I must bear their witness, believe their message, imitate their mission and ministry."[13]
- The concept makes good sense because "all Christians must know, understand, and practice the Great Commission in their daily lives."[14]
- By applying the term *missionary* to every Christian, all believers will be more apt to see that they are on the "mission field" in their own context and will make attempts to share the good news of Jesus Christ just as any missionary on the field does.

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[10] Nathan Rasmussen, "Who Really is an Apostle?" *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 49, no. 3 (July 2013): 331. This writer maintains that an apostle is a missionary and a missionary is an apostle.

[11] Eckard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary* (Grand Rapids: IVP Academic, 2008), 29.

[12] J. D. Greear, *Gaining by Losing* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 34.

[13] Arthur F. Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 302 citing Hans Kung, *The Church* (NY: Sheed & Ward, 1967), 358.

[14] Greg Wilton, "Are We All Missionaries?" *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (April 2013): 150.

- All Christians are missionaries because none are at "home." "Even if your ministry is to a group of people that you grew up with—a group that looks, talks, and acts just like you— you must recognize that your transformation in Christ necessarily makes you an outsider—a foreigner—to even your own culture. You can't afford to assume that you are ministering in your own context. You don't have a context in the world anymore."[15]
- This paradigm is a much better fit for where the mission field is since missions in our modern world is more about going to people, including our nearby ethnically different neighbors and work colleagues, than about going to distant geographical places.

Paradigm #2: Missionaries are specific individuals who have been called by God to cross linguistic and/or cultural barriers for the sake of the gospel, often taking them across the seas.

Opposed to the first paradigm, one missionary internet site put it this way: "Frequently one hears it said that every Christian is a missionary—that is that every Christian ought to be a missionary. The little chorus puts it, 'Be a missionary every day!' It sounds good, but this kind of fuzzy thinking only clouds the issue. Every Christian cannot be a missionary, nor should be."[16]

Missiologist George W. Peters identified a missionary as follows: "In the technical and traditional sense of the word, a missionary is a Christian missionary of the gospel of Jesus Christ, sent forth by the authority of the Lord and the church to cross national borders and/or cultural and religious lines in order to occupy new frontiers for Christ, to preach the gospel of redemption in Christ Jesus unto the salvation of people, to make disciples and to establishing and evangelizing Christian churches according to the command of Christ and the example of the apostles."[17]

William David Taylor says that missionaries "are cross-cultural workers who serve within or without their national boundaries," who "cross some kind of linguistic, cultural, or geographic barriers as authorized sent ones." He maintains that the term *missionary* (equivalent to an apostolic messenger) is one who has been sent out by the authority of God and the church "on a special mission with a special message," with a particular emphasis on "the Gentiles/nations."[18]

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[15] Goodman, "Everyone a Missionary?"

[16] The Traveling Team, accessed November 25, 2015, http://www.thetravelingteam.org/articles/is-everyone-a-missionary.

[17] George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), 248–249.

[18] William David Taylor, "Missionary," *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 644.

Missionaries are people "who have been called by God to full-time ministry of the Word and prayer (Ac 6:4), and who have crossed geographical and/or cultural boundaries (Ac 22:21) to preach the gospel in those areas of the world where Jesus Christ is largely, if not entirely, unknown (Ro 15:20)."[19]

In a more recent publication, a missionary is defined "as someone who intentionally crosses boundaries for the purpose of communicating the gospel to win people to Christ, discipling new believers, planting churches, training biblically qualified leaders, and ministering to the whole body of Christ in holistic ways."[20]

Although each of the above vary, the key element in this more traditional paradigm is that of crossing barriers—often linguistic but most commonly cultural. Those supporting this position provide the following biblical and practical reasons.

- Scripture shows that God selects and calls out of the church specific individuals that we would call missionaries. These are unique and different than the average Christian in the church. For example, the church at Antioch was called by the Holy Spirit to specifically set apart two individuals, Paul and Barnabas, for mission work (Ac 13:1–4). The others in the church did not go anywhere. In the Old Testament, there are numerous cases where God specifically called people to accomplish His mission: Abram (Ge 12:1–3), Moses (Ex 3:10, Isa 6:8–13), and Jonah (Jnh 1:1–2; 3:1). Thus, the missionary role is "unique, essential, and divinely appointed."[21]
- Referring to Paul and Barnabas (Ac 13:4), the verb "sent out" refers uniquely to an authoritative missionary commissioning according to Greek scholars Arndt and Gingrich.[22] Such action is indicative of authentic, selected, and unique missionaries.
- By distinguishing who is and who is not a missionary, an important distinction is made—identifying those who fulfill a specific calling and mission, especially to those in other cultures.
- By applying the term *missionary* to particular individuals, the focus can be kept on the unreached and the unevangelized, or least evangelized, demanding for the crossing of linguistic and cultural barriers, especially in going to the 10/40 window.

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[19] Hebert Kane, *Understanding Christian Mission* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), 28.

[20] Zane Pratt, M. David Sills, and Jeff K. Walters, *Introduction to Global Missions* (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2014), 3.

[21] Ott and Strauss, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 225.

[22] Arthur F. Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*, 303 citing William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 647.

> "Look at it this way, if every Christian is already considered a missionary, then all can stay put where they are, and nobody needs to get up and go anywhere to preach the gospel. But if our only concern is to witness where we are, how will people in unevangelized areas ever hear the gospel? . . . Many Christian leaders have picked up Ralph Winter's analysis of world need which states that beyond the one-fourth of the world's population which is nominally Christian, only one-fourth of the world's people are being somewhat effectively evangelized by cross cultural contact with Christians. The other half of the world's people are not being reached effectively because they are isolated from any real contact with Christians. This is hardly fair to those who have never heard! So in reality the idea that every Christian is a missionary is a 'cop out.' It avoids responsibility for the about three billion people who are not being effectively evangelized today. It means direct disobedience to the 'Go' of the Great Commission!"[23]

Making the distinction leads to serious missions and to better prepared missionaries, especially when it comes to the crossing of cultural and linguistic boundaries. This paradigm is important because it shows the true complexity of missions, which demands special expertise and training of the missionary if any effectiveness is to be obtained in cross-cultural missions.

- Only those who satisfy specific missionary qualifications (apostolic passion, spiritual giftedness, consistency of life, certain practical qualifications, and divine calling) can be considered to be missionaries.[24] Biblically, this paradigm recognizes the distinctions in God's gifting and calling of believers.[25]
- Common biblical sense upholds this concept of the missionary. David Hesselgrave has said that "although all followers of Christ are called to be *witnesses*, it is not true that all are called to be *missionaries*, any more than all are called to be pastors."[26] Further, "as pastors and evangelists are specially called by God for a ministry of the word of God, just so with the missionary! A missionary is specially called of God for a

[23] The Travel Team, accessed December 2, 2015, http://www.thetravelingteam.org/articles/is-everyone-a-missionary.

[24] Eric E. Wright, *A Practical Theology of Missions* (Leonminster, UK: DayOne Publications, 2010), 166–167; David L. Frazier, *Mission Smart* (Memphis, TN: Equipping Servants International, 2014), 44–45.

[25] Ott and Strauss, *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 224.

[26] David J. Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005), 215. See also George W. Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972), 249.

distinct ministry."[27] Another has stated this in the following manner: "We are not all called to be apostles, we are not all equipped to be apostles—not everyone is an apostle, so let's stop saying that everyone is a missionary!"[28] Similarly, Stephen Neill, the Scottish Anglican missionary and scholar has said that if everyone is a missionary, nobody is a missionary. The idea that all are missionaries does a "disservice to the 'missionary' by universalizing its use. While all believers are witnesses and kingdom servants, not all are missionaries."[29]

- This paradigm is helpful in leading people away from "staying" rather than "going." The paradigm of "every Christian a missionary" keeps people from going to difficult places, especially where barriers have to be crossed. In fact, it hinders making disciples of *all nations*. This paradigm really helps churches focus on the world and not just the neighborhood.
- The effort, energy, and budgets of churches that teach every Christian is a missionary are paltry, due in part to the fact that their focus is on local missions and not the unreached or least reached.
- Churches that promote the idea that "every Christian is a missionary" are more focused on growing big churches, rather than the making of disciples. Church growth is really their goal.

Although there are both strong and weak arguments for the two positions, it will be important to examine other factors to better answer the posed question. For instance, does the origin of the word *missionary* help to give an answer? What about the English Bible translations and their use of the term? Is a missionary the same as an apostle? What about missionary intentionality?

ORIGIN OF THE TERM *MISSIONARY*

Many believe that the actual term *missionary* emerged from the Jesuits. Around 1598, the Jesuits used the word *mission* when it sent some of its members overseas. These words *mission* and *missionary* are derived from the Latin language, specifically from *missionem* (the nominative being *missio*), which refers to the "act of sending" or from *mittere* (a noun of action from the past participle stem), meaning "to send." The Latin also signifies "a dispatching" or "release."[30] Jerome was commissioned in AD 382 by the bishop of Rome

[27] The Traveling Team, accessed November 25, 2015, http://www.thetravelingteam.org/articles/is-everyone-a-missionary.

[28] "Is Every Christian a Missionary? Yes and No," posted April 15, 2013, accessed November 24, 2015, http://www.joyfield.org/2013/04/is-every-christian-missionary-yes-and-no.html.

[29] Taylor, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, 645.

[30] *Online Etymology Dictionary*, accessed November 24, 2015, http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=mission.

to revise the Old Latin version of the Bible to what is known as the *Latin Vulgate*. Drawing probably on the European type of Latin, he revised the gospels.[31] He translated the words of Jesus in John 20:21, a key verse related to the missionary, as "*dixit ergo eis iterum pax vobis sicut misit me Pater et ego mitto vos*," that is, "Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you."[32] John 20:21, in the Greek New Testament, employs *apostello* (ἀποστέλλω) and *pempo* (πέμπω) where the Latin equivalent is *misit* and *mitto*. The meaning of both the Latin and Greek contain the sense of "send" or "sending," but the translation from the Latin does not help in answering the principal question.

THE ENGLISH BIBLE'S EMPLOYMENT OF "MISSIONARY"

Does the use of the word *missionary* in English Bibles aid in answering the question of who is a missionary? Some have stated that the word *missionary* never occurs in the Bible. However, this is not quite accurate, for it does occur in some English Bibles,[33] with and without a Greek basis.

Of the fifty-two English versions of the Bible that were examined by the writer,[34] just nine of the versions contained the term *missionary*.[35] Table 1

[31] William L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody, 1968), 336.

[32] *Latin Vulgate*, accessed November 24, 2015, http://www.latinvulgate.com/lv/verse.aspx?t=1&b=4&c=20.

[33] This paper is based on the writer's examination of fifty-two English versions of the Bible found at the website of Bible Gateway, https://www.biblegateway.com/.

[34] The following forty-four English versions of the Bible did not use the word *missionary*: *New King James, 21st Century King James, American Standard Version, BRG Bible, Common English Bible, Complete Jewish Bible, Contemporary English Version, Darby Translation, Disciples' Literal New Testament, Douay-Rheims 1899 American Edition, Easy-to-Read Version, English Standard, English Standard Version Anglicized, Expanded Bible, 1599 Geneva Bible, Good News Translation, Holman Christian Standard Bible, International Children's Bible, International Standard Version, J. B. Phillips New Testament, Jubilee Bible 2000, King James Version, Authorized King James Version, Lexham English Bible, Mounce Reverse-Interlinear New Testament, New American Bible (Revised Edition), New American Standard Bible, New Century Version, New English Translation, New International Reader's Version, New International Version, New King James Version, New Living Translation, New Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version Anglicized, New Revised Standard Anglicized Catholic Version, New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition, Orthodox Jewish Bible, Revised Standard Version, Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition, The Voice, World English Bible, Worldwide English (New Testament), Wycliffe Bible, Young's Literal Translation.*

[35] The following nine English versions of the Bible contained the word *missionary*: *The Amplified Bible* (2x), *New Life Translation* (1x), *The Expanded Bible* (1x), *God's Word Translation* (2x), *The Living Bible* (11x), *The Message* (1x), *Names of God Bible* (2x), *New Life Version* (20x), and *New Life Version Amplified* (1x).

TABLE 1

Term *Missionary* Employed Without Greek Language Equivalent

Reference	Bible Version	Insertion Comments
Acts 16:3	*Amplified Bible* *New Life Translation* *New Life Version Amplified Bible* *New Life Version*	The term *missionary* is employed to describe Timothy.
John 7:35	*Living Bible*	Jesus is identified as a "missionary" by the officers sent to arrest him.
1 Corinthians 9:4	*Expanded Bible* *The Message*	Speaks of "missionary work." Speaks of "missionary assignments."

notes the English versions where the word *missionary* was inserted into the biblical text but without any Greek New Testament word. The *New Life Version,* for example, translates Acts 16:3 as "Paul wanted Timothy to go with him as a missionary," yet there is no word in the Greek that represents the word *missionary*. The word is merely inserted in the text, attempting to identify Timothy as a missionary.

Table 2 shows the various English translations that actually translate a Greek term as "missionary." However, there are only two English versions, *The Living Bible* and *New Life Version*, that carry this translation of the Greek word *apostolos*, meaning apostle, as missionary.

Based on an examination of the fifty-two English Bible translations, outside of the original twelve disciples, there are just five individuals who are given the title of "missionary"—Timothy,[36] Philip,[37] Paul,[38] Peter,[39] and Matthias[40] (who replaced Judas). Of the nineteen individuals who were Paul's travel companions, only one of these is called a "missionary" in these fifty-two versions, and that is Timothy.[41] Paul's travel companions are rather called "fellow-worker," "fellow-soldier," "helper," "servant," "fellow-prisoner," "partner," and so forth. None of these were called "missionaries."

In reality, the English Bible employment of the term *missionary* does not help in answering the posed question since the English translations provide no consistency. Even those who traveled with Paul were not classified as missionaries.

[36] Acts 16:3—*Amplified Bible, Amplified Bible-Classic Edition*, and *New Life Version*.

[37] Acts 21:8—*God's Word Translation* and *Names of God Bible*.

[38] Prime example is Romans 1:1 in the *Living Bible* and the *New Life Version*.

[39] 1 Peter 1:1—*Living Bible* and *New Life Version*.

[40] Acts 1:23 with 1:25—*New Life Version*.

[41] The following traveling companions of Paul not labeled with the term *missionary* are Aquilla, Aristarchus, Barnabas, Epaphras, Gaius, Justus, Luke, Mark, Onesimus, Philemon, Priscilla, Sedundus, Silas, Sopater, Tertius, Titus, Trophimus, and Tychicus.

TABLE 2

Greek Word Translation as "Missionary"

Reference	Bible Version	Translation Comments
Acts 21:8	*God's Word Translation* *Names of God Bible*	The word *missionary* is the translation of the Greek term for evangelist (*euangelistes*, εὐαγγελίστής) in its identity of Philip.
2 Timothy 4:5	*God's Word Translation* *Names of God Bible*	The word *missionary* is the translation of the Greek term for evangelist (*euangelistes*, εὐαγγελίστής) in its identity of Timothy. The translation is "do the work of a missionary."
Romans 1:1 1 Corinthians 1:1 Galatians 1:1 1 Timothy 1:1; 2:7 2 Timothy 1:1, 11 1 Peter 1:1 2 Peter 1:1	*The Living Bible* *New Life Version*	The Greek word *apostolos* (ἀπόστολος) has been translated by the term *missionary*, which applies to Paul and Peter.
Romans 11:13 1 Corinthians 9:1, 2; 15:9 2 Corinthians 1:1; 12:12 Ephesians 1:1 Colossians 1:1 Titus 1:1	*New Life Version*	The Greek word *apostolos* (ἀπόστολος) has been translated by the term *missionary*. All of the references relate to Paul.
Romans 15:16	*New Life Version*	Missionary is the translation of the Greek word *leitourgos* (λειτουργός), which is normally translated "minister."
Acts 1:25	*New Life Version*	Translation of the word *apostole* (ἀπόστολη), apostleship is "missionary." The reference is to Judas.

THE CONCEPT OF APOSTLE

Does the apostolic concept help in answering the question? Some missiologists, missionaries, and churches equate the term *missionary* with that of an apostle.[42] Others refine it by likening it to an apostolic messenger.[43] The

[42] See for instance Steve Bern, *Well Sent* (Fort Washington, PA: CLC Publications, 2015), 53; Harold E. Dollar, "Apostle, Apostles," in *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, ed. A. Scott Moreau (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 73.

[43] Taylor, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, 644.

noun term *apostle*, *apostolos* (ἀπόστολος), occurs seventy-nine times in the New Testament. By the time of the New Testament, this term signified the sending of someone who had been given authority to deliver a message or carry out a mission, kind of like a person who has been sent to a country as an ambassador or envoy.[44] Biblically, this would refer to those appointed, authoritatively sent, and commissioned for making disciples of all nations. Interestingly, Barnabas is not labeled a missionary in the English Bible translations, but he is identified as an apostle in some of them. He had been set apart by the Holy Spirit and authoritatively sent by the church at Antioch along with Paul.

Just about every time the Greek word for *apostle* is used, a reference to those that the Lord Jesus had personally appointed is made—the twelve and Paul. The few outside references relate to Jesus (Heb 3:1), Barnabas (Ac 14:14), Epaphraditus (Php 2:25), Silvanus (1Th 1:1 with 2:6), and others that remain unnamed (2Co 8:23). However, the unnamed carry a unique title, "apostles of the churches" (ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν). Even though the Greek word is clearly *apostle*, most English translations do not translate it as such.[45] The majority employs the term *messengers*, and a few use *delegates*, *representatives*, and *emissaries*. Although some may object that these renderings do not adequately convey the idea of the Greek New Testament, which is "apostles of the churches,"[46] they may be the best terms to describe what many of these individuals actually did. For example, people like Timothy, Epaphras, Erastus, and Mark, who traveled with Paul, did assist him in the ministry but may not have actually been sent with apostolic authority like Paul and Barnabas. They were merely considered assistants to the apostles. Thus, they may not have been apostolic in the true sense of the term.

To equate apostle and missionary is misleading for two main reasons. First, the apostles were unique since they were personally called by Jesus (Lk 6:13). He met and traveled with them throughout his earthly ministry (Lk 24:36ff; Ac 1:3). One of the unique factors that qualified an individual as an apostle of Jesus Christ was that the person must have been "a witness to his resurrection" (Ac 1:22). These were "the apostles of the Lamb" (Rev 21:14).

Second, apostles in the New Testament, for the most part, had an authority that was equivalent to prophets in the Old Testament. Old Testament prophets spoke and wrote in the name of God, speaking and writing the very words of God. The apostles of the New Testament carried divine authority like the prophets of the Old Testament. For example, the apostle Peter calls on believers to remember "the command of the Lord and Savior through your apostles" (2Pe 3:2). In lying to the apostles, Ananias was

[44] Hesslegrave, *Paradigms in Conflict*, 216.

[45] Only seven of the fifty-three English versions translated the *apostolos* as apostle.

[46] Hesslegrave, *Paradigms in Conflict*, 217.

doing so to the Holy Spirit (Ac 5:3). Their words were divinely authoritative in an absolute sense. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, their written words became divine Scripture. After Pentecost, the new believers devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching (Ac 2:42), thus recognizing their authority. "To disobey or disbelieve them was to disbelieve or disobey God."[47] Apostolic authority was also demonstrated when the apostles commissioned the seven "deacons" (Ac 6:6) in the Jerusalem church and confirmed the breakthrough decision in Acts 15 related to the salvation of the Gentiles. Needless to say, it would be very difficult to equate any modern day missionary with an apostle of the New Testament era,[48] except possibly as an "apostle of the church." However, that, too, brings confusion and seems inappropriate and unhelpful to the local church.

From a historical perspective, "no major leader in the history of the church—not Athanasius or Augustine, not Luther or Calvin, not Wesley or Whitefield—has taken to himself the title of 'apostle' or let himself be called an apostle."[49] This would also be true for the great missionaries of the past—Patrick, Columba, Boniface, John Eliott, David Brainerd, William Carey, Adoniram Judson, Alexander Duff, Robert Moffett, David Livingston, Mary Slessor, Hudson Taylor, Amy Carmichael, C. T. Studd, Samuel Zwemer, William Cameron Townsend, and so forth. None were appointed apostles. Thus, it would be both biblically and historically difficult to conclude that there are missionaries or Christian leaders today who could be truly classified as apostles. Missionaries, yes; apostles, no.

THE CONCEPT OF MISSIONARY INTENTIONALITY

In answering the posed question: "Should local churches be teaching that every Christian is a missionary?" one other major factor must be seriously considered—that of missionary intentionality.

It seems unrealistic to consider someone a missionary unless s/he has grasped the idea that s/he has been sent and commissioned by the Lord to make disciples of all nations. Jesus has indeed "sent" and "commissioned" his church to make disciples of all nations. However, this is not a reality for many Christians. An extensive study carried out in Europe by EMRG—

[47] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 906.

[48] The apostle Paul, although not of the original twelve, appears to meet the criteria of an apostle in the same sense of the twelve apostles since he was personally selected by Jesus (Ac 9:5–6; 26:15–18), and he saw the Lord after his resurrection (1Co 9:1; 15:7–9). In addition, it appears that Barnabas was considered an apostle like Paul (Ac 14:14), and it is implied that James the brother of Jesus (not one of the twelve apostles) was also an apostle like Paul, according to Galatians 1:19. Paul was the last of the appointed apostles.

[49] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 911.

a strategy research group for church multiplication—found that 72.7% of Europeans identified with Christianity. Sadly to say, a miniscule 4.12% of them have any concern about the spiritual condition of those near to them—friends and neighbors.[50] A study carried out by the Barna Group in the United States found that although more than three-fourths of Christians believe that they are to share their faith in Christ with others, only 52% did so in the last year.[51] Of course, this means that 25% did not even see the necessity of sharing the gospel. In another study, 80% of Christians believe that they have a responsibility to share their faith with others, yet 61% had not done so in the last six months.[52] Thus, how can it be said that every Christian is a missionary if they do not "go" in obedience to their sending and commissioning?

Frankly, it is difficult to imagine any Christian who does not intentionally make the long-term effort to share the gospel with people to be considered a "missionary." Intentionality is essential to being a missionary. Practically, missionaries have a recognized mission field, goals, and plans to make disciples no matter if nearby or across the seas. Of course, this is nearly impossible without some type of long-term commitment. Is it realistic to go, baptize, and teach disciples to obey the teachings of Jesus in a few weeks?

Missionaries intentionally go, living out their "sentness" and commissioning. If not, they have either erased from their memory, ignored, disregarded, or disobeyed what Jesus sent them to do. Missionaries intentionally and purposefully leave their personal comfort zones for the sake of the gospel. "We are to take the message of the gospel to the whole world. It's not something we *might* do; it's something we *must* do. It's not an option; it's an obligation."[53] However, many seem to see it as an option. Instead of accomplishing the Great Commission, they practice the "Great Omission." Therefore, a person really cannot be called a missionary if s/he does not see him/herself as sent and commissioned. Jesus "sends each of us somewhere, to some group, to make disciples of those who don't know him."[54] Although space does not permit, it also goes without saying that the local church is involved in recognizing the person's sending and/or commissioning.[55]

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[50] "European Spiritual Climate: Top-line Report," January 4, 2006, submitted by S. Scott Friderich for EMRG, 1, pdf file.

[51] Barna Group, "Is Evangelism Going Out of Style," report December 17, 2013, accessed December 3, 2015, https://www.barna.org/barna-update/faith-spirituality/648-is-evangelism-going-out-of-style#.VmDtNpZdHpA.

[52] Jon D. Wilke, "Churchgoers Believe in Sharing Faith, Most Never Do," LifeWay study, accessed December 3, 2015, http://www.lifeway.com/Article/research-survey-sharing-christ-2012.

[53] Steve Bern, *Well Sent* (Fort Washington, PA: CLC Publications, 2015), 51.

[54] J. D. Greear, *Gaining by Losing* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 34.

[55] For example, see Acts 13:1-4, 15:22-23; Philippians 4:18; 3 John 8.

In reality, the response to the posed question is, no. Some Christians, but not all, can be considered missionaries.

A NEW PARADIGM: COMMISSIONARY

Although these two above paradigms serve good purposes, should we not consider a third paradigm, that of "commissionary?"[56] Such a neologism makes good sense since it arises from the Lord's teaching of "The Great Commission."[57] Although the origin of the expression is unknown,[58] it may be the best way to identify those who are messengers of the gospel, whether they cross cultures or not. The term truly identifies those who take on the personal responsibility for making disciples of all nations. Some of them would certainly cross cultural and linguistic barriers, while others cross no barriers (except the sin barrier) in walking across the street to reach out to their neighbor. There are some good reasons for using "commissionary" rather than "missionary."

First, this paradigm avoids the confusion of the identity of who is and who is not a missionary, eliminating much of the debate that surrounds the term *missionary*. No distinction needs to be drawn, for all are to make disciples whether crossing cultures or not.

Second, and as mentioned, the expression *commissionary* corresponds well with the Great Commission, for all Christians have been sent and commissioned. Jesus clearly said to his disciples, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you" (Jn 20:21). We know from the perfect tense which is expressed by the translation "has sent" (of *apostello*) that the sending by the Father did not end when Jesus ascended to the Father. It indicates an action where the effects continue. "The Son's sending by the Father is still continuing in the Son's sending of His followers."[59] Thus, the Father sent Jesus. Jesus sends his disciples. Such sending flows to the church of every generation, which is ongoing.

Not only have those who follow Jesus been sent, but they also have been "commissioned" by him. Matthew 28:19–20 states, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son

[56] The writer was first introduced to the term *commissionary* through an EMQ article by Greg Wilton, "Are We All Missionaries?" *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (April 2013): 148–154.

[57] This expression encompasses Matthew 28:18–20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:44–49, John 20:21, and Acts 1:8.

[58] Some would attribute it to Pope Paul III in 1537. Others say that it might have come from Dutch missionary Justinian von Welz (1621–88), but that it was Hudson Taylor who popularized it ("Great Commission," *Wikipedia*, accessed December 10, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Commission).

[59] W. Edward Glenny, "The Great Commission" in *Missions in a New Millennium*, eds. W. Edward Glenny and William H. Smallman (Grand Rapids: Kregel Books, 2000), 110.

and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Such a mandate involves exercising the Lord's authority for, in behalf of, and in place of him to accomplish the task of disciple making. It was Matthew's intent "to provide guidance to a community in crisis on how it should understand its calling and mission."[60] "The task given by Jesus to the Church through the disciples authorizes them to carry the gospel everywhere so that all peoples might have the opportunity to believe on Jesus as their Savior and become life-long followers of him."[61] The church of Jesus Christ is still under the same commission.

Third, the term *commissionary* may be a better term to use than *missionary* in light of the broad spectrum of the mission field. Because "missionary" is often associated with passports, crossing cultures, learning new languages, and travelling to new world locations, the term *commissionary* fits well with what is described as the mission field in Acts 1:8. Accordingly, the mission field is culturally and geographically near (Jerusalem and Judea), somewhat distant culturally and possibly linguistically (Samaria), or really far geographically, culturally, and linguistically (remotest parts of the earth). The mission field is both here and there.

In addition, Acts 1:8 presents a focus on the world that avoids the notion that one area of the world is more important than another. The passage "presents the expansion of the Christian witness from the center of Judaism to the center of the Roman Empire, from the mission to Palestinian Jews to the mission to Jews and Gentiles of the diaspora"[62] and is not to be understood and interpreted sequentially. The fact that the verse uses the Greek *kai* (κάι) four times, separating the geographical areas, appears to impress upon us that all geographical locations are to be an outreach focus simultaneously. The passage does not say, "be witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea, *then* Samaria, *then* to the end of the earth." Thus, churches are not necessarily to give priority to their local Jerusalem and then only to other places in the world according to Acts 1:8. The focus is the world. It avoids the imbalance of focusing entirely on places such as the 10/40 window or on a focus on the local community only. A one or the other approach does not honor and respect the Lord's teaching that "all" peoples are to be reached, whether they be near or far. However, priority seems to become prominent if specific people groups remain neglected in light of those reached.[63]

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[60] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), 57.

[61] Marvin J. Newell, *Commissioned: What Jesus Wants You to Know as You Go* (n.p.: ChurchSmart Resources, 2001), 16

[62] E. Earle Ellis, "The End of the Earth (Acts 1:8)," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 1 (January 1, 1991): 123.

[63] We must take seriously "access to the gospel," for many places in the world still have no Bible, no gospel preaching churches, no Christian radio programs, and no Christian literature. Thus, there is an urgency in light of the needs in the world.

Fourth, and closely linked to the third point, is that the term *commissionary* corresponds well with the concept of ethnic people groups. We must remember that missions is all about making disciples of *panta ta ethne,* which is found in all nations. The more important and strategic question to ask is not, "What country are you going to?" but "To what people group are you going to reach out?" Formerly, it was assumed that missionaries went to foreign countries to reach out to unreached people groups, but this has significantly changed in the last fifty years. Today, hundreds of ethnic people groups can be found in the most unlikely places—Los Angeles, New York, Amsterdam, Brussels, Oslo, Cologne, and so forth. Many unreached people groups are found in the backyard of western countries. Europe, for example, contains 382 unreached people groups, and the United States has 59.[64] Although it might be somewhat an exaggeration, there is certainly some truth to the idea that "God is at work in the world, shaking countries up, scattering people of the world to every corner of the globe. Geopolitical and water boundaries are not crucially important in missions anymore."[65] Geography is certainly still important, but it is a reality that everyday Christians might be able to go next door to reach someone from an unreached people group. However, it may be that some of these people, even living next door, are not reachable unless cultural and linguistic barriers are crossed. The greater the cultural and linguistic barrier, the more demanding the disciple-making task. In any case, the term *commissionary* is well suited for both distant as well as near unreached people groups.

CONCLUSION

In summary, "Should the local church be teaching that every Christian is a missionary?" The response is, no. First, it must be said that the reasons behind each of the paradigms appear to have a logical sense, yet they do provide a defining answer to our question. Second, the usage of the term *missionary* in English Bibles is not consistent and is not helpful in responding to the question. Further, missionaries cannot be equated with apostles in the true sense of the term. Although the expression *commissionary* is a better fit for what is happening in missions today, it, too, does not solve the problem. However, it does lead away from confusion related to geography and rightly focuses on the Great Commission. Whether a person is called a "missionary" or a "commissionary," the crucial element in answering the question is the intentionality of the missionary. Do Christians obey their "sentness" and commissioning? Does their local church send them out in

[64] Jason Mardryk, *Operation World*, 7th Edition (Colorado Springs, CO: Biblica Publishing, 2010), 73, 42.

[65] David L. Frazier, *MissionSmart* (Memphis, TN: Equipping Servants International, 2014), 48.

recognition of the Lord's sending and commissioning? To where do they go? What is their disciple-making plan? Otherwise stated, commissionaries (or missionaries) willingly submit to being sent and commissioned by the Lord. The local church recognizes this, and they intentionally go to their specific mission field, whether near or far, with goals and plans for disciple making. These factors define who is and who is not a missionary in our modern world.

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THEOLOGICAL EMPATHY AND JOHN WESLEY'S MISSIONAL FIELD PREACHING

Lenny Luchetti

Abstract

John Wesley cited several external reasons for his submission to field-preaching. These external factors include the persuasive requests of George Whitefield, the effectiveness of open-air preaching, and the closed doors of the Anglican Church. These usual suspects have received much attention among Wesley scholars. However, a closer look at Wesley's writings, especially his *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, reveals that internal motivators were at least as much to blame as external ones for driving Wesley to the fields. What initiated and sustained Wesley's field-preaching for fifty-one years, despite the many inconveniences and dangers associated with this homiletic practice? This study seeks to show that Wesley's sanctification, nurtured by his theological understanding of God as love and his empathic affections for neighbor, drove Wesley into the fields. This study concludes with an exploration of the implications of Wesley's theological empathy for the practice and teaching of preaching today.

INTRODUCTION

Like my wife recounting the labor and delivery of our three children, John Wesley did not hesitate to describe the undesirable characteristics of his homiletic new birth. In his earliest encounters with field-preaching, he described the practice as "strange"[1] and, worse, "vile."[2] Wesley confessed

[1] John Wesley, Journal Entry March 29, 1739, in *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 19, ed. W. Reginald Ward, Bicentennial ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 46. Hereafter *Wesley*.

[2] *Wesley*, Journal Entry April 2, 1739, vol. 19, ed. W. Reginald Ward, 46.

twenty years after submitting to the vile practice, "What marvel the devil does not love field-preaching! Neither do I: I love a commodious room, a soft cushion, an handsome pulpit."[3] More than thirty years into field-preaching, Wesley was still not warmhearted toward the practice. He wrote in his journal, "To this day field-preaching is a cross to me."[4]

Not only was preaching in the open air undesirable for Wesley throughout his life, it was downright hazardous. In *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, Wesley described the hardships:

> Can you bear the summer sun to beat upon your naked head? Can you suffer the wintry rain or wind, from whatever quarter it blows? Are you able to stand in the open air without any covering or defense when God casteth abroad his snow like wool, or scattereth his hoar-frost like ashes? And yet these are some of the smallest inconveniences which accompany field-preaching. Far beyond all these, are the contradictions of sinners, the scoffs both of the great vulgar and the small; contempt and reproach of every kind; often more than verbal affronts, stupid, brutal violence, sometimes to the hazard of health, or limbs, or life.[5]

Clearly, field-preaching was a homiletic road paved with all sorts of inconveniences and threats for the preacher.

Despite all of this, Wesley preached in the fields for fifty-one years, preaching his first open-air sermon in Bristol, England, on April 2, 1739, at age thirty-five and his last in 1790 in Winchelsea, England, at age eighty-seven. Wesley admitted that field-preaching was "a thing submitted to, rather than chosen."[6] This begs the question, why in the name of all that is safe and Anglican did John Wesley submit to the practice of preaching in the open air, outside of the hallowed halls of the church?

THE USUAL SUSPECTS: WHITEFIELD, EFFECTIVENESS, AND THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

Wesley offers several possible reasons why he engaged in the precarious practice of field-preaching. One reason frequently cited for Wesley's move from the church to the fields is the arm-twisting of his friend George Whitefield. One can easily sense the persuasive flattery of Whitefield, when he wrote to urge Wesley to join him in the fields, "I am but a novice; you are acquainted

[3] *Wesley*, Journal Entry June 24, 1759, vol. 21, ed. W. Reginald Ward, 203.

[4] *Wesley*, Journal Entry September 6, 1772, vol. 22, ed. W. Reginald Ward, 348.

[5] John Wesley, A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, in *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 11, ed. Gerald R. Cragg, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 397. Hereafter *Works*.

[6] *Works*, A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, in *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 11, ed. Gerald R. Cragg, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 178.

with the great things of God. Come, I beseech you; come quickly."[7] A powerful preacher such as Whitefield could be overwhelmingly convincing. Yet, Wesley proved over and over again that he could resist Whitefield's irresistible grace when it came to the latter's Calvinism. Did Whitefield really drive Wesley to the fields?

Wesley was not shy about defending field-preaching due to its soul-saving effect. Thousands of people, most of whom were not welcome in the Anglican Church, came to hear Wesley preach in the fields. Wesley noted, "The converting, as well as convincing, power of God is eminently present with them."[8] The effectiveness of this "strange" way of preaching is captured by Wesley when he wrote, "I am well assured that I did far more good to my Lincolnshire parishioners by preaching three days on my father's tomb than I did by preaching three years in his pulpit."[9]

However, would Wesley engage in a ministry practice simply because it worked, regardless of its compatibility with his theology? While Wesley was a practical theologian, he was not a pragmatist. He endured persecution and closed ministry doors precisely because he did not allow pragmatic conventions to trump his theological convictions. The ministry doors that were closed to him, that made field-preaching a "virtue of necessity," were closed precisely because of his "unfashionable doctrine,"[10] convictions he would not modify merely to become more effective. Did effectiveness really drive Wesley to the fields?

The most plausible and frequent reason cited by Wesley for his submission to the fields is that the preaching doors of the Anglican Church were, by and large, closed to him because of his "unfashionable doctrine." Wesley was ordained to preach but was not allowed to preach in most of the Anglican churches. He had to fulfill his call to preach, and the open air was the only way. Did the Anglican Church really drive Wesley to the fields, though?

Wesley cited Whitefield, effectiveness, and closed churches as reasons why he took to the uncomfortable, nontraditional, and dangerous fields. However, Wesley can be somewhat misleading when it comes to himself. Perhaps a dig below the surface will hint at some other possible, and maybe even more influential, reasons why he preached in the field. The often cited reasons above certainly contributed to John Wesley's venture into field-preaching, but maybe not to the extent with which they are typically credited. Were any of these reasons, in isolation or combination, enough to

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[7] Luke Tyerman, *The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1876), I: 193.

[8] *Wesley*, Journal Entry September 23, 1759, vol. 21, ed. W. Reginald Ward, 230.

[9] *Works*, Letter to John Smith March 25, 1747, in *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 26, ed. Frank Baker, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 237.

[10] *Wesley*, Sermon 112 "On Laying the Foundation of the New Chapel," vol. 3, ed. Albert C. Outler, 583–584.

drive Wesley to the fields and keep him there for fifty-one years despite the inconveniences and hazards, or was something else the primary motivator for Wesley?

ANOTHER POSSIBILITY: THEOLOGICAL EMPATHY

What drove Wesley to the fields? The obvious but easily overlooked answer is that he was being sanctified. Whether Wesley knew it or not, he was in the process of being sanctified, perfected in holy love for God and for people. Holy love drove out of Wesley the fear of duty-bound religion and the hardships of field-preaching. As the Holy Spirit infiltrated Wesley in a pronounced way at Aldersgate and beyond, the latter's mind concerning God and his heart regarding the marginalized were being sanctified in love. Put another way, Wesley's understanding of God (theology) overcame his preferences, and his feelings for the poor (empathy) overcame his prejudices. Once his cognitive understanding of God and his effective feelings for the marginalized were transformed, he was willing to change his behavior. Thus, he preached in the fields. This study seeks to show that Wesley's developing theology cultivated in him an empathy that drove him to the fields and kept him there for fifty-one years.

The primary source that supports this work is Wesley's *A Farther Appeal*, which he wrote more than six years into his open-air adventure. In that writing, he makes an extended and strong case for field-preaching.[11] Some of the usual suspects were cited as rationale. However, and this does not get much scholarly press, Wesley mostly emphasized how theology and empathy were among the primary motivators that drove him to the fields.

Theology

Wesley's growing sense of the nature and mission of God as love comes through loudly and clearly in *A Farther Appeal*. Comparing field-preaching to the wilderness preaching of John the Baptist, Wesley writes, "Yet the Shepherd of souls sought after us into the wilderness . . . ought not we also to seek . . . and to save that which is lost? Behold the amazing love of God to the outcasts of men! His tender condescension to their folly!"[12] According to Wesley, the essential nature and mission of God is love for those who are wandering around aimlessly in the wilderness of life.

The nature of God as holy love drove God toward unusual lengths in mission. Again, Wesley alluded to the wilderness preaching of John, who operated outside of the temple, "Then God was moved to jealousy, and went out of the usual way to save the souls which he had made."[13] John the Baptist was

[11] *Works*, A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, in *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 11, ed. Gerald R. Cragg, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 305–309.

[12] Ibid., 306.

[13] Ibid., 306.

raised up by God to preach in the "fields" to the marginalized poor when the religious establishment lost its focus on saving souls. When religious leaders fail to embody God's love for the world, especially those who are marginalized, God will find another way—a plan B. Wesley pointed this out for those who contended against field-preaching, "whenever it has pleased God to work any great work upon the earth, even from the earliest times, he has stepped more or less out of the common way."[14] God's *modus operandi* is doing whatever it takes, even employing and empowering something as odd and, to some, unlawful as field-preaching to set captives free.

Wesley wrote in one of his letters, shortly after his *A Farther Appeal*, that the effectiveness of field-preaching is "not my motive" but "a deep conviction that this is the will of God."[15] It is plausible, perhaps probable, that Wesley's morphing theological conception of God as love was the prime impetus for his submission to field-preaching.

Empathy

The second impetus, and one that flows naturally out of the first, is empathy. Theology cultivated empathy. Wesley's conception of God as love led to the cultivation of God's love in Wesley. In Wesleyan terms, the process of sanctification that Wesley believed and taught was at work in Wesley. Even if he cited external reasons for field-preaching (Whitefield, effectiveness, and the closed Anglican Church), it was the internal invasion of a sanctifying God that nurtured an empathic love in Wesley that drove him to the fields. Maybe when it comes to field-preaching, Wesley could not always explain himself. Although he came close in *A Farther Appeal*, he certainly could not help himself.

Roman Krznaric, a leading expert in empathy studies, notes that recent scientific scholarship argues for humans as *homo empathicus*, "wired for empathy."[16] He bases this on the work of Giacomo Rizzolatti and his team of neuroscientists from the University of Parma in 1990. Rizzolatti discovered that mirror neurons in the brain give human beings a natural capacity to be empathic, to feel what another feels.[17] Science indirectly confirms that God has made us like himself, with a capacity for empathy. The ability of humans to exhibit empathic love, then, is one of the marks of the *imago dei* in us.

Wesley believed the *imago dei* that marked us at creation can be restored through the process of sanctification here and now. Empathic love is a divine gene within us. It may be dormant, but it is there like a sleeping giant waiting to be awakened by the Holy Spirit through the process of sanctification.

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[14] Ibid., 308.

[15] *Works*, Letter to John Smith March 25, 1747, in *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 26, ed. Frank Baker, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 237.

[16] Roman Krznaric, *Empathy: Why it Matters and How to Get It* (New York: Perigee, 2014), xiii.

[17] Ibid., 21.

The Holy Spirit restores what we naturally are before the fall. The *imago dei* is restored here and now, not merely there and later. Wesley is a walking, talking, and writing artifact for his theology, his optimism concerning the power of God's grace to make us what he originally created us to be, *homo empathicus*.

Krznaric defines empathy as "the art of stepping imaginatively into the shoes of another person, understanding their feelings and perspectives, and using that understanding to guide your actions."[18] The biblical word that comes closest to the meaning of empathy is σπλαγχνίζομαι, typically translated "compassion." σπλαγχνίζομαι is a deep in the bowels of the body ache one feels because of someone else's suffering. Scripture is full of occasions when Jesus Christ was "filled with compassion"[19] and acted on behalf of the suffering by feeding, healing, or saving. Affection—what one feels—impacts behavior—what one does.

The empathy of Christ came alive in Wesley, evident by his empathic concern for and ministry to the poor, mostly unchurched, of English society. The connection between Wesley's theological understanding of God as holy love and the former's growing empathy for the marginalized to whom he preached in the open air is tight in *A Farther Appeal*. Just after articulating the theology that drove him to the fields, Wesley articulated his empathy for his flock in the fields:

> Consider coolly, if it was not highly expedient that something of this kind should be. How expedient, were it only on account of those poor sinners against their own souls who, to all human appearance, were utterly inaccessible every other way! And what numbers of these are still to be found, even in or near our most populous cities! What multitudes of them were, some years since, both in Kingswood and the Fells about Newcastle! who, week after week, spent the Lord's day, either in the ale-house, or in idle diversions, and never troubled themselves about going to church, or to any public worship at all. Now, would you really have desired that these poor wretches should have sinned on until they dropped into hell? Surely you would not. But by what other means was it possible they should have been plucked out of the fire? . . . It is hard to conceive anything else which could have reached them. Had it not been for field-preaching . . . they must have run on in the error of their way, and perished in their blood.[20]

Wesley's theology of love induced his empathic concern for those "poor sinners" and led him to the fields. It should be noted that Wesley did not use the term "poor sinners" pejoratively but empathically. Whenever Wesley

[18] Ibid., x.

[19] See Matthew 9:36, 14:14, 20:34; Mark 1:41, 6:34.

[20] *Works*, A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, in *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 11, ed. Gerald R. Cragg, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 306–307.

uses "sinner," the tone is laced with concern not condescension. This sentiment was not typical among preachers in Wesley's day. It is no coincidence that in his first field-preaching adventure, Wesley preached from Luke 4,[21] a text that highlights God's empathic love for the marginalized. He saw sinners, like Jesus did, as "captives" who need and long to be "set free."

Once Wesley adjusted his method from the pulpit to the fields, his manner of preaching was transformed, too. His loving concern for the people in the fields impacted what and how Wesley preached. He empathically contextualized his preaching in a variety of ways. Wesley's most famous preaching practice evidences his empathic contextualization, "I design plain truth for plain people."[22] It took a fair amount of restraint for an eloquent Oxford don to use colloquial language. Empathy supplied that restraint.

Contemporaries of Wesley picked up on his empathic contextualization. According to Heitzenrater, "The tendency to select topics according to the context and audience, and speak to their needs and at their level, is also supported by the testimony of several observers who indicate that Wesley spoke very directly to his listeners."[23] One such observer was John Hampson, Wesley's first biographer. Hampson provides this very helpful description of Wesley's empathic preaching: "Wesley's manner was graceful and easy . . . his style neat, simple, perspicuous, and admirably adapted to the capacity of his hearers."[24]

Wesley taught Methodist preachers to embody empathic contextualization. He advised, "always suit your subject to your audience."[25] "Because we are to instruct people of the lowest understanding . . . we should use the most common, little, easy word . . . which our language affords."[26] Vicki Tolar Burton succinctly sums up the uncommon nature of Wesley's homiletic writing, "Wesley taught speakers to love their listeners . . . a radical notion."[27]

When compared to the preaching of Whitefield, Wesley's style notably comes up short in the area of charisma. Nevertheless, what Wesley may have lacked in charisma, he more than made up for in contextualization. He seemed to have a rare ability in his day of adapting his method and manner of preaching to the particular needs of listeners and to put the gospel in a

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[21] *Wesley*, Journal Entry April 2, 1739, vol. 19, ed. W. Reginald Ward, 46.

[22] *Wesley*, Preface to Sermons, vol. 1, ed. Albert C. Outler, 104.

[23] Richard P. Heitzenrater, "John Wesley's Principles and Practice of Preaching," *Methodist History* 37:2 (January, 1999), 102–103.

[24] John Hampson, *Memoirs of the late Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, vol. 3 (Sunderland, 1791), 158.

[25] *Wesley*, Minutes of the Methodist Conference, vol. 10, ed. Henry D. Rack, 859.

[26] *Wesley*, Letter from John Wesley to the Rev. Samuel Furly on July 15, 1764, vol. 27, ed. Ted A. Campbell, 381.

[27] Vicki Tolar Burton, *Spiritual Literacy in John Wesley's Methodism: Reading, Writing, and Speaking to Believe* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 31.

contextual container from which they can drink based upon their hopes and hurts, dreams and disappointments.

This study seeks to show the plausibility that Wesley's motivation to preach in the fields was not merely pragmatic but theologically empathic. After Aldersgate, the empathic love of God for humanity, evident in the incarnation of Christ, got under Wesley's skin and into his soul. God's empathy drove God onto the field of human turf. That theology of empathy likely fueled Wesley's actual empathy for the poor unchurched and led to his incarnational "on their turf" approach to preaching. What happened to God happened to Wesley, since "renewal in the image of God entails being drawn into God's likeness."[28] Wesley was being sanctified, and that is a likely reason why he submitted to the "strange," "vile," inconvenient, and dangerous practice of field-preaching for fifty-one years.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PRACTICE AND TEACHING OF PREACHING

Wesley was a practical, though not pragmatic, theologian. He did what he had to do to be effective. He did what worked, but only in as much as it aligned with his theological cognition and empathic affection. Theology and empathy, love of God and neighbor, ruled his practical roost. For Wesley, theology informs practice, and the bridge between the two is empathy. Wesleyan theology induces empathy, which guides practice. An exploration of ways that Wesley's theological empathy can inform the practice and teaching of preaching today is warranted.

One of the current trends in the church is video-venue preaching. A preacher in one context is video recorded or streamed live for a different context. This method is based on the presumption that only the preacher's content matters, but the preaching context does not. In video-venue preaching, listeners are peripheral bystanders not participants who help shape the preaching event. A disembodied preacher cannot empathically contextualize a sermon in the moment the sermon is preached. The argument for video-venue preaching is a pragmatic one. It is easy, effective, and cheap.

Wesley was driven to the fields, though, not by a quest for pragmatic effectiveness but by his theological understanding of an incarnate God who comes onto our turf in the flesh. If Wesley was really a pragmatist and not a theologian, he would likely support the current trend. Perhaps Wesleyan studies have overplayed the pragmatist and downplayed the theologian in Wesley. Who can envision Wesley endorsing video-venue preaching? It

[28] Richard P. Heitzenrater, "The Imitatio Christi and the Great Commandment: Virtue and Obligation in Wesley's Ministry with the Poor," in ed. M. Douglas Meeks, *The Portion of the Poor: Good News to the Poor in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1995), 63.

would be easier, based on this study, to imagine him standing up at a general conference and enthusiastically reasoning, "How dare we preachers proclaim a God whose love drove him to come onto our turf in the flesh, if we are not willing to do the same through the ministry of preaching?"

Wesley's empathic contextualization offers a corrective for another development that has crept into the church over the past generation. Churches that grow large often protect the preacher from the people to whom s/he preaches. After all, "the preacher is simply too busy now for people. We need to give the preacher space for study. Don't bother the preacher with shepherding needs." Protecting the preacher from the people who come to hear sermons on Sunday might seem wise initially but in the long-run is problematic. How can the preacher incisively and empathically contextualize the gospel for people s/he does not know well? Loving, empathic connection between preacher and listener is a Wesleyan homiletic. Regardless of congregational size, the preacher is called to be more like an empathic shepherd than a pragmatic executive.

The cultural tendency to idolize style is also confronted by Wesley's theological empathy. A preponderance of literature in leadership, communication, and business persuades readers to play to their strengths in order to help their organizations most. "Find your strength and style. Make it your lead card. Stay in the lane of your sweet spot at all costs." This perspective has leaked into the ministry of preaching. Preachers must, no doubt, seek to find their unique, God-designed preaching strengths and develop them. However, preachers in the Wesleyan tradition will resist the ease of allowing our stylistic preferences to outweigh listener needs. If Wesley made too much of his preferential strengths and style, he would not have preached in the fields. The needs of listeners will significantly impact what and how the empathic preacher preaches.

What drove Wesley to the fields can also inform the professor in the classroom. Wesley's ministry flow from theology to empathy to practice presents a helpful outline for the preaching course. Instead of starting with best practices—"what works"—perhaps the course can, firstly, foster the theological cognition that, secondly, cultivates empathic affection and, thirdly, moves the student toward practices that are faithful to theology and empathy—love for God and neighbor. The beauty of the Wesleyan way is the equal place given to the head, the heart, and the hands. As it is with the Trinity, there is no hierarchy but mutual submission and interrelation between the different human faculties. If curricular design sets a spacious place at the table for theology, empathy, and practice, then the cognitive, affective, and behavioral can form students well in the Wesleyan way.

CONCLUSION

Before "All You Need is Love" was a Beatles song, it was a Wesleyan homiletic. The Beatles got it from us. Empathic love that drives the preacher deep

into the shoes of the listener is a hallmark of Wesleyan preaching. Hietzenrater makes the case that the main content of Methodism was love of God and neighbor. Then he asserts, "The topics for preaching were an extension of the Christian life that the preacher was expected to model."[29] The one who preaches in the Wesleyan tradition does not just *preach* on "perfect love" but *embodies* "perfect love" in and around the preaching event.

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Dr. Lenny Luchetti is Associate Professor of Proclamation at Wesley Seminary of Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, IN. He brings to the seminary more than 15 years of experience as a pastor, most recently as the lead pastor of a small church that had a significant turnaround and grew into a large multi-ethnic, economically-diverse, and overtly missional church during his tenure. He has written articles for Christianity Today's *Leadership Journal* and *Preaching Today* Luchetti is the author of Preaching Essentials: A Practical Guide, which has been recognized as one of the best books on preaching in 2013 by Outreach Magazine and Preaching Magazine.

[29] Richard P. Heitzenrater, "John Wesley's Principles and Practice of Preaching," *Methodist History* 37:2 (January, 1999), 100.

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THE LIFE OF DONALD MCGAVRAN: BECOMING A PROFESSOR

Gary L. McIntosh

Abstract

As McGavran's missionary career in India came to an end, publication of *The Bridges of God* opened new doors for research, teaching, and writing. The years 1955–1965 found McGavran moving from a missionary career to that of a professor and founding The Institute of Church Growth. In Eugene, Oregon, he met and befriended Methodist missionary Alan R. Tippett who became a partner in the spread of Church Growth Thought during the 1960s and 70s.

— Gary L. McIntosh has spent over a decade researching and writing a complete biography on the life and ministry of Donald A. McGavran. We are pleased to present here the fifth of several excerpts from the biography.

> The battle goes not to him who starts but to him who persists.
> —Donald A. McGavran

With his work among the Satnamis coming to a close, Donald took his vacation in 1951 in the hills north of Takhatpur to begin writing a manuscript tentatively titled, *How Peoples Become Christian*. In addition to his own ministry among the Satnamis, he had done on-the-spot studies of growing churches and people movements in several other provinces of India for several denominations, and he was eager to share his discoveries. He hunted

for one hour in the morning and evening to provide for meals, spending the time in between working on his manuscript.

Inquiries with different publishers regarding his book began in 1952, and the rough draft manuscript was completed in 1953. Officials at the United Christian Missionary Society (UCMS) read and conferred on the manuscript and were in general agreement that the title, *How Peoples Become Christian*, was a good one. After reading the initial manuscript, William D. Hall, director of the department of missionary education for the UCMS, wrote a letter on February 3, 1953, in which he commented, "I feel that this is a very significant book and that it certainly must be published. I agree so thoroughly with his basic concepts of thinking that I have found it difficult to pick out very many points of disagreement."[1]

After finishing the manuscript, Donald thought it was too strictly India. As a result, when the McGavran family left for furlough in the United States during the summer of 1954, the UCMS granted a request that he route his travel home through Africa so he could study people movements on that continent. Mary took the children and made a trip to England across Europe so the children could see many of the historical sights. Donald took off in May to travel across Africa, and rendezvoused in England in July with Mary and the girls. The trip was accomplished on a shoestring budget, but it allowed him to study twenty missions and hundreds of churches, evaluating mission policies as they related to church growth. He crossed Africa by plane, rail, bus, truck, bicycle, foot, and canoe, observing firsthand the growth of the church in six countries—Kenya, Uganda, Ruanda, Congo, Nigeria, and Gold Coast.[2]

After arriving in the United States for his furlough, Donald went directly to Yale University where he had been granted a research fellowship. He used the time that fall to continue his research on people movements and revise sections of his book, which was eventually published in 1955 as *The Bridges of God*. It was the most read book on mission theory in 1956, and it has continued to play an influential role in missiological thinking ever since. Reviews of the book lauded McGavran's courageous thinking. The September–October 1955 issue of the *Missionary Digest* wrote *The Bridges of God* is "the most up-to-date book on new missionary methods of which we know. . . . This book is one of the first to take account of the gigantic movements of the Holy Spirit throughout the world today. Mission-minded people should be deeply grateful to Dr. Donald McGavran for pointing the way."[3] The *Gospel Herald* declared, "The *Bridges of God* is stimulating and often disturbing reading . . . one of the most important books on missionary methods

[1] Personal letter from William.

[2] For his report on this trip, see Donald McGavran, "A Continent is Being Discipled," *World Call* 36, no. 11 (December 1954): 20.

[3] *Missionary Digest*, September–October 1955.

to appear in many years."[4] *World Outlook* almost shouted, "Warning! Read thoughtfully! A timely book! An important book! A sincere and courageous book. Dr. McGavran is equipped to speak authoritatively."[5] No one knew it at the time, but the *Bridges of God* was destined to change the way missions was practiced around the globe, and it became the *Magna Carta* of the Church Growth Movement, the primary document from which the movement grew.

In 1954, the Anderson-McGavran family reached a milestone of one hundred years of mission work in India. The United Christian Missionary Society paid tribute to the family with the publication of two articles on the family's missionary history. Retired mission director, Cyrus M. Yocum, wrote, "A Century of Service in India," in which he briefly outlined the missionary service rendered by the McGavrans. The article was published in *World Call* in June 1954. His article was immediately followed in the July–August edition by one written by Donald, "India Through a Century." He also wrote six articles that were published in 1955. One reflected on his recent visit to the Congo, another outlined the Disciples of Christ cooperative work in India, while the remainder focused on some aspect of missionary methods. One article that was published in the October 1955 issue of *The International Review of Missions* clearly demonstrated a new focus. In "New Methods for a New Age in Missions," he proclaimed, "The objective remains the same—that the Church of Jesus Christ may grow and spread throughout the world, making available the power and righteousness of God to every nation through a living, indigenous church in every nation. The growth and expansion of the Church is demanded by the Great Commission."[6] While he summarized the salient points found in *The Bridges of God*, Donald argued carefully for the "centrality of church growth" over social service or philanthropy to static churches.[7]

The next two years were spent in New Haven, Connecticut, where Donald and Mary served as the host couple at the Disciples Divinity House on the campus of Yale Divinity School. During these two years, Donald traveled a good deal studying church growth, while Mary manned the home front and worked part time at the Divinity School Library. When Donald was home, they held teas and suppers for the students and discussed missions.

Both Donald and Mary underwent routine health screenings in January 1955, as required by the United Christian Missionary Society for all returning missionaries. During his exam, Donald complained of pain in his chest

[4] *Gospel Herald*, February 28, 1956.

[5] *World Outlook*, February 1956.

[6] Donald, McGavran, "New Methods for a New Age in Missions," *International Review of Missions*, October 1955, 394.

[7] Ibid., 400–401.

and stomach, as well as infections of his hands and feet. The infections had been bothersome for thirty-three years, apparently due to the climate in India. Mary also showed signs of infection, but not a much as Donald. His chest pains were possibly related to gastric heartburn from a hiatus hernia. The pains in his stomach had been observed for some years. In 1937, Donald's appendix was removed due to chronic symptoms that led to suspicion of amebic involvement, but there was no improvement. The doctor noted that Donald was in good health even though he had been ill throughout his childhood—chickenpox, measles, German measles, mumps, and whooping cough—and as an adult missionary had attracted parasites, pin worms, chronic amebiasis, and malaria many times. However, after thirty-one years of service in India, they were both in good health.

The year 1955 proved to be one of celebration and transition for the McGavran family. Butler University celebrated its centennial on February 7, 1955, with a Founder's Day Convocation at which the school awarded Donald an honorary doctor of divinity degree, recognizing him as a world authority on religious education and of the people of India.

Following the furlough, Donald intended to return to India, but his mission board was both intrigued by his church growth discoveries and uncertain what to do with him. The leaders of the UCMS recognized that he was a world expert on mission practice and theory and felt that sending him back to his old mission work in India was not a wise move, neither for Donald nor for the mission.

For the summer of 1955, Donald and Mary were appointed to serve as hosts at the College of Missions house located at Crystal Lakes, Michigan. They spoke at several churches in northern Michigan and hosted a mission hour on Sunday afternoons between four and five o'clock. However, their future was uncertain. Apparently unknown to Donald, during July, Virgil A. Sly, executive secretary of the UCMS, offered Donald's services for up to three years to the International Missionary Council (IMC), publishers of the *International Review of Missions* headquartered in London. The IMC was one of the most influential Christian groups of its time, responsible for several respected studies and world gatherings of missionaries. The IMC had established a Department of Missionary Studies on the Life and Growth of the Younger Churches, and it seemed like a good fit for Donald. However, Charles W. Ranson, general secretary of the IMC, declined the offer with "extreme reluctance."[8] The reason for the reluctance was that two members of the IMC who knew Donald personally expressed hesitation. They respected Donald and his work but believed his rather individual approach would not merge well with the close-knit work of the Department of Missionary Studies. Looking back, this was a good decision, as the IMC was eventually absorbed into the World Council of Churches (WCC) in

[8] Letter from Charles W. Ranson to Virgil A. Sly, dated July 19, 1955.

1961. It turned away from an emphasis on evangelism toward political and social agendas, something that Donald would never have accepted. Providentially, the UCMS decided to send Donald on several tours of Puerto Rico, Formosa, Philippines, Thailand, Congo, and India to study the growth of the church in those lands. Those studies, and many to follow, provided the data and background for a number of books, articles, and reports that Donald would write over the coming decade.

Just before Donald left for Puerto Rico on October 25, 1955, to study the Disciple's missionary work, *The Bridges of God* was released by Friendship Press. His work and ideas were now available to missionaries all over the globe, and he looked forward to seeing what mission leaders would say regarding the book. In Puerto Rico, he studied the entire church situation—membership, leadership, and building program—as part of the *Strategy for World Missions* established by the UCMS to determine which of its mission fields had the greatest potential for growth. The study was completed in mid-December and was published in 1956 as "A Study of the Life and Growth of the Disciples of Christ in Puerto Rico."[9]

He returned in time to spend Christmas at home in the United States and then left in January 1956 for a five month study of Disciples of Christ missions in the Philippines, Thailand, Formosa, India, and Japan. Reporting to the UCMS in Indianapolis following his return in July, Donald pointed out that evangelistic opportunities existed in the mountain area of the Philippines and Thailand, particularly among the Tinguians of Abra and Apayao (Philippines) and the Chinese and Karens in northwest Thailand. He advised, "We must put in missionaries who are strongly evangelistic and those who will live in primitive outposts."[10] This study was published as *Multiplying Churches in the Philippines* (1958) and led to an article, "The Independent Church in the Philippines" (1958).[11]

Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma, honored Donald at its May 30, 1956, graduation with an honorary doctor of literature degree, which was presented in absentia. The honor was given especially in recognition of his translation of the Christian gospels into the Chhattisgarhi dialect spoken by ten million people at the time and for his being an authority on the Hindi language.

That summer, the McGavrans stayed at the Disciple's missions house located near Yale University, where Donald wrote *Church Growth in West Utkal*. This study, completed during April 1956, in cooperation with the Baptist Missionary Society, was an investigation of over one hundred

[9] Donald A. McGavran, "A Study of the Life and Growth of the Disciples of Christ in Puerto Rico," Indianapolis, IN: UCMS. Mimeographed.

[10] "Opportunities in Asia," *World Call* (September 1956): 46.

[11] Donald A. McGavran, "The Independent Church in the Philippines," *Encounter* 19, no. 3 (Summer 1958): 299–321.

congregations in India. A rough draft of the report was presented to a joint committee of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh church leaders, with the formal report written after he returned to New Haven.

In the summer of 1957, Donald and Mary moved to Frankfort, Michigan, where they served as hosts at the Missions House on the Disciples of Christ (Christian) church summer conference grounds. That summer, the McGavrans enjoyed a family reunion at Crystal Lake. Donald served on the faculty of the College of Mission and taught missionary candidates at the Christian Theological Seminary during the regular school year. Summer classes were held at Crystal Lake in Frankfort.

Donald received an invitation to return to the Philippines in early 1957, along with Earl H. Cressy, American Baptist missionary and missions professor,[12] to perform a survey for the Churches of Christ. The survey was part of "Operation Rapid Growth," which was designed to aid the United Church of Christ's constituency in its evangelistic efforts. They were given a preliminary budget of $6,200 to cover travel, lodging, meals, three conferences, an office assistant, office supplies, and publication of the results. Donald served on loan from the UCMS, and Earl Cressy, being retired, served without pay. Donald surveyed the rural areas, while Cressy focused on the larger towns and cities. They looked for the churches that were making rapid and solid growth, so that the most fruitful methods could be identified. One of the main suggestions made was for the United Church of Christ to appoint one family specializing in evangelism for each conference or district. The final report was published in a book, *Multiplying Churches in the Philippines*, in 1958.[13]

* * *

From 1953 until 1961, Donald's official status was as a professor in the College of Missions under special appointment. Back in 1927, the College of Missions had joined in partnership with the Kennedy School of Missions in Hartford, Connecticut, and for many years, courses were offered in three locations: Hartford, Connecticut; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Crystal Lake, Michigan. Throughout those years, Donald continued to be listed as a missionary to India, but his special appointments often found him studying the growth of churches in other countries, as well as teaching missions courses at Butler University (Indianapolis, IN), Phillips University (Enid, OK), Drake University, (Des Moines, IA), and Lexington College of the Bible (Lexington, KY).

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[12] Earl Herbert Cressy (1883–1979) was a missionary under the auspices of the American Board of Foreign Missions. He served in China and Thailand and was a professor at the Kennedy School of Missions.

[13] Donald Anderson McGavran, *Multiplying Churches in the Philippines* (Manila, Philippines: United Churches of Christ, 1958).

A new program was started in 1958 known as "peripatetic professorships" to supplement teaching in the field of missions at Disciple schools. This new program was birthed out of the Great Teacher Program, which raised $127,747.45 to enable Disciples schools to "maintain a distinguished faculty and to attract additional quality faculty."[14] As a peripatetic, or travelling lecturer, he taught during the fall semester at Phillips University (1957–58 school year) and the spring semester of 1958 at his alma mater, Butler University.

Both Donald and Mary traveled to Jamaica on July 10 so he could take a survey of church growth in that country. After returning to the United States, they went immediately to Des Moines, Iowa, so Donald could begin teaching in the Divinity School of Drake University for the autumn term of the 1958–59 academic year. During the school term, Donald participated in a commission on the theology of missions held at St. Louis, Missouri. He was engaged by the commission as a consultant on the authority and urgency of evangelism and suggested that the commission should "study mission as arising out of the understanding of God as known in Jesus Christ in the New Testament."[15]

His subcommittee on evangelism continued working throughout 1959 in preparation for another gathering scheduled for October 19–20. As supportive reading, his committee was asked to read the World Council of Church's Theology for Mission, which he dutifully did. Although parts of it impressed him as being logical, consistent, and carefully written, he could not imagine it being helpful to the Disciples cause. With an air of concern, he wrote,

> The document seems to me to miss the passion of Christ and of Paul and of the early Church in general that men know Christ and be found in Him. Hence it is theologically weak.
>
> It also suffers from an excessively broad definition of evangelism. Everything is evangelism. Hence it is theologically fuzzy.
>
> Further while no one wants mechanical evangelism or a scalp counting, this document leans over backward to dissociate evangelism from the conversion of anyone. Evangelism is defined up and down and forward and backward, but the assumption throughout is that evangelism has nothing to do with whether anyone ever believes or not. Hence it will undergird indifferentism, but scarcely flaming evangelism. . . .
>
> From the point of view of a theology of Mission this document says entirely too little about the relation of Chy [Christianity] to Non-Christian Faiths from Communism to Animism. It has a

[14] H. L. Smith, "Classroom and Campus," *World Call* (October 1958): 32.

[15] Minutes of Meeting Commission of the Theology of Missions, October 18, 1958, 5.

> mutually contradictory outlook. Its main emphasis seems to be that salvation is through Christ alone, and the outcome of all evangelism must be decision for Christ and into His Church. Yet it has a minor emphasis. It constantly uses phrases and sentences which by themselves imply that salvation through other religions is possible. This I would like to see rectified.[16]

To aid in the discussion, Donald took time to rewrite the first 14 points (out of a total of 135 points), which he sent the chair and one member of the subcommittee. He offered to rewrite the entire document but only if it was used. Donald did not want to invest four days of time in rewriting the document and then have the chair of the commission decide not to use it. However, his invitation was not accepted.

During the fall of 1958, Donald became increasingly concerned about racial intolerance among Disciples of Christ churches. The Civil Rights Movement was heating up in the United States and after giving thought to the numerous issues, he came up with an idea to enlarge Christian unity. The plan was simple. In cities where Negro and Anglo churches existed, Donald suggested that both churches exchange three families for a period of six months. These "short-term missionaries" would share in worship, serve as teachers, work on committees, and even give financially to the exchange churches. Then, following their term of service, they would return to their own churches, and another set of three families would be exchanged. In so doing, Donald believed both churches would develop a better understanding of each other leading to Christian unity. This was not a total answer, but at least it would be a beginning. Donald later wrote about his concern to end segregation in an extensive article, "A Plan of Action for Churches," that appeared in the October 1961 issue of *Christian Herald*.

The five years of travel from 1954 to 1959 provided a laboratory for the study of church growth throughout the world. The studies added considerably to his understanding, and he published a second book in 1959, *How Churches Grow: The New Frontiers of Mission*. *The Bridges of God* showed how the church expanded largely through people movements, but this new book demonstrated that churches grow in many different ways, depending on the circumstances surrounding each church. The book was the first full expression of his church growth missiology. It was divided into five parts. Following the introductory part one, the remaining four parts were "Population Factors in Church-Growth," "General Factors in Church-Growth," "Methods of Church-Growth," and "Organization in Church-Growth." Two chapter titles also stressed church growth: "The Structure of Church Growth" and "Understanding Church Growth." One reviewer, Joseph M. Smith of the Christian Theological Seminary, cautioned, "His emphasis upon the central importance of 'church growth' seems, at times, to lead him into a kind

[16] Letter from Donald McGavran to David McNelley dated January 2, 1959.

of commercial, utilitarian view of the gospel that would regard anything as Christian which gets 'results.'" However, the reviewer concluded, "This is a book about *one* thing, whose central significance no one can doubt. It will merit careful study, therefore, by all who take seriously the words 'Go . . . make disciples of all the nations.'"[17]

Donald was a visiting professor in the department of religion at Bethany College in West Virginia during the fall of 1959. He was quite proud to teach there, as four generations of his family had been associated with the school. His great grandfather, Samuel Grafton, was a member of the original board of trustees in 1840. His father John graduated in 1891, and his own son Malcolm graduated in 1951. He might have seen this position as the capstone of his missionary career, sort of coming full circle back to his roots. However, at sixty-one years of age, instead of coasting into retirement, he envisioned the starting of a graduate Institute of Church Growth (ICG).

"I am attempting to get a graduate 'Institute of Church Growth' established, and am writing to find out whether you are interested that it be at your seminary," was the opening line of a letter Donald sent to three seminary deans from Eugene, Oregon, on April 21, 1959. He gave three reasons such a graduate school was needed.

1. Much missionary work is being done all over the world by boards and missions for a small return in the growth of younger Churches. Part of this is due to lack of resources and irresponsiveness of some populations. But very much more is due to the fact that church growth has not been stressed and missionaries and churchmen have not been trained in how churches grow in the specific populations to which they go. Missionaries are trained in everything but church growth. They study religions, cultures, phonetics, sociology, anthropology, agriculture, ecumenics and chic[k]en raising; but go out knowing next to nothing about how the churches (in the population to which they go) have arisen and are arising. The assumption is, of course, that having a BD from a standard seminary or having grown up in an American church and being earnest Christians, they know all they need to about church growth. The assumption is in grave error.
2. In all North America there is no educational institution giving training in church growth abroad. The Southern Baptists in Fort Worth have something which nearly does it. They see that carrying out the great commission means church growth (a very unusual insight) and teach something about it. But they are handicapped by their presuppositions. The rest of the Churches believe that carrying out the great commission means sending missionaries out and keeping them at work (any kind of work) whether the Church grows or not. Hence Divisions of World Mission are at present neither training mission-

[17] Joseph M. Smith, "Discipling the Nations," *World Call* (May 1961): 39.

aries in church growth, nor planning to train them. In consequence they will not get adequate church growth out of a generally responsive world. They will continue to do "splendid mission work" and gather and spend millions of dollars "for missions."

3. However there is a rising tide of interest in church growth. Many factors are leading missionary statesmen to take church growth much more seriously than they ever have before. Returned missionaries also and nationals are manifesting new interest in the subject. The time is ripe for an Institute which specializes in church growth abroad. Our Church and our seminaries can render a notable ecumenical service at just this point.[18]

The letter went on to outline projected costs, faculty, curriculum, potential students, and the organization of such an institute. Donald had incorporated much from his years of teaching at Disciples colleges, universities, and seminaries that he included in his proposal. However, even though his vision was well thought out, all three seminaries turned him down.

Ross J. Griffeth, president of Northwest Christian College (NCC) in Eugene, Oregon, had discussed the idea for an institute when Donald served on the faculty during the 1959–1960 school year. President Griffeth expressed interest in calling Donald to be professor of Christian Missions at his college and helping him develop an Institute of Church Growth. Correspondence about this possibility took place in October of 1959 between Virgil Sly of the UCMS and president Griffeth. An agreement was reached whereby Donald would join the faculty on January 1, 1961, and the UCMS would provide his salary for that entire year. Ralph T. Palmer, head of the UCMS selection and training department, wrote to president Griffeth,

> Don will continue on the present salary basis during his first year at Northwest Christian College and will be considered the peripatetic professor of the College of Missions until the conclusion of his first year of service with you ending December 31, 1961. The United Society and in particular the College of Missions is happy to do this for you and for Don because we feel it is a contribution we can make to the future of Northwest Christian College.[19]

The northwest corner of the United States was not the most promising place to begin an interdenominational Institute of Church Growth, but Donald seized it with both hands, particularly since it was his only offer. In 1960, they headed to Eugene, Oregon, to begin the Institute for Church Growth at Northwest Christian School. They purchased Fox Hollow farm and spent a great deal of time gardening, enjoying the view, and the starting of Donald's new career.

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[18] Letter from Donald McGavran to deans England, McCaw, and Norris of Christian seminaries dated April 21, 1959. The underlined emphasis in the letter is McGavran's.

[19] Letter from Ralph T. Palmer to Ross J. Griffeth dated February 3, 1960.

Plans were quickly put into place to start the Institute of Church Growth in 1961. President Griffeth sent a letter to Addison Eastman, secretary of selection and training of missions for the National Council of Churches, on April 14, 1961, alerting him to the new Institute of Church Growth. In his letter, he described the purpose for the new institute.

> The purpose is to provide a center for research and teaching at the graduate level. The central concern will be with the growth of churches in various lands. It is our hope that missionaries on furlough, nationals visiting America, and selected candidates of the various Churches and Boards will find the Institute a place where they can concentrate on church growth and learn and share experiences concerned with making disciples and multiplying sound churches of Jesus Christ. We believe that ours is the only Institute of this sort in our country, as a pioneering adventure, we shall need all the help and guidance we can muster.
>
> Dr. Donald A. McGavran has been called to be the Director of the Institute of Church Growth. . . . Dr. McGavran brings to the Institute of Church Growth much first hand knowledge of how churches in many lands either grow or do not grow. This is his specialty. We believe he is eminently well qualified to direct our new Institute and make it of great service to the cause of Christian missions.[20]

After consultation with Donald, president Griffeth invited Bishop J. Waskom Pickett to speak at the initial Church Growth Lectureship in the fall of 1961. The purpose of the annual lectures was to present an outstanding missionary thinker who would speak on the continuing and central purpose of missions—planting and multiplying Christian churches throughout the world. The lectures were held October 29 through November 2, 1961. Bishop Pickett's gave seven lectures:

> The Case for Rapid Growth of the Church
> The Tragedy of Retarded Growth
> Assembled Lessons from Asia, Africa, and Latin America
> Growing Churches Restrict Communist Growth
> Preaching Necessary but Insufficient
> Yesterday's Best Not Good Enough for Today
> Potential Christian Nations of Tomorrow.[21]

Pickett's lectures were published in 1963 as *The Dynamics of Church Growth* as part of a church growth series offered by Northwest Christian College.[22]

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[20] Letter from Ross J. Griffeth to Addison Eastman dated April 14, 1960.

[21] Lecture on Church Growth brochure. No date.

[22] J. Waskom Pickett, *The Dynamics of Church Growth: A Positive Approach for World Missions* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1963).

Questions regarding what Donald meant by church growth started surfacing from various corners of the missionary world almost as soon as *How Churches Grow* was released. In a letter to Donald Salmon, executive secretary of the department of evangelism of the UCMS, Donald explained,

> I hold no brief at all for dishonest baptizing or pressuring people into joining the church, under conditions where we know they will not stay in it. I am not in the least interested in an evangelism, which is interested in numbers from the sake of the evangelist's professional reputation. But I am enormously interested in numbers for the sake of the salvation of men.
>
> No numbers of the saved are ever mere. God is interested in lost sheep. The more brought in and fed and folded, the better pleased is God.[23]

In another letter to Bishop Richard C. Raines, president of the division of world missions of the Methodist Church, Donald spoke about the purpose of the Institute of Church Growth. "We ask: what are the most effective ways to spend the sacred resources of mission, so that men are in fact won to Christ and His churches are in fact established and multiply."[24]

On January 2, 1961, the Institute of Church Growth at Northwest Christian College opened with one lone student. Keith E. Hamilton, district superintendent of the Methodist Church in La Paz, Bolivia, was awarded a one thousand dollar fellowship to study at the Institute of Church Growth. He researched the problem of pastoral training in the Andes to church growth, and the study was published as *Church Growth in the High Andes* in 1962.[25]

The Evangelical Foreign Missions Association invited Donald to speak at its September meeting in Winona Lake, Indiana. This meeting developed into an annual conference that touched over a thousand missionaries and had a pronounced effect on missiology throughout the world. Future seminars on church growth were held on the campus of the Alliance School of Missions in Nyack, New York, and on the campus of Biola College in La Mirada, California.

In the midst of the challenges of spreading the church growth word, Donald relied heavily on his wife. She provided the stability of home that allowed him to travel, write, and speak throughout the world. A letter written by Donald to Mary McGavran in September 1961, reveals the love and appreciation he had for her.

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[23] Letter from Donald A. McGavran to Donald Salmon dated January 14, 1960.

[24] Letter from Donald A. McGavran to Bishop Richard C. Raines dated October 17, 1960.

[25] K. E. Hamilton, *Church Growth in the High Andes* (Eugene, OR: Institute of Church Growth, 1962).

> Dearest Mary
>
> In a few moments I shall be leaving this house and after a drive to Alajuela airport, leaving Costa Rica.
>
> It has been good here, lots of contacts, some converts, many more encouraged, a good for the series collected, and I trust the work of God furthered.
>
> Now I have but one thought—to hurry home to the most wonderful woman in the world. How good it will be to see you. How good it is to know that you are there and that we are together even when we are apart. Your goodness and kindness and graciousness, and good sense and that despite all my faults you go on loving me!
>
> We have seen a lot of the world together, and sailed a lot of seas together and been in some terrible storms together, and done at least something of God's work together, and obeyed Christ's commands and planted His Church. Even when we have been physically apart—as we have been often—we have been in each other thoughts almost continually.
>
> God bless and keep you Dearest and give us many years ahead in the harvest field—and sitting on the front porch rocking—if that is His will—together.
>
> Love
>
> Don

Although Donald did not know it at the time, they would have another twenty-eight years together to serve Christ and love each other.

The church growth lectureship with Bishop Picket went well in 1961, and Donald planned for an even larger lectureship in 1962. This one would involve Eugene A. Nida, executive secretary for translations of the American Bible Society, Robert Calvin Guy, professor of missions at Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and Melvin L. Hodges, executive secretary for Latin America Foreign Missions Department of the Assemblies of God. Donald applied for a grant of two thousand dollars from the Sperry and Hutchinson Company in New York to fund the lectureship.

Things were moving forward in 1962. President Griffeth and McGavran hosted the Sterling professor of mission and oriental history, Kenneth Scott Latourette, for a visit to discuss the burgeoning institute, and he agreed to be included on the board of advisors.[26] Also added was Arthur Flemming, the president of the University of Oregon. Robert Prescott, owner of a small public relations firm, was hired to take the inner message of the Institute for Church Growth to the people of Oregon. He made a major contact for the Institute by arranging a meeting between President Griffeth, Donald McGavran, and Governor Mark Hatfield on December 12, 1962. In a letter

[26] Letter from K. S. Latourette to Robert Prescott dated September 29, 1962.

to the Rt. Rev. Stephen Bayne Jr. at Lambeth Place, England, Bob Prescott described what was happening in Eugene as follows:

> This is to solicit your favour and attention toward quite an unusual research project here underway in Eugene. Perhaps our fellow Anglicans may benefit from what is afoot.
>
> I refer to a joint effort by Northwest Christian College and the University of Oregon to re-examine the entire field of mission strategy the world over and to improve it—a rather startling objective. . . .
>
> The research program has gathered fellows from a wide number of denominations and points of emphasis around the world. Graduate work is being given both at the institute (technically on NCC campus) and across the street at the U of O. There is a very close collaboration with the U. of O Dept. of Anthropology. The anthropologists are quite delighted and enthused by the program. One of them told me wistfully: "This is the first time in the history of Anthropology any Christians came to us for help. We may have a few ideas. . . ."
>
> The feeling around the town, the U of O and NCC is, among those persons who know about the program, one of high hope: Perhaps Christendom is not out of business, perhaps there <u>are</u> ways to bring over entire peoples, perhaps the long and painful researches ahead will prosper and bear fruit.[27]

Over the next four years, fifty-seven missionaries studied at the Institute while on furlough, and one of those students—Alan Tippett—became the second member of the church growth faculty.

In 1960–1961, Donald sent out offers of a one thousand dollar fellowship to men who wanted to study at the Institute of Church Growth. Three fellowships were available each year, and he was on the lookout for mid-career missionaries who showed promise for study at the Institute of Church Growth. The essential qualifications were field experience, fluency in a language other than English, as well as a wide knowledge of one's field, mission, and indigenous churches.

At this same time, Alan R. Tippett (fifty-two years old at the time), a mid-career missionary with twenty years experience in Fiji, was seeking God's direction for his life. On furlough in his native Australia, Tippett sent an article, "Probing Missionary Inadequacies at the Popular Level," to an academic journal. Since the article was too practical, the editor turned it down but wrote Tippett informing him that the outside reader had recommended sending it to the *International Review of Missions*. The outside reader was Kenneth Scott Latourette. The article had been "written in Fiji, sent to America, then from America to England, published there, was read

[27] Letter from Robert Prescott Jr. to the Rt. Rev. Stephen Bayne Jr. dated May 24, 1962.

in America by Dr. Donald McGavran, who wrote to me [Tippett] in Fiji about it from America, and we two got into correspondence on the matter of mission at the popular level."[28] Tippett had read several of Donald's articles, as well as *The Bridges of God,* and realized that many of the tribes in Fiji represented typical people movements. After reflecting on the *Bridges of God*, he said to a friend in Fiji, "This is absolutely right but this man will never sell it to the mission Boards."[29]

Delighted that McGavran had written him "out of the blue," Tippett discovered that they shared a great deal in common. Both McGavran and Tippett had faced similar challenges in mission, and had reached similar conclusions. Through their correspondence, McGavran became aware of Tippett's interest in anthropology and its potential to inform mission practice. This led to the offering of a fellowship to come to the Institute of Church Growth to study for an MA degree and perhaps teach some of the courses. Years later, Tippett recalled this time:

> McGavran had realized that he needed an anthropologist's support at selling a number of his ideas. He knew that evangelical Christians in America at that time saw anthropology as anathema. He offered me a fellowship to do his courses and write a study of Christian mission in the islands, and maybe help a little with the teaching. This was a good concrete offer. It would give me a little time to go further with my mission study, to observe how he had structured his courses, and to draw from his experience, to meet other missionaries from other lands, and to do some writing. The idea was that it would lead to an M.A. in Missions if I so desired. Otherwise I could be satisfied with a Certificate in Church Growth.[30]

Tippett's family encouraged him to accept McGavran's offer. They were settled in a new home in Australia, and this would give time for them to consider whether to seek another field of missionary work or await an opening to teach missions. Tippett decided to join McGavran in Eugene for what he surmised would be a year of study, but it turned into two and a half years!

Having boarded a ship at Melbourne, Tippett spent nearly the entire month of December 1961 at sea before arriving in January 1962 in San Francisco. There he transferred his baggage to a train and then took a bus to Eugene, Oregon. After spending the night at Fox Hollow, the McGavran farm located nine miles out of Eugene, Donald took him to Northwest Christian College to show him around the next morning. Tippett was shocked

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[28] Alan R. Tippett, *No Continuing City* (unpublished autobiography, 1985), 273. Two original copies are known to exist. One in the Alan R. Tippett collection at Canberra University, Canberra, Australia, and the other in the personal collection of Charles Kraft. Quotes are from the author's duplicated copy of the Kraft original.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

to find that the Institute was not what it appeared to be in the brochures. The brochures depicted the buildings of NCC, which Tippett had assumed belonged to the Institute of Church Growth. In reality, the Institute was comprised of a small office for Donald, with a large table and blackboard set between two stacks of books where classes were held on the third floor of the library. Tippett's own office was simply a library study carrel.

In the spring, Tippett became a student in McGavran's classes. Donald was in need of someone to teach anthropology and animism, so he hired Tippett for four hundred dollars a term to teach anthropology harnessed to church growth thought. Three other career missionaries attended with Tippett that January of 1962: William Read, Roy Shearer, and James Sunda. This was the first real team of fellows, since the first lone student, Keith Hamilton, had departed. They took "Principles and Procedures of Church Growth," which ran through each term. Together they discussed case studies from various mission fields, such as, the Philippines, Ghana, Liberia, Jamaica, Mexico, Orissa, and other places. The list of courses was in development, and some were never offered. No courses in theology of mission were offered in the first years, but when theology came out, it was geared to Donald's own slant on theology and the theological battles he personally desired to address.

The presence of Tippett, Read, Shearer, and Sunda put great pressure on McGavran. His basic teaching plan was to have students collect data on the field and bring it to the Institute where they could learn how to evaluate it, test it, and write it up. Hence, all four were researching, surveying, and writing at the same time under Donald's direction and oversight. To relieve the pressure, McGavran asked Tippett to teach the two subjects of anthropology and primal religions during his first year at the Institute, as well as a case study on Oceania. This allowed Donald to have a break so he could prepare a new course.

The convergence of these five men together in the winter and spring of 1962 proved to be a powerful encounter. Each was quite different in personality and denominational background, and each came from a different part of the world. Shearer was a Presbyterian with experience in Korea. Read, too, was Presbyterian but had worked in Portuguese. Sunda served with the Christian & Missionary Alliance in Western Dani. Tippett, a Methodist, did missionary work in Fiji. McGavran, of course, was Disciples of Christ from India. In spite of their apparent differences, they formed a solid team of researchers, each influencing and being influenced by the others. They shared a common conviction to fulfill the Great Commission, had all experienced people movements, and believed that research had an important place in missions. None of the four students accepted everything that Donald proposed, but they were all drawn to him, believing that he had picked up and continued the work of Roland Allen, Alexander McLeish, John Nevius, and other mission pioneers following World War II. Together

they produced some of the best studies and publications to come out of the Institute of Church Growth in Eugene.

A major discouragement encountered by Fellows during the first years of the Institute concerned the inability of NCC to grant a master's degree. The brochure that had been circulated among missionaries promised a master's degree in missions upon completion of thirty credit hours and the writing of a thesis. Unknown to them, however, this promise was made in faith as NCC was coming up for an accreditation review, and it was hoped the school would be approved to grant a master's degree. Unfortunately, the accreditation committee only approved the granting of a bachelor's degree citing the lack of an adequate library for a master's program. Rather than make a scene about this, the Fellows let it drop. They believed so strongly in what the Institute was doing for missions, none wanted to do anything to damage the Institute at its early stage of development.

Tippett, however, was greatly annoyed and confronted McGavran about it. In his directive manner, McGavran put it aside, telling Tippett to go across the street to the University of Oregon and work instead on a PhD in anthropology. Northwest Christian College and the Institute had a good working relationship with the University of Oregon. Its library had strong holdings in anthropology, history, and specialized in Pacific studies, a good fit for Tippett's interests. Once he resigned himself to having been, as he put it, "hoodwinked into a doctoral program," he decided to make the most of the opportunity. As it providentially turned out, Tippett was able to study under Hoer Barnett, the leading applied anthropologist in America at the time.[31]

Over time, McGavran began relying on Tippett's background in New Testament Greek, theology, and anthropology to communicate and defend church growth ideas to various audiences. The evangelical constituency that was drawn to Donald struggled to accept the insights of anthropology. Instead, they hungered to know if church growth ideas were biblical. McGavran called upon Tippett to develop a theology of church growth that supported people movement theories, as well as other findings coming out of church growth studies. Over time, they learned how to present their ideas to conservative theological audiences.

For the 1962 church growth lectures, Donald invited Calvin Guy, professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas; Melvin Hodges, executive secretary for Latin American, Assembly of God; and Eugene Nida, secretary for translations, American Bible Society, to interact as a panel with Donald as moderator. The four later contributed to *Church Growth and Christian Mission* (1965).

By 1963, the Institute of Church Growth was gaining prominence among missionaries, professors of missions, and mission executives. Two thousand

[31] Tippett, *No Continuing City*, 278–279.

copies of *Church Growth in the High Andes* was in shipment (1300 to the Institute and 700 to Hamilton in Bolivia) as of March 1963, and nine additional books were in process from the research conducted at the Institute. Since he was sixty-five years old, Donald wanted to assure that the books would be published in the event of his death. In March of 1963, he asked president Griffeth for assurance that these undertakings would be honored no matter what happened to him.

One book in process was *Church Growth in West New Guinea* by James Sunda. Since president Griffeth had not authorized the printing, the cost for printing was shared between the Christian & Missionary Alliance and McGavran personally. The Institute was to receive 800 copies, with the remaining 1200 going to the Christian & Missionary Alliance (C&MA). *Church Growth and Group Conversion* was a reprint of the earlier work by Pickett, Warnshuis, and McGavran. Once again, Donald had moved forward without obtaining authorization, but he guaranteed that the book "will be paid for in full by me or my heirs."[32] *Church Growth in Jamaica* by Donald McGavran was being paid for in total by the UCMS. Five hundred copies of *God's Messengers to Mexico's Masses* by Jack Taylor were printed. The cost was shared with the Baptist Spanish Publishing House (Southern Baptist) in El Paso, Texas. Wilton Nelson wrote *A History of Protestantism in Costa Rica*, and five hundred copies were printed. The Latin American Mission paid four hundred dollars, Wilton Nelson paid two hundred dollars, and Donald paid two hundred dollars of the costs. Eerdmans released *Church Growth in Mexico* by Donald McGavran in September 1963. It was the result of a joint project between Donald, John Huegel, and Jack Taylor. Taylor, a fellow studying at the Institute, and Huegel, a missionary from Mexico, each wrote one chapter, with McGavran contributing the other ten. Alan Tippett was slated to write *Dynamics of Church Growth in the South Pacific*. The book was eventually released in 1967 as *Solomon Islands Christianity: A Study in Growth and Obstruction*. Research fellows Roy Shearer, Gordon Robinson, and John Grimley were each working on manuscripts to be published in 1963, also. Eerdmans eventually published Shearer's *Wildfire: Church Growth in Korea* in 1966, while Robinson and Grimley combined their writing projects to produce *Church Growth in Central and Southern Nigeria*, also published in 1966 by Eerdman's. The final writing project to which the Institute of Church Growth was obligated was *Church Growth in Brazil* by William Read, and Eerdman's released it in 1965.

The fact that Donald had to cover some of the costs of publishing books coming forth from the research conducted at the Institute reveals the fragile financial situation of the Institute at Northwest Christian College. However, "After 30 years in colonial mission McGavran knew how to exist on a shoestring and he ruled his institute as a colonial paternalist."[33] For example,

[32] Letter from Donald A. McGavran to Ross Griffeth dated March 5, 1963.

[33] Tippett, *No Continuing City*, 276.

research fellows never received their money directly. They had to pay for any expenditure for research personally and then turn in receipts for reimbursement from NCC funds. The largest charge against the one thousand dollar fellowship was for the publication of the research. Theoretically, Donald held a reserve for the publication of the manuscript, but he felt if money could be saved on one man's publication, he could use the savings to publish something else. Thus, he always looked for a publisher who was willing to take some of the risk, and if this failed, he would offer to subsidize a portion of the publication.

When president Griffeth invited the founding of the Institute at NCC, he was confident that funds could be raised to support the faculty, research fellows, and future publications. Unfortunately, funds were not easy to raise, which led to difficult times financially. This fact led Waskom Pickett to write a letter in May 1963 to the dean of the School of Theology at Princeton University, requesting the consideration of that school taking over the Institute of Church Growth. Pickett wrote,

> My reason for writing to you is to suggest that you confer with Dr. McGavran regarding a possible location of his "Institute of Church Growth" at Princeton. McGavran is doing exploits in bringing the issue of Church Growth to the attention of concerned Christians around the world.
>
> Several years ago, he opened an Institute on Church Growth at Northwest Christian College in Eugene, Oregon. The resources of the College are very limited. It is a small denominational institution, undergraduate only, and unaccredited until this year. Despite those handicaps, McGavran has drawn a number of students and has produced several valuable works.[34]

For reasons unknown, no arrangement was ever reached to take the Institute to Princeton.

Even through Tippett was somewhat disgruntled about being tricked into working on a PhD, he did enjoy helping McGavran communicate his missiological ideas. Tippett wrote,

> I did not see then that we were creating a new missiology appropriate to the post-colonial era of mission. We did attract attention, however. Once, as conservative theologians we were establishing a scientific anthropological system, we began to emerge as a problem to the extremer liberal groups who had wiped us off as theologically unacceptable. We never came into debate with them because we never found a common base for discussion. Our biblical presuppositions were mutually exclusive.[35]

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[34] Letter from J. Waskom Pickett to Elmer G. Homrighausen dated May 14, 1963.

[35] Tippett, *No Continuing City*, 282.

McGavran, Tippett, and the rest of the early students of church growth were not inclined to battle with extreme liberals who rejected biblical authority, nor with extreme conservatives who were biblical literalists. They chose, instead, to steer a course between these two poles where a large number of missionaries were searching for a fresh missiology that could reach the increasingly receptive peoples of the world. However, a confrontation with the World Council of Churches had been brewing for some time, and a showdown came in the summer of 1963.

At the WCC third assembly at New Delhi (November 18 through December 6, 1961), a resolution was passed asking for a consultation that "would make possible an exchange of findings and view of methodology between persons engaged in research into factors favoring or retarding church expansion, in terms of numerical growth."[36] This reaction was brought about by the rising tide of criticisms directed at Donald and his church growth missiology.

Tippett saw two types of critics: "those who feared the effect of attacks on strategy, policy, vested interests, etc; and others who were ready to pull items out of his contexts just to score points against him."[37] Some critics disliked Donald's emphasis on statistics, feeling it stressed a man-oriented faith rather than reliance on the Holy Spirit. This criticism took two forms. One, it implied that church growth missiology had no doctrine of the sovereignty of God, and two, that quantity was more important than quality. Both were untrue. In response to these two criticisms, Tippet explained, "Granted, we opposed the theological defensiveness based on the notion that God, being in control, would give growth when and where He would. All we had to do was to be faithful."[38] McGavran and Tippet responded by developing the biblical doctrine of stewardship. From their perspective, as faithful stewards of the gifts of God, missionaries ought to work for statistical growth under God's sovereign guidance. To think that quality alone mattered was a fallacy. Quality and quantity are not exclusive concepts. True quality implied growth of the church. Most of the resistance came from reactions to Donald's harvest theology, particularly the idea of reallocation of resources to receptive fields from non-receptive ones. This innovative idea brought a "hostile reaction from Boards with vested interests in resistant areas, especially in Islamic lands, for example. This was a major battle."[39] Still, a third criticism was aimed at Donald's dichotomy of discipling and perfecting as two parts of God's working through the Spirit. These terms were unfortunate, as they did create misunderstanding. Donald simply meant evangelism (discipling) and spiritual growth (perfecting). However, he was frequently

[36] Quoted in Middleton, *Development of a Missiologist*, 286.

[37] Tippett, *No Continuing City*, 283.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

attacked as discipling without perfecting, which is never found in his writings.

Underneath all of the criticisms, there is no doubt that Donald's polemical approach upset some of his critics. Tippett describes McGavran's assertive nature.

> Both at the podium and on paper McGavran was an extremely aggressive person. Psychologically he expected opposition and to some extent looked for it. He was always at his best when he was most threatened. On the platform his style was oratorical and by repeated presentation, well honed. He developed metaphoric phrases and punch-lines. His thirty years on the mission field within colonial structures and dealings with missionary bureaucracy had left him ready to "enter the ring to spar" with any who would—bishops, scholars or board administrators. (The "top brass" he called them.) He "pulled no punches" and sometimes his punches really hurt. As a result of this he made enemies and critics, and many there were who would have been glad to see him brought down.[40]

In person, Donald was able to disarm even his most strident critics, but in public forums, his debating style, which first sprang forth during his college years, was quite evident.

The motivation of the WCC is not totally clear, but in 1963, Victor Hayward asked Donald to participate in a consultation on church growth at Iberville, Quebec, located near Montreal. About twenty participants were invited from around the world to examine the church growth view, discuss the difficulties it raised, and produce a statement for the church. McGavran invited Waskom Pickett and Tippett to join him at the consultation. They met in New York the day before going to Iberville to map out their presentations, discuss issues likely to come up, and decide who would answer them. The conference was held July 31 to August 2, 1963.

The WCC had structured the conference tightly to promote its viewpoint. Donald was not allowed to help design the agenda, but he was told where and when he and his team would speak. Of course, they were allowed to say what they desired during their presentations, but Victor Hayward controlled the conference closely. Hayward vigorously attacked the church growth perspective, but as the conference progressed, the hostility lessened. Donald spoke about methodology and application of research. Waskom Pickett addressed why missions are bogged down, and Tippett presented case studies demonstrating the application of church growth strategies. As the three men presented their case, opposition was reduced. The final session was spent ironing out a statement, which came to be called the Iberville Statement on the Growth of the Church. Commenting on the Iberville

[40] Ibid.

Statement in his autobiography, Tippett wrote, "I think they took . . . us as a bunch of non-academic bush theologians, and intended to 'prick our bubble.' It didn't work out that way. We produced a fairly good church growth statement."[41] Instead of publishing the Iberville Statement, the WCC buried it in a file where no one was able to read it. However, it was later published at the urging of Donald, and in many presentations in the years following, the Institute of Church Growth used it quite effectively.[42]

That August, president Griffeth wrote Pickett that the Northwest Christian College was moving to incorporate the Institute of Church Growth as an organization separate from the college. Griffeth invited Pickett to serve as one of the trustees of the new corporation. The letter also informed Pickett that Governor Mark Hatfield had agreed to serve on the board of advisors for the Institute. Picket replied on August 22, 1963, "If Northwest Christian College and the proposed Board of Trustees can find resources of finances and personnel to bring out the full potential of the Institute they will be remembered for a truly great service to the Kingdom of God." He continued, "A vast amount of understanding is being lost to the Church every year because of the lack of what this Institute should provide. No traditional School of Missions can make a comparable contribution."[43] The fact that Northwest Christian College was struggling to support the Institute was mentioned in a letter written in September 1963, by president Griffeth to Vincent Brushwyler of the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society. He commented, "Our present problem is the same as that of every such enterprise, namely, adequate funds to support the work. Northwest Christian College entered this venture by financing the Institute of Church Growth out of a small financial reserve. We are working to establish a better and more secure financial foundation for the work. However, at present we are opportunists in faith."[44]

In December, Donald corresponded with David Barrett regarding suggestions Barrett had made that Donald change some wording in a new manuscript to appeal more to the left wing of the church. Donald's response reveals much about his theological position, as well as the character of his writing. He wrote,

> For years, I held the liberal more or less secular position. I graduated from Yale and Union and Columbia and counted myself one of the enlightened. . . . I deliberately turned from what may loosely be termed liberalism, holding that it is not adequate understanding

[41] Ibid., 285.

[42] The Iberville Statement was published in *Church Growth and Christian Mission* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1965). A copy of the Iberville Statement is found in the Appendix.

[43] Letter from J. Waskom Pickett to Ross Griffeth dated August 22, 1963.

[44] Letter from Ross J. Griffeth to Vincent Brushwyler dated September 28, 1963.

> of Reality, too one dimensional, and involves its adherents in much duplicity vis a vis the rest of the Church. So I use deliberately what I know sounds pious and perhaps simple—with deep sympathy for those to whom it seems so. I stood amongst them myself thirty years ago. I shall not be able to accept suggestions that I write to these friends' understandings and prejudices. I have to write what I believe.
>
> These words of mine have been chosen, not carelessly, but deliberately, to shake people awake. Christian mission needs hard bold plans. I considered using other words—aggressive, well-devised, effective—but decided to stick with these provocative Anglo-Saxon words. They stick in the mind.
>
> I have been fighting a battle to rouse missions to today's maladministration, criminal negligence, bumbling bureaucracy and Churches (conservative and liberal, main line and Pentecostal) to today's opportunities and open doors. The capture of Geneva and large sections of New York by men who are not in the least interested in discipling the nations, who indeed believe that goal old fashioned and pietistic, must be borne in mind. If I were to change my terminology to woo Geneva, it would not touch her—I have tried—and would water down what I have to say to the rest of the Christian world.
>
> I fear, my friend, that what I have written, I have written. I should have said this when you so kindly first proposed to do some editing. This was my mistake. Please pardon it. I made it because I will do everything possible to make what I say more effective. I have no particular pride of authorship; but do want to help redeem missions from their amazing ineffectiveness.
>
> Perhaps I shall not build the temple. Perhaps there is too much blood on my hands. Perhaps God will raise up a Solomon and he will build it. Indeed, perhaps you, who can advocate discipling the nations without the opposition I have encountered (or engendered?), will bring out the definitive work on church growth. If so, I shall be delighted. Somehow the Church must recapture the initiative, turn from all these delightful by-paths, and carry out God's will in the discipling of ta ethne.[45]

Donald's passion to reach all the peoples of the world with the saving gospel of Jesus Christ is apparent in his correspondence with David Barrett.

Looking back on this time some years later, Donald noted that the first two building blocks of what came to be known as the Church Growth Movement were started in Eugene, Oregon. The first was the founding of the Institute of Church Growth, and the second was beginning publication of the

[45] Letter from Donald A. McGavran to David Barrett dated December 14, 1963.

Church Growth Bulletin (first circulated in 1964), a sixteen page bimonthly periodical edited by Donald and published by Overseas Crusades, Inc. Norman L. Cummings, home director of Overseas Crusades, Inc., had become deeply interested in church growth and wrote to Donald on April 2 offering to assist the Institute of Church Growth. Specifically, Overseas Crusades offered to provide a secretary for Donald, publish a bulletin on church growth, help with the recruitment of faculty, and provide exposure for the Institute through the Evangelical Foreign Mission Association (E. F. M. A.). The first issue of the *Church Growth Bulletin* was published in September 1964 and proved to be a key communication piece for the burgeoning Church Growth Movement. By the end of the year, over 1,200 leaders representing one hundred mission boards in the United States, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America were receiving the *Church Growth Bulletin*.

From June 1964 to June 1965, the future of the Institute of Church Growth was in serious doubt. Although the Institute operated as an academic body, and was supported by president Griffeth out of the NCC budget, in point of fact the Institute had no constitutional existence. The affairs of the Institute were merely accounts in the books of NCC, and the Institute did not really exist except as an experimental program at NCC.

Donald was fighting to keep it open and listed Alan Tippett as professor of anthropology and church growth at the ICG even though Tippett was no longer on the payroll. The time away from his family had taken a predictable toll on Tippett. In December 1963, he told Donald he was going to go home to Australia. The combination of being away from family, teaching, speaking, and working on his PhD had taken a serious physical toll. His blood pressure had risen so that he needed medication, but that caused some depression. After some rest and prayer, he determined to stick it out and finish his comprehensive exam and the dissertation. The deadline for the finished dissertation was set for May 5, and he turned it in just fifteen minutes before the deadline. With defense set for May 29, Tippett was physically at the end of the tether. He ably defended his dissertation, "Fijian Material Culture: A Study of Cultural Context, Function, and Change"[46] and was on a plane home to Australia on May 30. In his pocket was an offer from Donald for a permanent post at the Institute, but he wanted to wait on that decision until he returned home and talked it over with his wife Edna. Anyway, he also wanted to see the Institute properly constituted, which did not appear to be happening.

President Griffeth kept working to incorporate the Institute independently of Northwest Christian College by establishing a Church Growth Foundation that would put the Institute on a solid financial footing for years to come, but nothing was quickly coming together. The fact that he

[46] Alan Richard Tippett, "Fijian Material Culture: A Study of Cultural Context, Function and Change" (PhD diss., University of Oregon, 1964).

was retiring on June 30, 1965, meant the Institute would be left without its major administrative supporter at the college. Northwest Christian College had provided the Institute a yearly budget of fifteen thousand dollars. While not a huge sum, it put a great deal of pressure on the college, and without president Griffeth's encouragement, the college board was likely to stop supporting the Institute. President Griffeth even explored with McGavran the possibility of relocating the Institute to the Bay Area of California so it could be near the headquarters of Overseas Crusades.

In the midst of the struggle to keep the Institute going, good news came in the form of a fifty-four thousand dollar grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc. During the spring, Donald had submitted two proposals to Charles G. Williams, director for religion at Lilly Endowment. One involved a survey team to study East Africa, and the other was for a similar project in Latin America. The proposal to fund a study of Latin American church growth was approved, and president Griffeth received a check on December 15, which provided a happy end to the year. The grant was to be dispersed to the Institute of Church Growth over the following two years.

God was at work behind the scenes preparing Donald for even larger influence around the world. The years at Northwest Christian College gave opportunity to develop case studies of growing churches, refine lectures, develop reading lists, and lead church growth conferences. The years in Eugene provided sort of an experimental workshop that enabled Donald and his students to refine research methodology and clarify basic terminology, as well as publish early church growth studies from around the world. Then, as Donald was thinking of retiring to a farm he and Mary had purchased in Eugene, somewhat miraculously, Fuller Seminary invited him to begin the School of World Mission in Pasadena, California.

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EIGHT STEPS TO TRANSITIONING TO ONE OF FIVE MODELS OF A MULTICULTURAL CHURCH

Bob Whitesel

Abstract

Theories of change and theories of changing[1] are insufficiently studied, hence often inadequately understood by the ecclesial academy. The few theories that are available are based on an author's experience with singular process model developed from similar homogeneous contexts. However, the present author, reflecting on case studies over a ten-year window, strengthens the argument for a holistic, eight-step model as first developed by John P. Kotter at Harvard University. Whitesel argues that the eight-step process model is resident and visible in ecclesiological change. He then suggests that the requisite change objective for many churches will be a heterogeneous, multicultural model, which will intentionally or unintentionally follow one or more of the five classifications.

— Delivered to the Great Commission Research Network, Oct. 6, 2016
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX

[1] There is an important difference between *theories of change* and *theories of changing*. The latter, and the focus of this article, investigates how to control and manage change. *Theories of change*, however, seek to understand how change occurs. I have discussed *theories of change* as well as theologies of change in the book, *Preparing for Change Reaction: How to Introduce Change in Your Church* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2007). For a fuller treatment of the differences between *theories of change* and *theories of changing*, see Warren G. Bennis, *Changing Organizations* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996).

THE NEED FOR RESEARCH BY THE ACADEMY.

In my literature review on ecclesial change,[2] I found that prominent (e.g. megachurch) authors who customarily tout one model that has worked for her or him pen most popular books on church change. Subsequently, overall general principles of organizational change in the ecclesial context are contextually bound and may be too narrow.

In addition, a *theology* of change/changing is poorly understood. Yet, both the Bible and church history are replete with ecclesial change, e.g. from old covenant to new covenant (Heb 8:13, Col 2:16–17) and from monarchies (1 and 2 Sa, 1 and 2 Ki), to oligarchies (Judges), to syndical forms of government (the council of Jerusalem, Ac 15:1–12).[3]

To establish a theological context for church change, I penned three chapters in the book, *Preparing for Change Reaction: How to Introduce Change in Your Church*. This current article will assume that either the reader has read those chapters or will consult them later. Subsequently, the present discussion will be delimited to the theory and practice of changing with one of five potential multicultural objectives.[4]

A CASE STUDY BASIS FOR RESEARCH.

Reliable and valid process models usually arise from examining and comparing numerous case studies. In this regard, the best organizational researcher may be John P. Kotter, former professor at Harvard Business School. Having read hundreds, if not thousands, of student case studies, he began to formulate a process model that would explain successful change. His seminal article in *Harvard Business Review* titled, "Leading Change: Why Transfor-

[2] This article will expand some of my previous theorizing as represented in two of my books: *Preparing for Change Reaction: How to Introduce Change in Your Church* and *The Healthy Church: Practical Ways to Strengthen a Church's Heart* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2013). In addition, my initial thoughts on the "How to Change a Church in 8 Steps" can be found in my article of the same title in *Church Revitalizer Magazine* 1 no. 5 (2015): 44–45.

[3] P. Schaff and D.S. Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 504.

[4] I embrace the term multicultural in lieu of multiethnic or multiracial, because the latter carry important implications for reconciliation between cultures that have been polarized by violence and bigotry. My coauthor Mark DeYmaz and I in *re:MIX – Transitioning Your Church to Living Color* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016) spend several chapters addressing the importance of multiethnic and multiracial reconciliation. The reader of this present article should consult our more exhaustive treatment there. Thus, the present article will be delimited to general procedures, processes, and plans that can result in a multicultural church regardless if that cultural mix is ethnic cultures, affinity cultures, generational cultures, social economic cultures, etc.

mation Efforts Fail," created a seismic shift in the way organizational theorists and practitioners applied the change process. His theory of changing as reflected in his eight steps for leading change became a staple for the study of organizational change in business schools and increasingly in seminaries.

In my position as professor of missional leadership for over a decade, first at Indiana Wesleyan University and then at Wesley Seminary at Indiana Wesleyan University, I have been afforded the opportunity to also study hundreds of student case studies on ecclesial change. I have observed that ecclesial change follows very closely Kotter's eight-step model. In this paper, I will briefly explain how Kotter's model can inform a process model for ecclesial change.

OUTCOMES: FIVE MODELS OF MULTICULTURAL CHURCHES

As mentioned above, a delimiter for this article is that I will consider objectives with more colorful (i.e. multicultural) outcomes. I do this because of my research interest and because it is of growing relevance to homogeneous churches in an increasingly heterogeneous world. I employ the term multicultural in the broadest sociological sense and a list of ethnic, generational, socioeconomic, affinity, etc. cultures as relevant to this discussion can be found in *The Healthy Church*, pages 58–59.

In a previous article for *The Great Commission Research Journal*, I put forth in detail five multicultural models as a contemporary update of the historical categories of Sanchez.[5] I also demonstrated some of these models afford a more comprehensive and reconciliation-based approach. I then evaluated each model through a ten-point grid of "nomenclature, mode of growth, relationships, pluses, minuses, degree of difficulty, creator complex, redistribution, relocation and reconciliation."[6] This present article will assume that the reader has access to this article for further reading. An overview of the five models will frame the process model's objectives.

The Cultural Assimilation Church: A Creator Complex

The model is not actually multicultural but is listed here because of prevalence. This is a church where a dominant culture absorbs smaller or less powerful cultures into the behaviors, ideas, and products[7] of the domineering culture. C. Peter Wagner observed that such congregations opened "their doors for the ethnics [sic] to come into *their* church and worship in *their* way, with predictable lack of success."[8] He came to describe this malady as

[5] D. Sanchez, "Viable Models for Churches in Communities Experiencing Ethnic Transition," (unpublished paper, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1976).

[6] "Five Types of Multicultural Churches: A New Paradigm Evaluated and Differentiated," *The Great Commission Research Journal* 6, no. 1 (2014).

[7] P. Hiebert, *Cultural Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1976), 25.

[8] C. P. Wagner, *Our Kind of People: The Ethical Dimensions of Church Growth in America* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1979), 162 (emphasis original).

a "creator complex"[9] where a dominant culture will subconsciously attempt to make over people from other cultures into the image of the dominant culture.[10] To understand the attraction of assimilationist churches, one must consider three types of cultural adaptation.[11]

> *Consonant adapters:* These are people who willingly adapt to the behaviors, ideas, and products of another culture. Assimilationist churches may grow more readily among people who embrace consonant adaptation. Unfortunately, their goal is not subcultural preservation or even appreciation, rather the absorption of subcultures into a dominant culture. The loss of indigenous arts, histories, and traditions creates a world less rich in variety and complexity than God designed.
>
> *Selective adapters:* They adapt to another culture but do so only partially. They love their cultural traditions and so bring into the new mixture some of their traditions and arts. Examples can be found in Alejandro Portes and Ruben G. Rumbaut's *Immigrant American: A Portrait*.[12] Selective adapters historically founded and fought for immigrant variations in the American church, e.g. the former Norwegian Lutheran Synod, now the Evangelical Lutheran Church Synod.
>
> *Dissonant adapters:* They adapt very little to the dominant culture, preferring the familiarity and reassurance of their own culture. An African-American friend that wears his tribal dashiki to church in America may exemplify this. Dissonant adapters often share a concern that their cultures are being sidelined, if not minimalized, by both selective adaption and consonant adaption. They typically prefer a worship service where their culture is celebrated, preserved, and sanctified rather than blended (more on blending below).[13]

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[9] Ibid., 96.

[10] See examples in Robert Jensen, "White Privilege Shakes the US," in Paula S. Rothenberg, *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism* (New York: Worth, 2002), 103–106.

[11] See R. G. Rumbaut, "Acculturation, Discrimination, and Ethnic Identity among Children of Immigrants," in *Discovering Successful Pathways in Children's Development: Mixed Methods in the Study of Childhood and Family Life*, ed. T. S. Weisner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 8; and C. Kraft, *Christianity in Culture: A Study of Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Orbis Books, 1979), 113.

[12] A. Portes and R. G. Rumbaut, *Immigrant American: A Portrait* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1996).

[13] Questions for further study include:

- Does the proliferation of social community over the Internet strengthen or undermine cultural subsets?
- Does the proliferation of social community over the Internet strengthen or undermine consonant, selective, and/or dissonant adaption?

As noted, the assimilationist church may not connect with either the dissonant adapter or the selective adapter. Moreover, the creator complex in the assimilationist church may make it homogeneous. This is exacerbated if a subculture feels it is not being treated equally or fairly in a church (whether that subculture is a generational youth group culture or a Spanish-speaking culture). As a result, the subculture is likely to break away from the parent church and form an independent organization. While some will note that this proliferates the overall number of churches, it has been my observation that many of these churches are often too small and underfunded to survive. They may result in too many unplanned church offspring, which often do not survive.

The Multicultural Blended Church: Indeterminate Color

Here the goal is an organization that celebrates its variety with distinct cultural segments sprinkled throughout worship services. Because not all cultural artifacts are discarded, but some are retained, the result can be a new cultural experience (i.e. a blended culture). Blended worship might include a seventeenth century hymn played on contemporary instruments of guitars and drums, or Caribbean folk songs sung by a choir. The result can often be a less than appetizing concoction, especially to dissonant adapters. John V. Taylor, Africanist and bishop of Winchester summed this up by stating, "We do not want the westernization of the universal Church. On the other hand we don't want the ecumenical cooks to throw all the cultural traditions on which they can lay their hands into one bowl and stir them to a hash of indeterminate colour."[14]

In addition, this model does not break down as many cultural barriers, because people attracted to these services already appreciate a mixture of cultures. Usually only consonant and selective adapters are drawn to this type of church. Personally, I find this type of church rewarding, but this is probably due to my travels as well as the international makeup of my students.

The Multicultural Mother/Daughter Church: Cultural Apartheid?

A multicultural mother/daughter church often arises when a subculture becomes polarized from the dominant culture in a church. The dominant group often decides it is best for the subculture to "start their own church." In the name of "planting" a church, cultural apartheid occurs. While this does offer a community more church options, as mentioned above, they are often too small to survive or influence the mother church. This model also does little to reconcile cultural differences, because the subculture is often seen as second class and as a result, has little influence upon the mother church.

[14] J.V. Taylor, "Cultural Ecumenism," *Church Missionary Society Newsletter*, November 1974, 3.

The Multicultural Partnership Church: Patron and Stipendiary

A fourth type, as described by Al Tizon and Ron Sider in their book, *Linking Arms, Linking Lives*,[15] occurs when a healthier congregation partners with a church of a different and often less dominant culture. An admirable tactic, it unfortunately does little to break down cultural walls since the physical and interpersonal distance between the two congregations is great. The struggling church, often in an urban area, will be perceived as the stipendiary of a wealthy patron. With this model, a church does better to share the wealth, but it does little to create reconciliation between cultures because of distance and the patron-stipendiary relationship.[16]

The Multicultural Alliance Church: A Church of Equals

The alliance model is a heterogeneous organization led by an inclusive and balanced alliance drawing from the different cultures it is reaching. The alliance honors cultural differences by embracing multiple, culturally different worship services that are led by a heterogeneous organization. Daniel Sanchez, in his early work on multicultural models at Fuller Theological Seminary, describes this as one church "comprised of several congregations in which the autonomy of each culture is preserved and the resources of the congregations are combined to present a strong evangelistic ministry."[17] Such a church may share assets such as budgets as well as leadership duties with culturally integrated and balanced boards. A strong respect and appreciation of cultural differences often results when leaders are forced to work together to run a church.

Offering multiple homogeneous worship options not only better preserves the different cultures involved and reaches dissonant adapters, but also allows the church to reach out to multiple cultures simultaneously. Manwell Ortez[18] rightly points out that this model can result in culturally separate worship silos. However, this risk can be met when a church

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[15] R. J. Sider and A. F. Tizon, *Linking Arms, Linking Lives: How Urban-Suburban Partnerships Can Transform Communities* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books 2008).

[16] At this juncture, it is important to keep in mind what John Perkins calls the 3Rs of a healthy church (*A Quiet Revolution: The Christian Response to Human Need, a Strategy for Today* [Urban Family Publications, 1976], 220). The first R is *relocation*, i.e. that the church should be relocating in the community of need rather than retreating to the suburbs and distancing itself. The second R is *redistribution* and indicates a redistribution of wealth and power. This can be addressed by suburban/urban partnerships. The third R is spiritual and physical *reconciliation*. Perkins points out it is not one or the other but both if churches are truly to be bearers of the Good News.

[17] Sanchez.

[18] M. Ortez, *One New People: Models for Developing a Multiethnic Church* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996).

overcomes cultural walls by running the church together rather than just pew sharing. I have often stated that "you can't reconcile cultures by simply sitting next to each other in a pew and sharing one another's songs. You must share your life and your leadership." Running a church together forces congregants to collaborate with people of different cultures to organize, administrate, and tackle the *missio Dei*.

EIGHT STEPS TO TRANSITIONING TO A CHURCH OF LIVING COLOR

Toward any one of these models, my experience has led me to believe that Kotter gives us a helpful roadmap. His seminal model for leading change was based upon years of studying management school case studies. In a similar vein, for over a decade, I have compared and contrasted Kotter's model with my seminary students' case studies. The following is a brief introduction to Kotter's process model based upon that comparison:

Step 1 – establish a sense of urgency.

Kotter found that people will not undertake change unless they feel there is some urgent pressure propelling them forward. It is important for the leaders of the church to ascertain and explain this pressure. It can be the pressure of a dwindling congregation, dwindling finances, or a change in culture in the community, but urgency is the key. Kotter found that people will not be motivated to undertake change unless they feel there is no other option. As explained below, the visionaries (e.g. leaders/pastors) often feel they need to create the vision first. Kotter found that they only need to share the urgency. The vision (the next step) is more collaborate in creation.

Step 2 – build a powerful guiding coalition.

Kotter uncovered that change cannot be led by one person or one visionary. It cannot be led by a coalition that only includes change proponents either. It actually takes a coalition of people from all cultures in the organization for successful change to occur. Change will more likely occur if the vision includes input from all cultural gatekeepers, including the naysayers. I have found that including some of the gatekeepers and naysayers in the guiding coalition does not actually undermine the coalition; rather, it gives it the ability to develop a broader consensus for change.[19] If you only fill the guiding correlation with people who favor the change, then the change will

[19] B. Whitesel, *Staying Power: Why People Leave the Church over Change and What You Can Do about It* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002).

polarize the organization. In addition, Dyck and Starke found that breakaway organizations and group exit can result if the naysayers do not have a voice.[20]

I have found this "broad coalition" sadly missing in most church change paradigms but readily evident in success stories. I described in *Staying Power: Why People Leave the Church Over Change and What You Can Do About,* twelve examples of churches that changed in a unifying manner by embracing collaboration in the change process.

Step 3 – create a vision.

Though most church leaders start here, this should be the third step. It may be why change often fails. A vision should be created by the guiding coalition, not a narrow band of change proponents. Thus, step two is labeled a "guiding coalition," because it "collaboratively" leads and "guides" the organization toward the future, taking into account all cultures and perspectives. Because different groups within the church are represented, including the naysayers, vision typically is more palatable to a larger segment of the church.[21]

Step 4 – communicate the vision.

Often the vision is communicated via a static list of objectives. However, research indicates that utilizing a "narrative story" multiplies the chance of the change succeeding. Scott Wilcher has suggested that change is more than twice as likely to occur if a metaphorical story is attached to depict the change.[22] Wilcher found that traditional change methods[23] are only success-

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[20] See Bruno Dyck and Frederick A. Starke's research in "The Formation of Breakaway Organizations: Observations and a Process Model" in *Administrative Science Quarterly* 44 (1999): 792–822; with corresponding data in Frederick A. Starke and Bruno Dyck, "Upheavals in Congregations: The Causes and Outcomes of Splits," in *Review of Religious Research* 38 (1996): 159–174.

[21] My students, who tend to be younger pastors, often wince at the idea of including naysayers in the guiding coalition. The idea of making their case to those who are usually opposed worries them and often thwarts their reaching out to them. Yet, it has been my experience that these naysayers are not as negative as they are concerned. In guiding churches toward change, I have found that the naysayers' concerns will only grow if they are not heard.

[22] Scott Wilcher, "MetaSpeak: Secrets of Regenerative Leadership to Transform Your Workplace" (PhD dissertation, 2013).

[23] K. Lewin, "Group Decisions and Social Change," in *Readings in Social Psychology*, eds. E. E. Maccobby, T. M. Newcomb, and E. L. Hartley (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1958), 330–344; and J. P. Kotter, "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail," Harvard Business Review (1995): 59–67.

ful about 30% of the time.[24] However, when metaphors, such as narrative stories, are attached to depict the change process, the success rate jumps to almost 85%.[25] The communication aspect of the story attached to the vision thus becomes critical. The Bible is replete with stories that can serve as metaphorical agents for change.

Step 5 – give others power to act on the vision.

This means delegating to others the authority to change things (however, start with small wins; see step six). This allows change to take place through members of the guiding coalition, rather than one person who might become a lightening rod for criticism. As seen above, change is usually not successful when one person alone sets the vision, but rather succeeds when the guiding coalition is empowered to chart the way forward.

Step 6 – create short-term wins.

This is probably the most overlooked yet logical step. Kotter found that organizations that create short-term wins get more buy-in from reticent members. For instance, instead of launching a full-fledged Hispanic ministry, one client began with once a month worship led by Spanish-speaking members of the church. The opportunity for congregants to experience the validity and authenticity of worship in another language (or in different musical genres) on a short-term basis, can convince many people of their long-term legitimacy. I have often summarized this as "long term goals begin with short-term wins."

Step 7 – change systems, structures, and policies that do not fit the vision.

This means the organization must fundamentally and systemically change. This cannot be window dressing. Serious, substantial change usually must occur. A congregation may need to grow into one of the multicultural models described earlier. Regardless, it is important to reevaluate elements and programs in the church that cannot support the new direction. Too often, leaders want to hurry the process, feeling that if they start with eliminating ministries, the road forward will be easier. Yet, my case study experiences suggest it will not.[26] Systems and structures must change, but they should change as a result of a latter step in a process model that has been verified by short-term wins. While organizations must structurally change to transition into an organization relevant to changing environments, these systemic

[24] J. Balogun and V. H. Hailey, *Exploring Strategic Change* (Essex, England: Pearson Education, 2008).

[25] G. R. Bushe and A. F. Kassam, "When Is Appreciative Inquiry Transformational? A Meta-case Analysis," *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 41(2), (2005): 161–181.

[26] Whitesel, *Staying Power*, and *ORGANIX: Signs of Leadership in a Changing Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011).

changes will be more likely to occur if viewed as the last step of the process, rather than the first.

This article has sought to introduce the reader to a basic process model toward one of five objectives. For further research, I have created an online encyclopedia at ChurchHealth.wiki, where readers can search by word for parallel research related to this article.

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CONFLICT IN THE SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED CHURCH

William D. Henard

Abstract

One of the most difficult aspects of dealing with any church is conflict. Because of humanity's fallen nature and because of the difficulty of initiating and accepting change, conflict is almost always inevitable. Conflict becomes detrimental when it is not handled correctly or when it remains unchecked and finds its source deep within the sinful nature and motives of people. Conflict in the church, though, does not necessarily have to be destructive. Many of those within the church reconciliatory ministry say that conflict is essentially neutral. When handled properly, it can actually result in some positive benefits for the church.

INTRODUCTION

When I first started doing research for a class I was teaching on change and conflict at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, one of the areas that I tried to research was the number of pastors who leave the ministry every year. Most of us have heard the "1500 a month" statistic. In some of the statistics I quoted in my book on church revitalization, that number was repeated. LifeWay Research Group, however, has updated and corrected those stats. According to them, the original statistic came from an anecdotal question asked at a pastors' conference that took place at Fuller Seminary.

The information was never intended to be used as actual research, but it has been communicated as such nonetheless.

LifeWay researcher Scott McConnell has concluded that pastors are not leaving the ministry in droves. McConnell estimates a total of twenty-nine thousand evangelical pastors have left the pastorate over the past decade, an average of fewer than two hundred-fifty a month.[1] Reasons for pastors leaving the ministry and for their termination are varied. Brooks Faulkner offers these conclusions:

> The most frequently stated reasons for termination revolved around a lack of unity in the congregation. 66% stated: A small but powerful minority of members. 41% stated: Factions in the congregation. 16% stated: Differed with congregation over leadership style of pastor. 12% stated: Been at church too long. 12% stated: Too authoritarian or dictatorial. 10% stated: Couldn't get along with members. 10% stated: Not spending enough time on the job.[2]

When we examine the church as a whole, we recognize that evangelicals are planting 3,500 churches a year, but 3,500 to 4,000 churches are closing. About 80 to 85% of churches are plateaued or are in decline. By year five, 35% of church plants fail. While a number of reasons can be given for why churches struggle, a major problem within many of our congregations is conflict. When asked why they left their previous church, according to the LifeWay study, Most said they moved on because they had taken the previous church as far as they could (54%). However, 23% of pastors who changed churches say they left because of conflict in the church. Church conflict often took multiple forms in pastors' last churches, including significant personal attacks against 34% of the pastors.

Pastors also reported conflict over changes they proposed (38%), their leadership style (27%), expectations about the pastor's role (25%), and doctrinal differences (13%). Thirty-eight percent faced conflict with lay leaders, and 31% found themselves in conflict with a church matriarch or patriarch. More than a third of pastors (34%) say they left a previous church because their family needed a change. One in five found the church did not embrace their approach to pastoral ministry (19%). Pastors also cited poor fit and unrealistic expectations (18% each) as reasons for leaving. Some were reassigned (18%) or asked to leave (8%).[3]

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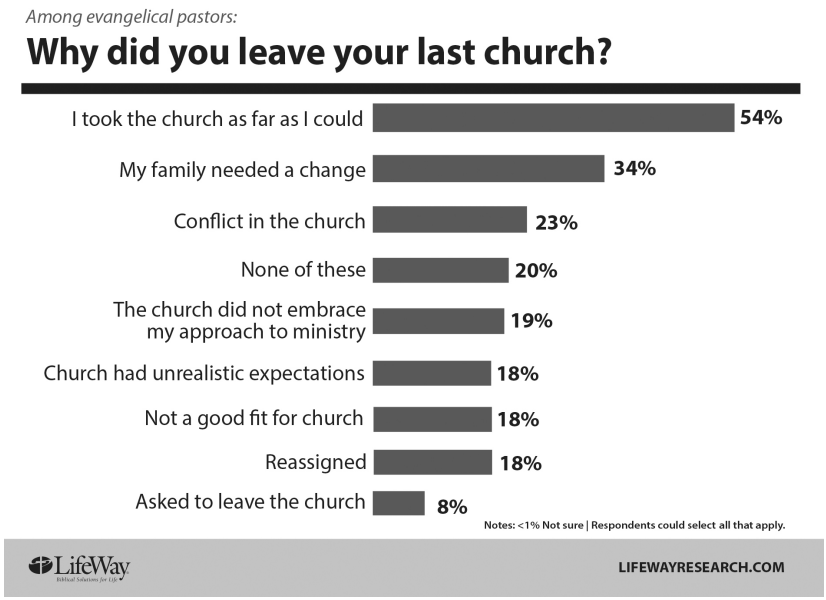
[1] Lisa Cannon Green, "Research Finds Few Pastors Give up on Ministry," http://www.lifeway.com/pastors/2015/09/01/research-finds-few-pastors-give-up-on-ministry/.

[2] Brooks R. Faulkner, "Leaving—Why Ministers are Leaving the Ministry," http://media.mobaptist.org/public/pastoral ministry/LEAVING_Why_Ministers_leave_ministry.pdf.

[3] Green, "Research Finds Few Pastors Give up on Ministry."



The point is, conflict is real in the church, and if we do not understand why it happens, it will continue. Additionally, conflict does not necessarily reflect the age of the church. Many would think that conflict only occurs in congregations that are either older in the age of the congregants or at least older in the age of the church itself. Conflict, though, occurs even in new churches and young churches. Lyle Schaller has stated that the years four to seven are the crisis years for a pastor. Thom Rainer has said that years two to three are the years of conflict and challenge, while years four to five are the first of the crossroads years. He writes,

> This period is one of the most critical in the relationship. If the conflict was severe, the pastor will likely leave or be forced out. Indeed, these years, four and five, are the most common years when a pastor leaves a church. On the other hand, if the pastor and the church manage their relationship well, they can often look forward to some of the best years ahead.[4]

Therefore, regardless of where a pastor intends on serving, conflict is probably on the horizon at some point. Ken Sande reminds us of why it is critical for pastors to understand conflict and to confront it. He proposes:

1. 25% of the churches in one survey reported conflict in the previous five years that was serious enough to have a lasting impact on congregational life.

[4] Thom S. Rainer, "Five Stages of a Pastor's Ministry," http://www.thomrainer.com/2013/10/five-stages-of-a-pastors-ministry/.

2. There are approximately 386,000 churches in America.
3. There are approximately 19,000 major, scarring church conflicts in the U.S. each year (386,000 × 1/4 × 1/5).
4. 23% of all current pastors in the United States have been fired or forced to resign in the past.
5. 45% of the pastors who were fired in one denomination left the ministry altogether.
6. 34% of all pastors presently serve congregations that forced their previous pastor to resign.
7. The seven primary reasons for forced exits all involve some form of conflict.
8. The average pastoral career lasts only fourteen years—less than half of what it was not long ago.[5]

Finally, statistics reflecting the extent of church conflict are articulated in the following:

1. 24% of ministers experienced a conflict in the last two years that was serious enough to call a special meeting.
2. 25% experienced a conflict in the last two years that resulted in people leaving their congregations.
3. 9% experienced a conflict that led leaders to leave the congregation.
4. 7% were classified as "persistently conflicted."[6]

CHURCH CONFLICT DEFINED

How do we define conflict in the church? Precise definitions of conflict are difficult to formulate without aspects of delimitation or description. Arnold Kurtz explains,

> Synonyms such as "clash," "tension," "struggle," and/or "friction" are usually employed, but they do not stand alone, or are inadequate in themselves, in providing definitions. Is, for instance, the "tension" or "struggle" intra- or inter-personal, intra- or inter-group? And is the "tension" and "struggle" over one or more of the following general areas of conflict: (a) money; (b) power (including authority and structure); (c) value and belief; (d) loyalty to persons and groups? [7]

[5] Ken Sande, "The High Cost of Conflict Among Christians," http://peacemaker.net/project/the-high-cost-of-conflict-among-christians/.

[6] Donald Q. Hicks, *A Study of the Conflicts Within Churches That Lead to the Termination of Pastors Within the Southern Baptist Convention, Accompanied by a Proposal of Preventive and Interventional Solutions* (DMin project, Liberty University, 2010), 28.

[7] Arnold Kurtz, "The Pastor as a Manager of Conflict in the Church," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 20 (1982), 112.

Conflict may be defined to include any matter that terminates, limits, or prohibits Christians from acting or interacting with one another in a spiritually compelling way and, therefore, affects their ability to serve the Lord according to Scripture. Church conflict in the congregation is "a situation in which two or more members or factions struggle aggressively over what is, or appears to be mutually exclusive beliefs, values, assumed powers or goals."[8] Ken Sande says that "conflict is a difference in opinion or purpose that frustrates someone else's opinion or purpose."[9]

THE REASONS FOR CHURCH CONFLICT

So why is there conflict in the church? The answers are not simple, and their resolve is even more difficult. The foundation for the inauguration of conflict does, however, have its roots in the biblical text.

The Genesis Account

One needs only to go to the account of Adam and Eve, and then subsequently to the encounter of Cain with Abel to find the beginnings of conflict. When Eve listened to Satan in the garden, the Bible says, "Then the woman saw that the tree was good for food and a delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it" (Ge 3:6).[10] The result of that action was conflict, both with God and with each other. Genesis records,

> Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid themselves from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. So the Lord God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard You in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." Then He asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" Then the man replied, "The woman You gave to be with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate." (Ge 3:8–12).

That conflict then led to another that ended in death and the fulfillment of the promise God made to humanity of the consequences of sin. Genesis

[8] Quoted in Jim Wilson, "Church Conflict Can Prove Healthy If Handled Biblically, Speaker Says," http:// http://www.bpnews.net/702/church-conflict-can-prove-healthy-if-handled-biblically-speaker-says. The quotation comes from Lloyd Elder, professor and director of the Moench Center of Church Leadership at Belmont University, Nashville, TN.

[9] Ken Sande, "Christian Conciliation Procedures" (Billings, MT: Institute for Christian Conciliation, 1993), 9.

[10] All Scripture quotations are from the Holman Christian Standard Bible, unless otherwise noted.

tells us that Cain and his brother Abel brought offerings to the LORD. However, the LORD had regard for Abel's offering but not for Cain's. Cain obviously did not know how to process the now released anger and jealousy that he felt and experienced, and as a result, he killed his own brother (Ge 4:8). The Bible explains to us that all of humanity sins because we are born with this same nature to sin. Scripture says that we are born sinners and that we are by nature sinners. Ephesians 2:2 declares that before conversion, we are "sons of disobedience." Ephesians 2:3 also establishes this thought, explaining that we are all "by nature children of wrath." To be a child of wrath indicates that we are separated from God because of sin. If we are all "by nature children of wrath," it can only be because we are all by nature sinners. We discover this same concept in 1 Corinthians 15:22, that says, "In Adam all men die," and Romans 5:12 that states, "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all men, because all sinned." Thus, we are all sinners by nature, and we are sinners who respond to our nature by sinning.

From a soteriological standpoint, we understand that when we are saved, it is our spirits that are saved but not yet our flesh. Therefore, all Christians still wrestle with sin even though they are in Christ. It is why John writes,

> If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say, "We don't have any sin," we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us (1 Jn 1:8–10).

Therefore, the reason that churches have conflict is because Christians sin. Through the ages, scholars have argued about the need for or the benefit of discipleship and spiritual formation. The reason that we need discipleship is because we are all struggling to become like Christ. That answer may sound simplistic, but our battle with sin leads us to make many poor choices and to fall into conflict.

Take a look at the New Testament church, and the battle with conflict becomes a very probable observation. Though not exhaustive, note these ten examples of conflict in the early church:

1. Religious traditionalism versus Christ (Jn 8:1–11)
2. Struggle of self-interest versus servant hood (Mk 10:35–45)
3. Diversity in membership and prejudice (Ac 6:1–3)
4. Partners in ministry split over disagreement (Ac 15:36–40)
5. Personal and spiritual immaturity (1Co 3:1–3)
6. Churches full of cliques (1Co 1:10–12, 11:17–22)
7. Individual responses to issues and values (Gal 2:11–12)
8. Prominent women could not get along (Php 4:2–3)
9. People treat rich believers better than poor believers (Jas 2:1–9)
10. Self-will along with rebellious spirit (Jas 4:1–3).

Thus, it can easily be concluded that conflict is not a recent development within the church. It is an age-old problem. Remember that many of the great men of God were confronted with conflict. The pastor of the small to medium-sized church is not alone in this dilemma.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

In addition to these ten examples within the corpus of the New Testament material on conflict is Paul's admonition for Christians to be aware of and engaged in spiritual warfare. He gives this challenge:

> Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength. Put on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics of the Devil. For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. This is why you must take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand (Eph 6:10–13).

The reason that we have conflict in the church is because it is a spiritual battle. Satan's desire is to destroy the church and to destroy believers. One of the most difficult realities I had when I initially graduated from seminary and headed off to pastor a church for the first time without the safety net of seminary and friends was this realization: Satan often uses God's own people to do his bidding. I was ready to fight the world, but what I was not ready to do was to deal with conflict in the church. These are God's people, and they are not supposed to act in godless ways. Yet, they do because the church is a contended place of spiritual warfare.

Power Struggles

Within the context of sin nature and spiritual warfare comes the issue of power struggles. While we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, and we realize that church people are not our enemy, spiritual warfare oftentimes manifests itself in battles over control and leadership.

Carl George, in the book he coauthored with Robert Logan entitled, *Leading and Managing Your Church*, presented the idea of a berry-bucket theory, drawing from a practice used by his grandfather in distributing his buckets of berries for consumption. George utilized this idea to categorize those investors in the church who hold claim to the power and future of the church. In this analogy, George identifies two primary groups, with two subgroups under each major grouping. The theory says that the makeup of the church's membership includes people both older and younger than the pastor who were members before the pastor began his service. With these former members, or *formerberries*, are older and younger people, or

what he calls *newberries*, who joined the church after the pastor's tenure commenced.[11]

What I have learned is that, within most churches, five groups of people will be present. While primarily all of the characteristics fit each grouping, exceptions do exist, especially among the ranks of those who are already members of the church. These groupings include:

1. Older Thirties: people who have been members of the church at least thirty years.
2. Younger Thirties
3. Older Tens: people who have been members at least ten years.
4. Younger Tens
5. Newbies: people who have joined the church during the current pastor's tenure.[12]

George calls these individuals "investors" in the church, and that designation is very true. What many pastors and new people fail to realize is the amount of investment people have in their church. Many times, it is a financial investment. They have given the money, built the buildings, and made sacrifices so that the church would survive. New people do not appreciate such nostalgia. Their investment is also in time and service. The church sits where it is because these investors have paid a significant price.

When those investments are not appreciated or are threatened, conflict arises. Among the thirties are families who have been in the church a long time. Parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren all play a part in the stakeholder mentality. Therefore, when their family name or welfare is threatened, people become outraged.

This fact is especially true in the small to medium-sized church, along with churches that are more rural than suburban. Interestingly enough, many large churches also suffer from this same conundrum. The rural church has traditionally been, and continues to be, driven by family connections. People grew up on the family farm, and the church grew because families grew. In many areas, family farms, however, are disappearing, and children are no longer staying at home. Thom Rainer predicts that 100,000 churches are going to close their doors in the next decade, and most of these churches are rural in nature.[13] The problem, though, is much more rooted in

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[11] Carl F. George and Robert E. Logan, *Leading and Managing Your Church: Effective Management for the Christian Professional* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1987), 147–64.

[12] Bill Henard, *Can These Bones Live? A Practical Guide to Church Revitalization* (Nashville: B&H, 2015), 30–42.

[13] Thom Rainer, "Autopsy of a Deceased Church," http://thomrainer.com/2013/04/24/autopsy-of-a-deceased-church-11-things-i-learned/. Rainer has also put these ideas into book form. See Thom S. Rainer, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church, 12 Ways to Keep Your Church Alive* (Nashville: B&H, 2014).

the struggle for power than it is in church size or setting. When that power group is threatened, conflict results.

Glenn Daman offers additional insight into the family power struggle in his article entitled, "When Sheep Squabble," explaining that one of the causes of conflict is "tribal warfare." He writes,

> Quite often a person or family within a small church becomes the tribal chief. This individual or family, because of past involvement, possess significant authority and influence in the church. This person may be in an official position of authority such as on the board, or he may not hold any recognized position. His influence, however, significantly controls the decisions and direction of the church. The congregation looks up to him.
>
> Conflict arises in a small church when the tribal chief's authority and influence are challenged. Often the challenge comes from the pastor as he finds himself at odds with this individual over the decisions and direction of the church. The result is tribal warfare in the congregation.[14]

When conflict like this arises, it is oftentimes a "behind the scenes" conflict. It may play out in committee meetings or in the "meeting after the meeting." If the family matriarch or patriarch is well-respected, and if the conflict is with the pastor, it usually does not bode well for the pastor. This level of conflict, as well as others, is why many small churches never grow and why so many are dying. The struggle for power becomes more important than the future of the church, and in many cases, those involved believe that the struggle is for the future of the church.

Changes in the Church

Another issue that causes great conflict in churches is the need for change. Usually when a new pastor arrives, he comes with great visions of what the church can become. He immediately sees some of the shortcomings of the church, as he has been exposed to churches that are growing rapidly. Therefore, he promptly begins to implement changes that will benefit the church numerically and spiritually.

The problem is, however, everyone resists change. The small to medium-sized church is often criticized for not being willing to change, but that accusation is somewhat misguided. Resistance to change is true regardless of the size of the church. We might assume that the church is small because it has fought change, but there are many large congregations that are also opposed to anything that changes their polity, structure, or relationships. Size does not necessarily affirm a church's acceptance of or even need for change.

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[14] Glenn C. Daman, "When Sheep Squabble—Dealing with Conflict in the Smaller Church," *Enrichment Journal* (Spring 2005), 4.

The reason that many pastors find an unwillingness in people to change is that they fail to examine, communicate, and strategize the need for and process for change. While church stagnation and decline are sources for conflict through change, so is church growth. When a church experiences growth, there are demands that the church changes in order to structure for the growth and have systems in place to accommodate future growth. Those changes cause conflict. Additionally, pastors sometimes make changes and then expect church members to follow without realizing that, in most cases, following that procedure is not only poor leadership, but also it is reckless at times. Pastors must consider the people, the personalities, and the past when looking at change. Just remember this adage: How many church members does it take to change a lightbulb? Change, what do you mean change? Change is possible, but change usually takes a lot of time and a lot of preparation.

Cultural Differences

Within the context of change, sometimes a pastor seeks to bring about a change merely due to cultural preferences rather than real need. Culture is a source of conflict within the church. Culture applies to polity, preferences, and personalities. In the realm of polity, churches behave the way they do or follow the particular procedures they do because is it a part of their cultural norm. Churches develop habits that lead to policy and procedure. Christians form certain biases or convictions based upon their upbringing or in reaction to perceived or real abuses. For example, for some Christians, it is accounted as sin to bring food or drink into the area called the sanctuary or worship center. They have been taught that this area is sacred. When newcomers or teenagers show up with sodas in their hands, it becomes a real source of conflict.

Conflict arises out of preference. Every Christian likes a certain style of music, worship, teaching, preaching, polity, order, and method. Oftentimes these methods are equated with Scripture. For instance, many churches conduct the same style of evangelistic outreach that they did twenty years ago, not because it is effective, but because they believe that the church would be accused of being non-evangelistic if they did not do it. If someone tries to change that methodology, accusations and suspicions begin.

Culture creates conflict when the culture of the church becomes significantly different from the culture of the community. This issue is not just a white or Caucasian issue; it is a factor that affects people of all colors and races. When the neighborhood begins to change from being a neighborhood that defines a different racial or cultural makeup, the church must decide if it will embrace the new culture or reject it. Regardless of the decision, conflict results. In small and medium-sized churches, these cultural differences are far more noticeable than in the larger church. Add one white person to a choir of one thousand Asian-Americans, and no one notices.

Add one white person to a choir of ten, and the picture becomes quite clear. The church either embraces and celebrates the cultural change, or conflict ensues.

Internal Conflicts

An interesting development within the church has been the creation of entities whose primary purpose is peacemaking among Christians. While some may accuse these entrepreneurs of exploiting a delicate situation, their rise demonstrates the level of conflict that has arisen in the church and the fact that churches in the past have not adequately dealt with the issue, especially as it relates to internal conflicts between believers. One such group is the Institute for Christian Conciliation. They list six reasons for conflict. The following is an adaptation of their findings:

1. Intrapersonal Conflicts—This type of conflict is within one's self, such as anger or bitterness.
   Spiritual warfare—moral, ethical, spiritual low
   Family crisis—marriage conflict, family unsupportive, health issues
   Calling conflict—Am I in the wrong ministry area?
   Ministry/church conflict—Do I need to be here?
2. Substantive/Strategic Conflicts—Examples of this type of conflict are church budgets, committees, removal of pastor or other church staff, members, or church building projects.
3. Value and Belief Conflicts—This type of conflict deals with Bible doctrine.
4. Relationship/Interpersonal Conflicts—This type of conflict deals with the heart in the area of lacking forgiveness and making things right with an individual or a group.
5. Information Conflicts—The way information is given out to staff or the church on any issue.
6. System/Structural Conflicts—This type of conflict is how a church is governed, organized, and who is responsible for what.[15]

While some of their findings are overlapping with other findings already mentioned in this article, it is clear that much of the fault of conflict within the church finds its root in internal issues, not in external ones. While many pastors cite attacks by the world on the church, the real problem is far more internal than it is external.

Additional Sources of Conflict

While the above stated issues are the primary bases of conflict, many other sources exist. Kathryn Bartol and others wrote a book entitled, *Management: A Pacific Rim Focus*, in which they provide an excellent list of sources

[15] Adapted from The Institute for Christian Conciliation.

of conflict within an organization. I have adapted and shortened this list for the church, but the sources definitely apply. These include:

1. Communication factors. If we define communication as the building of a picture in the receiver's mind that is exactly the same as the one the sender intended, then perfect communication is rare. Misunderstandings can occur for many reasons.
2. Structural factors. Members may experience a feeling of discomfort with how things occur, or processes may seem cumbersome.
3. Size. Reviewing studies relating conflict to organizational size, Robbins found more conflict in larger organizations. Size increases led to a reduction in goal clarity and an increase in formalization, specialization, supervisory levels, and opportunities for information to become distorted.
4. Participation. It is reasonable to expect that greater participation by volunteers (for example, in decision making) will lower conflict. From the human relations perspective, it is argued that inviting volunteer participation satisfies a drive for involvement. Research, however, shows that conflict increases with greater subordinate participation, because participation raises the subordinates' awareness of individual differences. Greater conflict from increased participation, however, is not necessarily bad. If the outcome of participation and its associated conflict improve overall work-unit performance, then it is productive.
5. Reward systems. If the rewards for one person or group come at another's expense, conflict arises. For example, staff people are often rewarded for being innovative, identifying a need for change. Volunteers are rewarded for uninterrupted productive activity. The two can be in conflict.
6. Resource interdependence. Typically, groups compete for organizational resources. With greater resources, conflicts may be avoided. However, increased resources are uncommon in organizations, and therefore, lack of coordination and cooperation between groups and conflict are likely.
7. Task interdependence. Two types of task interdependence are very prone to conflict. One is sequential interdependence, in which one person or work unit relies on another. The second form of task interdependence is reciprocal, in which people or work units are mutually interdependent. When people have to depend on others, conflict arises.
8. Personal behavior factors. People disagree because people have different personalities. Conflict occurs if people interpret the rejection of their ideas as a rejection of themselves. Individuals turn the proverbial molehill into a mountain when they fight for their personal identity.

9. Communication styles. Conflict may arise from communication problems and interpersonal misunderstandings. For example, differences in linguistic style mean that some men in work teams talk more and take more credit for ideas than women in the same team. Conflict comes when men wrongly assume that because women participate less, they are uninterested or less capable; and women incorrectly assume that because men seem to talk more, they are bossy and uninterested in women's ideas.
10. Differences in goals. Oftentimes, conflict arises because different organizations or individuals have differing goals depending upon the need of the group at the time. Those committed to short-term goals may be in conflict with those who look at the bigger picture.[16]

MAKING APPLICATION TO CHURCH/PERSONAL CONFLICTS

A study of conflict would not be complete without at least a call for and process for reconciliation. How does the church or individuals within the church resolve conflicts?

Conflict Between Individuals

First, start by developing the right attitude and heart. This first step is the most difficult step because it involves the following characteristics:

1. Meekness (Galatians 6:1)
2. Humility (James 4:10)
3. Forgiveness (Ephesians 4:31, 32)
4. Patience (James 1:19, 20).

Second, lead the church and the offending/offended parties to evaluate their part(s) in the conflict. Adrian Rogers once said, "It's got to be an awfully flat pancake to have only one side."[17] While the offending/offended parties often believe it is always the other person's fault, rarely is it one-sided. Consider the passage of Scripture from Matthew 7:1–5 to remove the log from your own eye first.

Third, lead the offended party to the individual (not to others) to voice concerns, with the goals of reconciliation, forgiveness, and restoration. Examine the following two passages: 2 Corinthians 5:11–21—the ministry of reconciliation—and Matthew 18:15—you have won your brother.

Fourth, remind those involved to look to others within the church, and especially in leadership, to help with mediation. Consider Matthew 18:16,

[16] Kathryn M. Bartol, David C. Martin, Margaret Tein, and Graham Matthews, *Management: A Pacific Rim Focus* (Columbus, OH: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2004), 258–61.

[17] Said at a meeting at Bell Avenue Baptist Church, Knoxville, TN, in 1983.

"But if he won't listen, take one or two more with you, so that by the testimony of two or three witnesses every fact may be established."

Finally, be committed to the task that if the person refuses to reconcile, church leadership needs to determine the next step. Ask these two questions: Is this an offense of sin that needs to go before the church? Is it simply a matter that the two can "agree to disagree" but can walk together as friends?[18]

Church Conflict

In addition to the principles that apply to conflict between individuals, one must consider how conflict exists within the larger context of the congregation, how conflict flows out from individuals and affects the corporate body, and how one must deal with that level of conflict. Note these ideas:

1. Fortify your prayer life.
2. Engage in spiritual warfare.
3. Seek prayer support, accountability, and mentorship from a trusted fellow pastor or denominational leader.
4. Establish a practical strategy to resolve the conflict. Realize that time is of essence.
5. Involve the appropriate leadership group in the church.
6. Request consultation from another pastor or denominational leader to provide guidance for the leadership group.
7. If specialized help is needed, call upon others outside of the church to help.[19]

Conflict Prevention

Finally, wisdom teaches us to seek to prevent conflict before it starts. While some conflict is inevitable, especially when dealing with sinful people, some of it can be avoided or at least somewhat neutralized. Here is a short list of possible ideas:

1. Work with the leaders of the church. Remember that the tribal chief, or older/younger thirties, have considerable influence in the church. Avoid the temptation of running over the leaders or assuming that they are not spiritual, simply because they disagree with the pastor's desires or goals. Remember that they have seen pastors come and go and have heard all of the grand goals with no result. Be patient to work with them and to gain their trust.

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[18] "How Should Conflict in the Church be Handled?" http://www.gotquestions.org/church-conflict.html.

[19] Greg Sumii, "Preventing Unhealthy Church Conflict Resolution" (Fresno, CA: California Southern Baptist Convention, 2002), 6.

2. Orchestrate change carefully. Determine which changes are triage changes and which changes are secondary. Conflict happens because new ideas often clash with old structures. Therefore, demonstrate care in bringing about changes that minimize the threat to the congregation.
3. Maintain communication. Pastors often assume that people hear and understand the goals and direction of the church. Note this standard of communicating vision: When the vision caster is absolutely tired of communicating the vision to the church, it is then that the church is just beginning to hear it. Do not make the mistake of implementing the "need to know" adage. Communication is essential in the small to medium-sized church.[20]

CONCLUSION

Pastors need to embrace the fact that conflict is inevitable in the church. Churches have problems because people have problems. Churches have problems because they still deal with the issue of the fallen nature of humanity. People are sinners by nature, and they respond to that nature by choosing to sin.

Conflict in the church, though, does not necessarily have to be destructive. Many of those within the church reconciliatory ministry say that conflict is essentially neutral. When handled properly, it can result in some positive benefits for the church. Consider these possible outcomes of conflict:

1. It can serve as a stimulus that stirs new ideas and processes for decision making.
2. It can help people distinguish better between two points of view.
3. It can help a church better define its identity or beliefs.
4. It can help hasten change.
5. It can stimulate productive dialogue and build new relationships.
6. It can encourage a healthy reexamination of assumptions and preconceptions.
7. It can lead to the discovery of new ideas, approaches, and methods.
8. It can stimulate personal growth.

Conflict, on the other hand, becomes detrimental when it is not handled correctly or when it remains unchecked and finds its source deep within the sinful nature and motives of people. Ken Sande writes, "It can lead to alienation, anger, pain, humiliation, defensiveness, physical illness, and can lead to broken families, friendships, and businesses, and drastically diminish the witness and outreach of the church."[21]

[20] Daman, "When Sheep Squabble," 7–8.

[21] Sande, "Christian Conciliation Procedures," 21.

Eric Reed echoes much of this sentiment through a survey of 506 pastors conducted by *Leadership*. Pastors responded with the following negative outcomes of conflict:

1. Damaged relationships 68%
2. Sadness 58%
3. Decline in attendance 32%
4. Leaders left the church 32%
5. Loss of trust 31%
6. Bitterness 29%
7. Loss of communication with congregation 3%.[22]

Therefore, when conflict is something that causes or could cause destruction or decline, it must be addressed and nullified. Conflict is not the end of the church, but it certainly will facilitate a church's death if left unchecked and allowed to fester.

Finally, conflict is not necessarily a characteristic of the small or medium-sized church alone. There are churches within these size ranges that are healthy and growing. There are also large and mega-churches that are overwhelmed with conflict and are now on the decline or have even ceased to exist. Thus, the Scripture gives an excellent challenge and reminder regardless of the size church that we serve, "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1Pe 5:8 ESV).

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CHOOSING THE RIGHT CONSULTANT

William J. Ingram and Denise D. Quigley

Abstract

The church in North America is in decline. Research indicates that many churches are not growing or even considered "healthy." More and more churches are addressing their declining attendance through hiring consultants to identify areas of growth and improvement. The key is finding the right consultant or consulting firm for the needs of the local church. This article seeks to help the local church ask the right questions when selecting a consultant or consulting firm.

INTRODUCTION

It is almost universally agreed that the church in North America is in decline. The numbers are staggering. Although there are more churches today than at any other time in the history of the United States, the proportion of people attending churches tells a different story. The number of churches has increased 50% in the United States from 212,000 in 1900 to 345,000 in 1995, according to the United States census. This, however, has not kept up with population growth, which has increased by 300% over that same time.[1] Research indicates churches are not growing or even considered "healthy." In a research study conducted by David T. Olsen from 1996 to 2005, he

[1] Ed Stetzer, *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 7.

found that among Protestants, 52% of churches researched had declined in attendance by at least 10% over the 10 year period; 17% of churches were stable attendance or had plateaued; and 31% of the churches were growing in attendance.[2] According to Olson's research, 69% of all Protestant churches are either plateaued or declining. In addition, according to church growth researcher Thom Rainer, "eight out of ten of the approximately 400,000 churches in the United States are declining or have plateaued."[3] Rainer's research allows for a back-of-the-envelope calculation, which shows that 320,000 churches are currently either in decline or plateaued. This is alarming, but the concern does not stop there.

According to Ed Stetzer, "churches in the first decade of the twenty-first century are closing at a phenomenal rate. Eighty to eighty-five percent of American churches are on the downside of their life cycle."[4] Leith Anderson, noted pastor and church leader, made the same observation, stating that "an estimated 85% of America's Protestant churches are either stagnating or dying."[5] George Barna's observation is correct: "Thousands of churches across America have deteriorated to the point where they are a ministry in theory only, a shell of what they have once been. In these churches, little if any, outreach or in-reach takes place."[6] This led Olson to state that the American church will continue to decline to a point where fewer than 15% of the American population will attend church.[7]

One manner in which churches are addressing their declining attendance is through seeking outside help. A fresh set of eyes can help the church see opportunities for change, opportunities for outreach, and opportunities for growth. The fresh pairs of eyes are known as consultants. Consultants can help a church see areas of growth, they can point out areas that need addressing, and they can offer hope for a better and brighter future for the church.

The key is finding the right consultant or consulting firm for the need of the local church. This article seeks to help the local church ask the right questions when selecting a consultant or consulting firm.

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[2] David T. Olson, *The American Church in Crisis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 131–32.

[3] Thom S. Rainer, *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 45.

[4] Stetzer, *Planting New Churches*, 10.

[5] Leith Anderson, *Dying for Change: An Arresting Look at the New Realities Confronting Churches and Para-Church Ministries* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1990), 9–10.

[6] George Barna, *Turnaround Churches: How to Overcome Barriers to Growth and Bring New Life to an Established Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1993), 22–23.

[7] Olson, *The American Church in Crisis*, 180.

CHECK REPUTATION

Reputation is a funny thing. A reputation can be either good or bad, yet it does not provide a complete picture. Despite this, however, reputation is a good place to start. A reputation can help you eliminate potential options. The key areas of reputation to look for are: past performance, working style, previously made recommendations to churches, assessments or tools used to survey staff, key leaders or the congregation, and the reporting of findings.

Past performance is the easiest aspect to figure out about a consultant. You can ask past clients whether the consultant(s) delivered on what was promised. Was the work completed on time? Was the work done well? These may seem like simple and unimportant questions, but choosing a consultant who does not meet a deadline is frustrating and can cause distrust in the process and in the leadership of the church. It can also cause delays in implementing needed changes.

Working style is another important factor to consider. Is the consultant(s) combative? or confrontational? or are they more collegial and supportive? This might not seem important until you consider the reason(s) for hiring a consultant. A church that is seeking a consultant is either going through a time a of transition, i.e. a long-term senior pastor has retired, or the church has been in decline for a number of years, or a church's leaders are unsure of the vision or direction of the church. In any of these cases, the church hires a consultant to **HELP** the church figure out these things; the consultant is not hired to **LEAD** the change of these things. The consultant's role is to give ***input*** to the leadership team of the church; the consultant does ***not lead*** the leadership team of the church. A consultant should not have a vested interest in the church, so that they have no rights to demand or pressure the leadership of the church in a particular direction. A consultant should offer guidance and remain objective!

CHECK PRESUPPOSITIONS

Consultants are people like each of us. Understanding the presuppositions or bias of the consultants is probably the most difficult information to assess during the selection process, yet it is imperative to know and understand before hiring a consultant. Presuppositions or bias are not bad, if known and accounted for; unknown or unrecognized bias can lead the consultant down the wrong path before the assessment of the church begins, and therefore, be led to a wrong conclusion in the end. For example, a consultant might believe that it is always the senior pastor's fault that a church does not grow. It is true that the senior pastor may be the cause of the decline of the church, but to assume that the senior pastor is *the* reason for the decline before completing an assessment of the church is both wrong and dangerous. Too many

other factors affect whether a church grows and remains healthy. Having this presupposition about the senior pastor might keep the consultant from getting to the root of the problem. Perhaps the issues are not with the senior pastor, but it is with the board. Perhaps the church is located in a community that is experiencing a population decline or shift. Perhaps there is a hidden sin within the church, like in Joshua 7, and God will not allow the church to grow until the sin is confessed and repented. On the other hand, some presuppositions or bias are quite good and healthy. For example, to believe that God wants the church to grow and be healthy is a bias that everyone should have.

Here are some questions to ask to determine the presupposition or bias of the consultant: "What do you believe about church growth?" "Who is responsible for the growth of the church?" "Can one person alone determine the growth of the church?" "What are the major factors limiting a church's growth?"

CHECK RECOMMENDATIONS

Checking previous recommendations is perhaps the easiest information to obtain when interviewing a consultant or consulting firm. Ask the consultant or consultant firm for the names and contact information for the last five churches that they consulted and, if possible, the last five churches that were the same size and circumstance.

Make the calls, and find out about the consultants. Importantly, ask about the previous recommendations that were made by the consultant. It should be expected that consultants would have some standard recommendations for a church, such as, the church needs more local outreach; the worship style needs to better reflect the local community; changes need to be made in staffing; start small groups; get rid of Sunday School for adults; and perhaps the church should consider hiring additional staff in order to take advantage of opportunities for outreach.

What the inquiry into previous recommendations is looking to understand is does the consultant always offer the same recommendations or "canned" answers? Alternatively, is the consultant offering unique, detailed recommendations that fit the local church that they are consulting? For example, some consultants believe that adult Sunday school should be done away with and replaced by small groups, whereas a healthier (and maybe a less divisive) recommendation would be to *add* small groups and make adult Sunday school just another small group. Another example might be to recommend training or coaching for a pastor or staff members instead of replacing the pastor or the staff.

Here are some questions to ask church leaders when checking previously made recommendations: "Did the recommendation offered seem generic or location specific?" "Did you feel that the recommendations took into

account the nuances of your church's situation?" "Looking back, do you think the recommendations were correct?" "Did you implement any or all of the recommendations?" "If you did not implement a recommendation, why not?" "What would you do differently, if anything?"

REVIEW CHURCH HEALTH ASSESSMENT OR SURVEY TOOL

Examining the church health assessment or survey tool that a consultant may use to survey staff or survey the congregation is the most difficult task for a church leader during the selection process. Let's face it, not many of us at the local church are experts in survey development or are trained in evaluating the reliability, validity, and content alignment of survey instruments. If we were, then we could develop our own survey tools for the staff and/or the congregation to examine issues about the church. However, data is important in making decisions. Your data is only as good as what you measure and collect. So, ask for a copy of a consultant's past survey tools for both staff and the congregation and find out whether the consultant customizes the tools to your local church situation. Remember, a good survey tool should be reliable (e.g. consistency of the results), be valid (e.g. accuracy of question design), and provide actionable feedback about the church and its ministries.

Reliability and validity are closely linked. If a survey does not produce valid (or accurate) results, then the survey may not be repeatable (e.g. reliable). In the same way, if the survey does not produce consistent information, then the survey is unreliable and invalid as a decision-making tool. The assessment or survey tool that is used by a consultant should first of all be reviewed during the selection process. Most importantly, the survey should address concrete and actionable issues within the church. A full read of the survey will highlight for you the main areas that the survey can address and the topics that can be reported. Look for areas that may be missing in the survey that are important in your church history, evolution, leadership, culture, and environment.

When reviewing the overall structure of the survey, a rule of thumb for ordering topics within an assessment or survey tool is to move through topics from general to more specific. Broad, open-ended questions are typically placed at the end of the survey once a respondent has answered all of the closed-ended questions, followed by respondent characteristic questions such as age, gender, etc. The placement of broad, open-ended questions at the end is done so that the survey tool has brought to mind the main areas of importance addressed in the survey before having the respondent reflect on providing narrative input or comment. Open-ended questions are designed to elicit specific feedback or comments for which details are wanted/needed that is not easily captured in a closed-ended question.

After reviewing the content and structure of the survey, it is ideal to walk through each question and think through the terms used and the

appropriateness of the response scale. The first step is to examine the terms used and decipher if the terms and respondent characteristic questions align with the church, its structure, and its ministries. It is critical that the terms used are aligned with how the church and its ministries are structured. If the survey uses different definitions for terms such as mission, outreach, small groups, etc. than are used within the church and its own ministries, then the data collected will not reflect the reality of the church, and the results will be meaningless or misrepresented. Next, review each of the closed-ended questions and their associated response scale. Every possible response to a given question should be included within the response scale or response values, without any overlap. There also should be a "Not Applicable" option included for many questions, especially those targeted toward specific ministries in which not all congregants participate. A Likert scale is a common scale used for closed-ended questions. In its final form, the Likert scale is a five (or seven) point *scale* that is used to allow individuals to express how much they agree or disagree with a particular statement. Typically, questions about the same content are grouped together in a survey, and then within a content area, questions with the same type of response scale are grouped together. Screener questions may also be used for questions specific to a sub-population within the church.

It is more important to be thorough in terms of survey content than to worry about survey length. Previous research suggests that survey length generally does not affect survey response rates. Prior findings suggest that the number of survey questions that respondents were required to answer, from as few as 23 to as many as 95, had little effect on response rates, and respondents were as likely to answer a relatively longer survey as a shorter one.[8]

Note that questions should be at a low level of reading literacy (e.g. typically at the eighth grade reading level) and absent of any jargon. The main issue is to have the wording of questions clearly understood by all ranges of people within the congregation. Emotionally charged questions are not appropriate.

DISCUSS ADMINISTRATION PROCESS OF THE CHURCH HEALTH ASSESSMENT OR SURVEY TOOL

Understanding the process of how the church health assessment data is to be collected and discussing how to make this successful so that the effort yields a large number of responses is critical. Set up a time to discuss the

[8] P. M. Gallagher and F. J. Fowler Jr., "Notes from Field: Experiments in Influencing Response Rates from Medicaid Enrollees," in Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, Portland, OR, 18–21 May 2000.

details of the survey administration process with the consultant, and make sure to ask about the plan to distribute the surveys (paper, email with web-link, etc.). Decide what timeframe allowed for people to respond (e.g. how long will they be fielding the survey or administering the survey) and what types of reminders will be used and how often. Importantly, discuss what is the target number of completed surveys they are aiming for and how are they going to determine that the completed set of surveys is a good representation of the entire church congregation.

Another issue to address is anonymity of respondents. An anonymous survey is a key to getting honest feedback. Fear of repercussion might keep people—staff or congregants—from sharing their true thoughts and feelings about the church. Confidentially is a must. Therefore, the survey must be designed so that no one can determine who has responded. This includes ensuring that when responses are de-aggregated by specific characteristics, no one is able to determine the identity of a given person. Questions such as, "How long have you attended the church?" and, "What role(s) do you currently serve?" combined can easily identify the person who responded to the survey. Bottom line, there should be no way to link responses to those who gave the response.

Another important area to consider is the response rate and sample size. The larger the response rate, the larger the sample size of completed surveys, and the more generalizable and representative the data. With this in mind, the minimum goal is to have at least a 30% response rate if using an email/web-based survey and 50% response rate if using a mail/hard copy survey.[9] The response rate is the number of people who answered the survey divided by the number of people in the sample (e.g. the total number of congregants).

Characteristics of the congregation are important data needed in order to understand whether the completed set of surveys captured a good representation of the entire congregation. For example, if mostly the married 30–45-year-olds took the time to fill out the survey, then you are missing the viewpoints of other types of congregational members. The survey results displayed by congregational characteristics (e.g. age, gender, etc.) and compared to these same characteristics from administrative church data can determine whether the assessment was able to collect a representative sample of the whole congregation. If there are gaps, then additional surveying is required. Ask upfront questions such as, "What is your target of completed surveys given our church size?" "What methods of follow up will you use to ensure a completed survey?" "What comparisons can we make to church administrative data to know that we have a good sample of completed surveys?"

[9] H. Rodriquez et al., "Evaluating Patients' Experiences with Individual Physicians: A Randomized Trial of Mail, Internet and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Telephone Administration of Surveys," *Medical Care* 44(2), (2006): 167–74.

REPORTING OF ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Finally, when hiring a consultant, the church must understand how the information found will be reported back to the church. This is done by comparing the assessment or survey tool used by the consultant with an example of previously reported findings. Ask for examples of past briefings or findings that a consultant has provided to churches in addition to the assessment tools used. For example, if the consultant's assessment tool asked for the age of the congregation in ten-year blocks (e.g. 20 to 29, 30 to 39, 40 to 49, 50 to 59, 60 to 69, 70 to 79, and 80 plus), then the data should be reported by displaying it with the same breakdowns. Alternatively, is the data being displayed differently (e.g. 20 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, 55 to 64, 65 to 74, and 75 plus) and has somehow been aggregated? If data is not reported in the same way it is collected, there is room for misunderstanding the data at best and manipulating the data at worst. Remember, the findings will help determine the future direction of the church's ministry, so it is imperative that it is done right!

REVIEWING CHURCH DATA

Church health assessment tools are a valuable way of gaining insight into the current thoughts, feelings, and attitudes of the church body encompassing the staff, leadership, and membership of the church. However, church health assessment tools cannot give a full picture of what is going on at the church; in other words, these tools do not tell you what has been going on at the church. To understand the evolution of the church, its neighborhood, and its congregation, it is important that the consultant(s) review historical information. Several types of data are important for any consultant to review. First, attendance information for at least a span of the last ten years (fifteen to twenty years if possible) should be divided by congregant characteristics such as age, gender, married status, race/ethnicity, etc., if possible. A good consultant will also review financial statistics for the same period of time, including giving patterns, missional giving patterns, construction projects, or major expenditures, etc. It is important to understand the changing demographic patterns for the location of the church, as well, although this may require some research about the community. However, the time is well spent, as it provides context for the changing membership and neighborhood of the church.

By examining attendance records, financial information, and demographic patterns of the church, its city, and neighborhood, the consultant(s) has the opportunity to see trends, either good or bad. For example, if the church experienced consistent growth and then sudden decline, the consultant(s) has important questions to ask key leaders. "What happened during this period of time?" "Were there any big changes in church lead-

ership or church staffing?" "Did something change in the community?" "Was there a major crisis?" "Did the community makeup shift dramatically?" Without answers to these kinds of questions, it is impossible for the consultant(s) to make meaningful recommendations that will benefit the local church.

REVIEWING CHURCH CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

Similarly, it is important that the consultant(s) review the constitution and bylaws as well as all policies and procedures. This provides a good structure for understanding how decisions are made. Are the constitution and bylaws outdated? Do the constitution and bylaws require the organization to be run in a way that stifles growth, or are the constitution and bylaws written in a way that encourages growth? Are policies and procedures written to eliminate human decision-making, or are they written to allow the staff some freedom to operate within defined boundaries? For example, what spending levels do the congregation need to approve? If the number is too low, it makes decision-making very difficult. Will the consultant(s) offer useful suggestions on how to improve the constitution and bylaws, or does he let the church try to figure it out by themselves? Will the consultant review the polices and procedures and provide input or changes? This poses an interesting tightrope for the consultant(s) to walk, because if too much direction is given, then buy-in from the congregation might be lacking. If not enough input is given, then the leadership might not address glaring structural/operational needs or issues.

CONCLUSION

Hiring the right consultant or consulting firm can be a great blessing and benefit to the local church. Consultant(s) can help the church see opportunities for growth, identify areas for improvement, assist with the development of policies and procedures, recommend needed training or reorganization, and assist in staff development plans. These benefits could help a plateaued or dying church become a healthy, vibrant church again.

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PREPARING TO MULTIPLY: FOUR STEPS FOR ESTABLISHED CHURCHES

Joey Chen

Abstract

How should a leader of an established church lead the church to multiply? With the increased attention to church planting, there are more resources available, but little attention is given to the established church. This article seeks to help the leader of an established church prepare to engage in multiplication. While strategy, best practices, and finances are vital components to church multiplication, the crucial starting point for an established church leader is to prepare. There are four places to look while in the preparation stage: inward, upward, outward, and around.

Learning to cook taught me crucial lessons about the importance of preparation. The first time I tried to cook a full meal was for my girlfriend (who is now my wife), and it was a disaster. I took on more than I could handle and found myself sweating, with a messy kitchen, and half-cooked dishes that were inedible. I was minutes away from making a phone call for take-out. What began as a romantic gesture became a frustrating experience, and the only reason the meal was salvaged was because I asked my mother to help finish cooking the meal.

Later, I discovered *Jacques Pepin's Complete Techniques*, and I realized that I had jumped into cooking without understanding the basics. Before even touching food, Pepin spends time teaching the importance of holding the knife correctly and sharpening it. For seventy chapters, Pepin focuses

entirely on preparation. The lesson is clear—preparation is essential to execution. This is crucial in athletics and medicine, and it is essential to church multiplication.

FEW WRITE ABOUT ESTABLISHED CHURCHES

Many have written about the preparation of the church planter or the church planting team, but less is written about preparing established churches to multiply. This is probably due to the unfortunate reality that most established churches have plateaued or are declining.[1] Many leaders of established churches experience churches that "are steeped in complacency and the status quo and thus tend strongly to resist needed change."[2] Since it is more difficult to mobilize change in an established church, there is a preference to starting new churches apart from the established church. Still, established churches need to be involved in church planting. As J.D. Payne challenges, "It is time for more churches to become mothers, instead of remaining on birth control."[3]

Some authors write about established churches being involved in multiplication, but most write for churches already at the strategy stage. However, two dedicated resources for established churches are *Spin-Off Churches*, by Rodney Harrison, Tom Cheyney, and Don Overstreet and *Ripple Church*, by Phil Stevenson. While both of these resources are helpful and commendable works, Stevenson gives the most attention to preparation.

This article hopes to build upon these great works and provide guidance for leaders of established churches to multiply. Proverbs 16:9 reminds us that "The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps." There are four directions a leader needs to look in order to prepare: inward, upward, outward, and around. These preparation steps are primarily for the leader, but it is recommended that the steps begin to be taken by others as well.

LOOK INWARD

The first direction the leader needs to look is *inward*, which means to step back to evaluate motives. Since you have probably read books, attended conferences, or observed church plants start in your city, you are probably excited about multiplication. Nevertheless, before answering the "how"

[1] Ed Stetzer and Warren Bird, *Viral Churches: Helping Church Planters Become Movement Makers*, 1 ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2010), 60.

[2] Aubrey Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting: A Guide for Starting Any Kind of Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 9.

[3] J. D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009), 234.

question, it is best that you stop to answer the "why" question. If you do not have an answer to the "why" question, or if the answer is not rooted in a calling from God, then it is probably best to wait.

There are destructive motives that need to be identified and put away. Peter writes, "We have been born again to be God's holy people, so we are to put away envy" (1Pe 2:1). Envy looks at the successes of others and withholds joyful celebration and praise of God. Envy makes joy in kingdom growth impossible because the only growth that envious people desire is the growth of their own kingdom.

I have been in San Francisco for nine years, and in that time, I have seen several new church plants become the largest and fastest growing evangelical churches in the city. Externally, I celebrated the growth of churches in San Francisco, but internally, I experienced discontentment and envy. In those moments of envy, there was a desire to start something new, but it was selfishly motivated.

God was gracious and stopped me because I was not focused on Christ or his kingdom; I was focused on me. Joe Rigney writes that "Envy is a gaping maw, a roaring lion seeking to devour, the relentless ache of the shriveled heart."[4] Those words described my envy and explain why anyone with envy should not multiply. Planting a church out of envy will dishonor God and harm the church.

Envy is easily masked behind ambition and personality, so how can we tell if we are motivated by envy? Rigney provides some helpful diagnostic questions.

> The next time someone else is given an opportunity or a blessing that you wish was yours, how do you react? Do you murmur about it, or do you celebrate with them? Are you filled with gratitude, or carping rivalry? When it comes to the ministries of others, are you their biggest fan or their biggest critic? Are you consumed with envy, or is your joy made complete as you see the Bridegroom increase in the success of someone other than you?[5]

Sometimes, an envious person is so blinded that he cannot answer these questions honestly. If you are serious about looking inward, I would encourage you to ask your spouse or trusted friend to answer these questions for you. If there are any discrepancies in your answers, that may indicate a lack of self-awareness that needs to be explored.

In addition to envy, look inward for *selfish ambition*. Dave Harvey has written a book, *Rescuing Ambition*, and anyone with ambition to multiply churches should read it before starting. Harvey notes that godly ambition

[4] Joe Rigney, "Why Envy Is a Danger for the YRR," *Desiring God*, last modified April 3, 2013, accessed October 6, 2016, http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/why-envy-is-a-danger-for-the-yrr.

[5] Ibid.

becomes corrupted when "the love of distinction never has a project, purpose, or person in mind beyond self. The most important thing is not the success of a business or a great endeavor. The most important thing is that I be remembered for being the best, for being first. It's the trap on the path of ambition."[6] Since pastoral ministry is people work, there is a danger to work for the applause of people.

The danger of selfish ambition is real and common among those who want to multiply churches. Audit yourself by asking these questions and inviting others to evaluate your character. How often do you allow others to share the spotlight in ministry? Do you find that your mood swings with church attendance and offering? Are you often critical of other churches and pastors simply because they have externally successful ministries?

Conversely, it is important that a leader has godly ambition. Without ambition, leaders lose focus or give up. Paul says, "and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation" (Ro 15:20). Two motives are essential to the leader of multiplication—a love for God and a love for the lost.

Starting new churches is not ultimately about the church; it must be about God and his glory. Jesus said to the church in Ephesus, "But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first" (Rev 2:4). Sometimes a leader becomes myopic in his focus on the church and forgets that the church exists for the glory of God.

In their book, *Ten Most Common Mistakes Made by New Church Starts*, Griffith and Easum suggest that the first common mistake is "neglecting the Great Commandment in pursuit of the Great Commission."[7] They rightly conclude that "the Great Commission minus the Great Commandment reduces evangelism to a vocation, a challenge, or a duty. However, the deep motivator for people who take evangelism seriously is an overwhelming love of God."[8] A leader looking to multiply must have a deep relationship with Jesus. If there is not a foundational love for God and the pursuit of his glory alone, then efforts for multiplication will either rely on human strength or become self-interested.

LOOK UPWARD

The second direction to look is *upward*, which is to look to Christ. Church planting books rightly focus their attention on the leader. John Maxwell is right when he says that "everything rises and falls on leadership." How-

[6] Dave Harvey, *Rescuing Ambition* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 42.

[7] James Griffith and William Easum, *Ten Most Common Mistakes Made by Church Starts* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2008), 5.

[8] Ibid., 6.

ever, church multiplication must be grounded in something more than the leader's skill and personality. Multiplication must be anchored in Christ and Scripture. This is something that is often assumed in multiplication strategies and must be made explicit.

The biblical mandate for starting new churches is found in Christ's promise, "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt 16:18). Jesus desires to build his church; it is not ultimately a work of man. Looking upward means being compelled by Jesus' promise to the church.

Even though the Great Commission does not say to plant churches, multiplication of churches is implied. Tim Keller points out that baptism "means an incorporation into a worshipping community with accountability and boundaries" (cs. Ac 2:41–47).[9] Ott and Wilson further note that the command to make disciples and obey all that Jesus commanded "cannot be kept by one individual alone, the kingdom of Christ cannot be demonstrated in isolation."[10] Jesus' commission requires the starting of new churches so disciples can follow Christ together and make more disciples. Obedience to the Great Commission requires the planting of new churches.

In addition to the promises and commands of Jesus, the pattern of the early church was to start new churches. This is seen in the book of Acts and in the ministry of Paul. At almost every city, preaching of the Gospel occurred, conversions happened, and churches started. We know that the Thessalonian church continued Paul's work when he says, "For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so we that we need not say anything" (1Th 1:8).

Notable scholars Andreas Köstenberger and Peter O'Brien point out that Paul "was engaged in primary evangelism and proclaimed the message of the grace of God so that men and women were converted, but he also founded churches and sought to bring believers into full maturity in Christ as a necessary element in his missionary task."[11] Paul's mission to preach the gospel included the establishing of new churches.

Looking upward also means being theological. This is because the practice of starting churches is a theological task. Ott and Wilson recognize that church planting is theological when they say it "is where missiology and ecclesiology intersect."[12] Church planting is a thoroughly practical task

[9] Tim Keller, "Why Plant Churches," February 2002, accessed October 5, 2016, http://download.redeemer.com/pdf/learn/resources/Why_Plant_Churches-Keller.pdf, 1.

[10] Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 23.

[11] Andreas J. Köstenberger and Peter T. O'Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: Apollos/Inter-Varsity Press, 2001), 268.

[12] Ott and Wilson, *Global Church Planting*, 26.

but not detached from theology. An upward-looking leader recognizes the importance of theology, will prepare himself in the study of theology, and equip the church through the teaching of theology.

Phil Stevenson wrote an article entitled, *A Theology of Church Planting*, and he recognizes that "church planting is an implementation of theological teaching."[13] Stevenson identifies four key theological concepts that are foundational to church planting: *mission Dei*, incarnation, kingdom of God, and ecclesiology. These truths must shape both the leader and the church's minds and hearts. His helpful summary of these theological topics is a great primer for developing a theology of church planting.

LOOK OUTWARD

Looking *outward* is learning to develop a love for the lost and understanding your context. In order to lead the church to multiply, the leader must have a love for those who need Christ.

In an established church, the leaders time may be primarily focused on the ministries for believers. It is important to help Christians grow in Christ-likeness and to create systems that sustain discipleship. However, a leader looking to multiply churches must be able to live among non-Christians and share the gospel in everyday experiences. Their prayer life has to be filled with prayers to the "Lord of the harvest" (Mt 9:38) because the plentiful harvest with few workers burden them.

Writing about how to act at the right time, Stevenson says that a church "that has the desire to see people brought into the kingdom has the potential to become a parent."[14] In order for a leader to prepare an established church to multiply, the leader first must cultivate a love for those who need Jesus. This was the pattern of Jesus during his earthly ministry; he ate with the drunks, tax collectors, and sinners.

One of the best ways to develop this love for the lost is to schedule it into your calendar. A leader's time is easily filled with ministry needs of the church, which is why there is often little time for non-Christians. Prioritize a standing calendar appointment, weekly or monthly, to spend time with non-Christians. A leader's love for those who need Christ cannot grow unless time is spent with them.

In addition to your calendar, make sure it is a part of your prayer life. Pray by name for leaders of your city. Make sure you regularly pray for non-Christian friends, and ask them how you can pray for them. Most non-Christians are not against prayer, especially if it is for them.

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[13] Phil Stevensen, "A Theology of Church Planting," *Great Commission Research Journal* 2, no. 2 (Winter 2011): 252.

[14] Phil Stevenson, *Becoming a Ripple Church: Why and How to Plant New Congregations* (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2013), Location 1184, Kindle.

This love for the lost also needs to be fostered in the church. If a church loves non-Christians, it will be more likely to multiply. Malphurs gives a helpful audit survey[15] that could be used among key leaders to identify if evangelism is a core value. If it is not a core value, discuss with leaders what barriers exist or what conflicting priorities are hindering a love for the lost. Nurturing the congregation to develop a love for the lost will take praying, teaching, and modeling.

LOOK AROUND

Finally, preparing a church to multiply requires the leader to look around. Look around in your church and in your city for likeminded people. Multiplication cannot be accomplished alone, and neither should the preparation for it. This means looking around for people who share this passion and befriending local church planters.

If God has given you a vision for multiplication, then he will also provide people to follow this vision. Identifying these people is important because they will become a support group that will pray for you and help in the multiplication effort. As you cast the vision for starting new churches, make sure you sit down with key leaders to see if they are supportive. Make sure to involve and empower likeminded people to leadership positions so they can help influence the culture.

If you look around at your top leadership (board, elders, trustees), and there are no likeminded individuals, then the priority should be to cast a vision for multiplication. Stevenson is right when he warns that "until pastors, board members, and other influence-makers in the local church own a vision for parenting, they will lack enthusiasm for expansion."[16] If you find yourself in this place, do not impudently criticize the leaders. Spend time praying for the Holy Spirit to change minds, and spend time teaching your leaders the importance of multiplication as obedience to the Great Commission.

Looking around means investing in relationships with local church planters. There is much to be learned from those who are actively involved in the work. This can be done personally and corporately. Personally, take the time to sit down with church planters, and get to know them and their passions. Since new church planters are primarily focused outward on the community, their ability to exegete the culture is probably higher than most established church pastors. Take them out for coffee or lunch, and ask how you can pray for them and their church. Learn how you can support them. Since multiplication is kingdom work, this means learning to encourage others and not harbor a spirit of competition.

[15] Malphurs, *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting*, 237.

[16] Stevenson, *Becoming a Ripple Church*, Location 829.

On the corporate level, you could invite the church planter to come and share or guest speak at your worship services. This gives the established church exposure to the church plant, and it can help cultivate an acceptance of multiplication. Make sure to take the time to pray for the church planter and his family publically.

Depending on the willingness of your church, offer tangible support, like the use of your building or work force. Involving the established church in the help of a church plant helps create momentum for future multiplication work.

CONCLUSION

The urgency of church planting is significant. I praise God for the recent interest in church planting, and my hope is that more established churches will start to multiply. If you have read this far, you probably have a desire to start new churches, and I am thankful for that. However, before you start, take some time to prepare yourself and your church. I hope you do not end up with a messy kitchen, half-cooked dishes, and the need to call in your mom to help—unless she is a part of your church planting team.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Elliott, Stephen D. *By Signs and Wonders: How the Holy Spirit Grows the Church*. Franklin, TN: Seedbed, 2014. 178 pp. $16.95.

Reviewed by Aaron Perry, PhD, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care and Christian Ministry at Wesley Seminary at Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, IN. He is an ordained pastor in The Wesleyan Church and has served as a pastor near Binghamton, NY, and Brockville, Ontario, Canada.

Church planter, pastor, and current professor and program director of pastoral ministries and church planting at Kingswood University in New Brunswick, Canada, Stephen D. Elliott has written a book to spur a new form of evangelism in the contemporary Western church. Elliott writes from his doctoral research (DMin, Asbury Theological Seminary) and professional experience as a church planter and pastor where he utilized and critically observed various evangelism strategies, including a pursuit of the Holy Spirit for miraculous signs in the conversion of unbelievers. *By Signs and Wonders: How the Holy Spirit Grows the Church* is a popular, reasoned, and passionate presentation of the case for the role of miraculous deeds and supernatural events in conversion.

Elliott begins and sustains a sharp and pointed critique of what often passes for friendship evangelism, the evangelism strategy that a holy, positive, helpful, sacrificial life will lead unbelievers to understand the source of this lifestyle and become followers of Jesus (xi). Frankly, argues Elliott, the approach is not working. While Elliott repeats that friendship evangelism is

not bad, misguided, or to be discarded, the reader will not question Elliott's desire to persuade the reader that it is ineffective. Elliott's version of friendship evangelism is best described as a friendship evangelism in use, rather than the approach in its full form. This in-use form of friendship evangelism is an evangelism that really is not evangelistic (and hardly that concerned with friendships!). It is, at best, a wish in fairly surface-level friendships that never gets at sharing the gospel. As such, it is better understood as "pre-evangelism" (71). Elliott will not let the reader away from his belief and argued point that friendship evangelism, as it is typically practiced, will not have any significant influence in converting unbelievers.

In its place, Elliott presents the miraculous role of the Holy Spirit combined with proclamation and/or testimony as a more effective model for attracting, persuading, and converting unbelievers. Evidence is drawn from Scripture (both Old and New Testaments), early church history, revival accounts, the Wesleyan tradition, spirituality authors (such as A.W. Tozer), contemporary documentaries (the "Transformation Videos"), recent evangelism programs (e.g., Alpha), the experience of the non-Western world churches, and personal experience to present this case. The Spirit's presence and miraculous work are presented as being normative for the church and a means of conversion that the contemporary Western church should seek. The Holy Spirit, through healings, words of knowledge, prophecies, and other actions, must be sought and expected in today's church for there to be meaningful, widespread conversions.

By Signs and Wonders does a fine job of presenting a readable, organized case of the author's experience and conviction of evidence for the Spirit's role in evangelism. Elliott offers a plethora of stories, quotes, and statistics for the miraculous presence of the Spirit in conversion and the failure of contemporary Western churches to evangelize the lost. Those readers who have become disillusioned with friendship evangelism or who have failed to see it bear much (if any) fruit, as was the case with Elliott, will find the book convincing. Further, Elliott's case is grounded in the lordship of Jesus, with consistent critiques and warnings of unbiblical signs. The Spirit is not sought for entertainment, and the Christian's allegiance is to Jesus, not to the signs themselves (p. 141). Others who are naturally skeptical of the approach will argue that a more critical assessment of statistics, online materials, and Elliott's plain read of Scripture and history is needed. While these maneuvers would certainly strengthen Elliott's case, they would also change the nature of the book.

Elliott intentionally writes for a lay audience in addition to pastoral leaders. Each chapter comes equipped with small group discussion questions, and Elliott provides helpful teaching points and repeatable models in the appendices. Elliott's own experience is used to help interested pastors begin to introduce an openness to the Holy Spirit to church leadership, staff, and the whole church so as to help people incorporate what might be awkward

and foreign into their corporate worship and small group practice. Readers, both lay and clergy, predisposed to Elliott's argument will find the work a helpful resource for encouragement, small groups, and practical insights, while those open to the argument will be presented with new evidence and avenues of thought.

Payne, J.D. *Apostolic Church Planting: Birthing New Churches from New Believers.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015. 128 pp. $15.00.

Reviewed by Joey Chen. Joey has a passion for what God is doing in cities and is currently lead pastor at Sunset Church in San Francisco, California. He is also currently working on a DMin at Talbot School of Theology. He earned his MDiv from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and a BA from Cedarville University.

At a recent church planting conference, I listened to speakers stress the importance of cultural relevance and discuss how to handle setup and teardown challenges for multisite locations. There were talks about staffing challenges and what kind of staff positions to fill when starting a new church. While I appreciated the content and practical guidance, I felt that something was missing. J.D. Payne's book, *Apostolic Church Planting*, addresses a talking point that is often neglected or assumed in the present church planting conversation. Payne was pressed to write this book when he discovered that church planters were unfamiliar with basic biblical foundations at church planting conferences! The urgency is great because "when the church is shocked at a biblical model, it reveals just how far away from the Scriptures we have moved in our missionary practices" (14). Payne's work seeks to provide biblical paradigms and practices of church planting.

The heart of Payne's church planting paradigm is that it should be "evangelism that results in new churches" (13). Throughout the book, Payne gives definitions, biblical foundations, and best practices that help the church planter to stay grounded in Scripture. In the first chapter, Payne deals with the question, "what is church planting," and why assuming the answer to this question is not wise. He points out that "nowhere in the Bible is the church commanded to plant churches" (17). We have a commission to go make disciples, and he notes that "we read the birth of churches—*after* disciples are made" (17). He is concerned that much of modern church planting focuses on the secondary, not the primary, matters.

Important to the discussion of church planting is ecclesiology. Payne criticizes the common desire of planters to focus on the secondary matters of the church, such as trendy people, locations, and aesthetics. By focusing on these matters first, he believes that church planting starts off on the wrong foot because this leads church plants to prioritize existing Christians.

In chapters three to eight, Payne focuses on practical matters of the church planting team, the stages of planting, shifting roles and responsibilities, and methods. Especially helpful is his analysis of the start of New Testament churches. From this analysis, he identifies that the pathway to planting is fourfold: the gospel is shared, disciples are made, churches are planted, and elders are appointed (51). In the chapter on methods, Payne does not give a how-to-guide, but he gives guidelines that methods must be biblical, reproducible, ethical, non-paternalistic, and Christ sustainable.

In the remainder of the book, Payne turns his attention to implementation. He addresses common concerns of where to start and how to develop elders, strategy, and ethical guidelines. Similar to the guidelines for the methods, Payne gives principles of strategy instead of specifics. He suggests that strategy should be "a prayerfully discerned, Spirit-guided process of preparation development, implementation, and evaluation of the necessary steps" (110). Payne ends with ethical guidelines that are helpful considerations prior to planting a church.

Threaded throughout the book is Payne's conviction that churches should be started from the evangelism of new disciples, and that transfer growth or growth from "longtime believers ought to be the exception to the rule" (23). This point shows up in almost every chapter of the book and is foundational to his paradigm. What is convincing about this conclusion is the Scripture he uses to support his thesis. He writes that "nowhere in the Bible is the church commanded to plant churches. No such reference exists" (17). He states that the regulative paradigm in the "weight of biblical evidence is that churches should be birthed from harvest fields" (24). However, probably due to space, he does not show all the places where this occurs in Scripture. A biblical theology of church plants in the New Testament would have been helpful to proving his point, because without it, the reader must take his word for it.

Overall, Payne is persuasive in his biblical argument, but there are some weaknesses in his application of it for the church. Payne does admit that there is a place for church planting that starts with longtime Christians, and that is his primary personal experience (23). However, if his thesis is based on the observation that churches should start with new converts, he does not show how churches that start with longtime believers are failing. At the same time, Payne is right in criticizing expectations of church planters wanting to work primarily with fully mature believers. If church planters work only with mature Christians, they will never make new disciples. This is one area that could use more research if a majority of church plants start with mature believers.

Payne applies his thesis consistently when he considers pastoral development. Not only should new churches come from new believers, but also new pastors should come from new, local believers. Answering a common question of whether or not it would be better to send mature pastors to new

churches, he answers, "No. . . . While this is biblically permissible for pastors to come from outside the newly planted churches, this should be the exception in church planting, not the expectation" (107). This satisfies the biblical observation in the New Testament since Paul did not send elders from Jerusalem or Antioch to pastor the new churches. However, I believe Payne neglects to deal with the sending of Timothy and Titus to Ephesus and Crete to establish elders. While they may be identifying local pastors, they are outsiders that are helping to establish local pastors. This may not be so simple as Payne wants to suggest.

The emphasis on church planting as a team effort is an important corrective that many church planters should heed. Since many church planters lean towards a "Type A" personality and have entrepreneurial skills, one of the weaknesses of many church planters may be working alone. Payne addresses this issue with his ethical guideline six that states, "Since a team approach is a biblical model for church planting, and many liabilities come when working as a solo church planter, it's best to develop your team before the work begins" (118). Especially helpful is what Payne calls, "Barnabas factors," which are eight characteristics of a church-planting team. Keeping consistent with his belief that church planting should start with conversion, Payne notes that one of the eight characteristics that mark a team member must be someone who "shares the gospel regularly" (34). In chapter six, Payne is wise in recognizing the future role changes for a church planting team. This is a good reminder that a healthy team and healthy leader anticipate change and prepare for it. He is right to recognize that a "long-term discipleship strategy is also a must" (67).

It is sometimes difficult to tell if Payne is speaking of church planting in an international context or church planting in the North American context. While this may lead to some confusion, it is a good reminder that missions and church planting ought to have much in common. While addressing the question of where to begin, Payne uses the principle of receptivity to help guide a planter to a starting point. This shows how much overlap there is between missions, the Church Growth Movement, and modern church planting efforts. However, for all the similarities, Payne does give priority to the global need when he says, "Since the global need for the gospel is so great, your team should begin its ministry among people with the greatest need *and* with a high level of receptivity to the gospel *unless God reveals otherwise*" (115). Many church planters should consider this question since there seems to be a tendency to go to trendy cities rather than church planting among unreached peoples of the world. We need church plants both in the cities of the U.S. and in unreached places of the world, but I agree that there needs to be a greater consideration and priority on unreached peoples.

Payne's dual role as pastor and professor can be felt throughout the book in his language and the structure of his book. One helpful part of every

chapter is his ability to anticipate common questions and give answers at the end of many of his chapters. In addition, he gives a helpful summary at the end of each chapter. His communication style and approach make this an approachable book for a challenging topic.

One attractive feature of this book is its succinctness. This is because this book is not an update but a complement to his earlier and more comprehensive resource, *Discovering Church Planting*, published in 2009. This means that many topics do not receive an in-depth treatment, but its brevity may play favorably for a church planter wanting to pass this book out as a primer for team members who are not lovers of books.

Payne's book is easy to recommend for church planters, church planting team members, or leaders considering church planting. One caveat is that the title may need some explanation since *apostolic* may be misleading, but it does not take away from its biblical substance and practical helpfulness. Payne skillfully presents church planting as a work that is filled with both hope and difficulties that must be overcome. The stakes are high because at least four billion people in the world do not know Christ, and like Payne, I hope there will be many more church planters who heed God's call and respond with their lives for the glory of God among all peoples of the earth.

Ott, Craig, Ed. *The Mission of the Church: Five Views in Conversation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2106. 181 pp.

A review by Dustin Slaton, Campus Pastor of the South Campus of Green Acres Baptist Church of Tyler, TX and a PhD student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

In *The Mission of the Church: Five Views in Conversation*, Craig Ott, professor of mission and intercultural studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, presents a conversation between five different perspectives on the nature of the church's mission. The book presents five chapters in which the authors make a case for their particular view, then follows up with five chapters where each author has an opportunity to respond to the other authors and to offer clarification. This review is written by a pastor with a western evangelical worldview, and will raise concerns from an evangelical viewpoint.

Steven B. Bevans's chapter presents the mission of the Church as the task of prophetic dialogue. The goal of prophetic dialogue is to engage the lost world in their context, using their own life and religious experience as the foundation for a conversation (4). Bevans is a Roman Catholic priest and missionary, who has written extensively on mission. Prophetic dialogue seeks to help people discover the validity of their own religious experience and discover the deeper truth within their experience. These deeper truths

will lead them to a better understanding of who God is. The core principles of prophetic dialogue are "(1) witness and proclamation; (2) liturgy, prayer and contemplation; (3) justice, peace and the integrity of creation; (4) interfaith, secular (and ecumenical) dialogue; (5) inculturation; and (6) reconciliation"(10). Bevan's arguments show a definite concern for the well-being and care of individuals, reconciliation, and contextual ministry. However, evangelicals will have a difficult time with some of his conclusions regarding the role of evangelization as it engages other religions. He suggests that other religions can be a pathway to faith in God, writing that "they have come to realize that the religions among which they live are not demonic creations but vehicles of God's saving power. And so they have come to realize that other religions are not Christianity's rivals, but potential allies in working for the values of the reign of God"(7). Concerning the Holy Spirit, Bevans says in his response chapter that a non-linear approach to the Trinity "would allow room for the presence of the Spirit in other religions both before and after the advent of Jesus"(121). This is a definite problem for those who view salvation being by faith in Jesus Christ alone and the Word of God being found exclusively in the biblical text.

Darrell L. Guder's chapter discusses a multicultural and translational approach to the mission of the church. Guder is a professor emeritus at Princeton Theological Seminary and has written on the mission of the church and mission theology. The multicultural and translational approach to mission has as its primary purpose the contextualization of the Gospel into culturally appropriate forms. "At every step of the way, the discourse evoked by this approach precludes any particular culture making claims to universal validity and normativity, recognizing that it is the Spirit's empowering work to enable the articulation of the gospel in every culture, as it is translated by faithful witnesses carrying out the apostolic mission" (22–23). Guder's focus is on the expansion of the church in these cultural forms, but he does not emphasize the role of evangelization as a vital element of that mission. The reader must read between the lines to discover if Guder believes evangelization has a vital role. He says, "Cultures require conversion just as individual sinners do"(28), and, "The mandate of the apostolic mission that generates the multicultural church is summarized in Matthew's Great Commission: 'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations' (Matt 28:19)"(31). It would be preferable for him to make more emphasis on evangelism as it relates to the mission of the church.

Ruth Padilla DeBorst is a teacher and writer on the topic of mission, and she is coordinator of the Networking Team of the International Fellowship of Mission as Transformation. Her writing comes out of her experience as a Latin American Christian. Her chapter presents the integral transformational approach to the mission of the church. This approach emphasized the power of the Gospel to transform spiritual realities as well as physical

realities, providing restoration and reconciliation in multiple areas. She writes, "Reconciled relationships in the creation community are at the heart of transformation. And this transformation affects all dimensions of life, matters spiritual, social, political, economic, and ecological"(42). While DeBorst does say an emphasis on salvation has its place, it cannot be removed from social impact. In fact, DeBorst truly gives more emphasis to creating changes in the society and physical situation of people than on spiritual change. The gospel appears to take a back seat to meeting physical needs. Quoting Washington Padilla, she writes, "The integral transformational approach, in sum, is grounded in an understanding of the kingdom of the 'triune God who hears the cry of the people'; the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, 'model of solidarity and service to the poor'; and the ever-present work of the Holy Spirit 'in human beings [that] produces transformation which also reaches social reality'" (48).[1]

Edward Rommen's chapter concerns the sacramental vision approach. Rommen is the rector of Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Church in Raleigh-Durham, NC, and an adjunct professor at Duke Divinity School. Rommen states, "The church and its sacraments are … the beginning and end of its mission" (69). Rommen argues the mission of the church is to bring more people into the church. He is concerned with evangelism, writing that "the most pressing duty for Christian witness is to introduce the person of Christ to those who do not yet know him"(74). Yet Rommen, writing from an Orthodox Church view, sees the goal as incorporating people into the church so that they may receive salvation and ongoing spiritual nourishment through receiving the grace-administering sacraments of baptism and communion in the Eucharistic celebration (74–75). Thus, from Rommen's perspective, the mission of the church can only happen where the Orthodox church is present, because these sacraments can only be administered by "a canonically consecrated bishop or one of his ordained priests"(80). Church planting, therefore, can only occur through authorized missionaries who have "received this authority from this unbroken [Apostolic] chain of command," and only those authorized can "legitimately engage in the mission of the church" (83). This high view of the place of the church, specifically the Orthodox Church, raises serious problems for the widespread expansion of the church, and gives no place for contextualization of the church as it spreads.

Ed Stetzer's chapter is on the evangelical kingdom community approach to the mission of the church. Stetzer served as the executive director of Lifeway Research and is a prolific author on mission and the church. Stetzer defines his approach: "God's people are to participate in the divine mission to manifest and advance God's kingdom on earth through the means of sharing and showing the gospel of God's kingdom in Jesus Christ"(92). He adds

[1] Padilla, Washington. *Hacia una Transformacion Intergral*. Buenos Aires: FTL, 1989. 95.

that it "must be rooted in the biblical text, focus on the work of Christ on the cross, call for conversion, and display activism as a missional church"(92). The mission of the church is primarily the evangelization of nations and the establishment of the kingdom of God in new areas. Along the way, Stetzer says social change will occur, and a contextualized church will be established (94–95). The primary impetus for all of this is God's glory being manifested and proclaimed throughout the nations (97). Stetzer gives a biblical argument for this view that is solidly based on the Scripture rather than a particular church tradition or social situation. It would be good for Stetzer to add a more explicit reference to evangelization in his definition, perhaps adding "and to call people to salvation through faith in Christ." Evangelism is more than just "sharing and showing the gospel." It is sharing, showing, and calling people to response to what they have received. He includes this in his chapter, but it is missing from his definition.

This book is a quick read, being only 181 pages, including indexes and bibliographies. It offers a thorough, yet succinct, description of these five views on the mission of the church, and gives some space for interaction between the contributors. It would have been preferable if the contributors' responses could have been included with the original chapters, so arguments could be directly pointed toward each specific view of mission. However, it is obvious Ott's goal was to have more of a conversational tone, which is accomplished by the general responses in the second half of the book. This is a great resource for developing conversation on the mission of the church. It is perfect for expanding the reader's understanding of mission beyond his or her own denominational understanding. This contribution to the conversation by Craig Ott is necessary and appreciated.

Patrick, Darrin. *Church Planter: The Man, The Message, The Mission*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010. Print. 240 pp. $14.00.

Reviewed by Jamie Booth. Booth earned a BA in Bible from Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, and an MDiv from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts. Currently, he is pursuing a Doctor of Ministry degree from Talbot School of Theology, La Mirada, California. Booth serves as the Executive Pastor of Calvary Christian Church, Lynnfield, Massachusetts.

Church Planter is a well-written and thought-provoking book that covers three crucial elements for any church plant: the man planting the church, the message the church proclaims, and the mission that the church carries out. The author of this book, Darrin Patrick, was a church planter himself. Darrin began The Journey church in St. Louis, Missouri, in 2002. Since its inception, The Journey has grown to be a multisite church with six campuses throughout both Missouri and Illinois. The church has also planted

eight additional churches in areas as far away as Port-au-Prince, Haiti. In addition to beginning The Journey church, Darrin served as the vice president of the Acts 29 Network, which is an organization dedicated to planting churches. Further, he served as a council member of The Gospel Coalition.

The three sections of *Church Planter* assist the reader in coming to a fuller understanding of the great challenge and responsibility of church planting. The first section of the book covers "The Man," the church planter himself. The major emphasis of this section revolves around this verse: "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves" (2 Corinthians 13:5a, NIV). Patrick asks potential church planters to examine themselves by looking at seven biblical qualifications for church planting. Specifically, he shares that church planters should be rescued or saved, called to ministry, qualified and living a God honoring life, dependent on God, skilled in ministry, a shepherd who cares for people, and determined to work hard for God.

The second section of this book deals with the message that the church planter and the church should preach. Patrick believes that this message should be a historical, salvation- accomplishing, Christ-centered, sin-exposing, idol-shattering message. To preach a historical message, Patrick writes we must proclaim that "He (Jesus) went from the God of heaven out there to being the Lord of earth right here. God took the theory of his love for his people and wrapped it in skin and blood and gristle and bone" (107). By a salvation-accomplishing message, Patrick means the message is more than interesting facts; rather, it should be alive and should change us (117). A Christ-centered message teaches that our faith is not about what we do, but about what Christ has done (136). By a sin-exposing message, Patrick believes our message should point out those things that we love more than God (150). Finally, in this section, Patrick shares that an idol-shattering message reveals the fact that we are all worshipers, and we are all "worshipping something—either God or something or someone in the place of God" (159).

In the third and final section of the book, the author discusses the mission that the church planter and church must fulfill. He characterizes the mission in five ways. First, he says the *heart* of the mission should be compassion, taking time to meet the needs of the people rather than always being busy doing inward-focused church activities. Second, he says the *house* of the mission should be the church and not outside parachurch organizations. Patrick writes, "I began to realize that the parachurch was a reaction to the church not doing its job. I began to see how the local church is God's eternal plan to both edify his people and evangelize the world" (187). The *how* of the mission should be contextualization, working hard to make sure the church "is speaking to people with their terms, not on their terms" (195). Fourth, he shares, the *hands* of the mission should be care. By this, he means

not just preaching the gospel as Word, but living out the gospel and doing good works in the community (210). Finally, he shares that the *hope* of the mission is city transformation. Patrick challenges pastors with the question, "Would your city weep if your church did not exist?" (226). If the answer is no, then he suggests perhaps we are not doing enough to bring the gospel to our communities.

The purpose of *Church Planter* is to give a rubric by which potential church planters could evaluate and affirm their call and commitment to ministry. It also serves to inspire existing churches to get involved in planting new churches and become more active in their communities. *Church Planter* succeeds in accomplishing both of these purposes.

First, the lens into church ministry that Patrick provides gives a thorough and accurate view into pastoral life. He forces potential church planters reading his book to ask hard questions such as, "Am I spiritually healthy enough to be a lead pastor?" and, if they are not, to realize that their churches will not grow. Patrick explains, "Most churches do not grow beyond the spiritual health of their leadership" (24). He also challenges potential church planters to count the cost and realize that pastoral ministry is not easy. He writes, "Ministry is more than hard. Ministry is impossible. And unless we have a fire inside our bones compelling us, we simply will not survive" (30). He goes on to say, "The unsexy reality of the pastorate is that it involves hard work—the heavy-lifting, curse-ridden, unyielding employment of your whole person for the sake of the church. Pastoral ministry requires dogged, unyielding determination" (94). These lenses, among others Patrick provides, give the opportunity for his readers to examine their calling, which was one of his primary reasons for writing the book.

Second, *Church Planter* seeks to inspire existing churches to get involved in church planting and become active participants in their communities, which it also succeeds in doing. Patrick believes that the church is the hope of the world and asks, "What would happen if we actually started seeing ourselves as missionaries to the people who live around us by being good neighbors?" (228). Patrick further encourages people to get involved in their communities in every way possible. He shares that they do this by being good neighbors, through community engagement, through good deeds, and even through their professions. He writes, "This means that people in our churches should be professors in local universities, researchers and physicians in our local hospitals, musicians in local bands, artists in local galleries, writers in local media, and politicians in local government" (228–9). Throughout the book, Patrick does a tremendous job of showing how the church must be involved in the community through church planting and community involvement.

To accomplish the two purposes of challenging potential church planters to evaluate their calling and to challenge churches to get involved in their

community, Patrick ends the book with probing rhetorical questions. He asks,

> What if our cities were littered with new churches in every neighborhood? What if pastors actually put the gospel and the church above their comfort, ego, and preferences? What would happen if we spent less energy trying to make people feel comfortable and more energy making the gospel clear? . . . How many nonprofits would be started by God's people to address the broken areas of the city? How many at-risk children would be tutored, and how many fatherless teens would be mentored? How many single moms would be supported? How many immigrants would look to the church as a place of help and hope? How much more of God's grace would we understand if we sacrificially served the poor and the marginalized? How many lost, broken people would cease being their own savior and trust in Jesus? (237).

We can only assume that the answer to these questions is that our world would be a much better place and that many more would know him as Lord and Savior, if we all did what Christ has called us to do.

Church Planter is a great book, but it is not perfect. Patrick brings with him certain theological beliefs that do shape some of his comments throughout the book. Most notably, this would be his complementarian viewpoint. The title of the first section of the book is "The Man," and the use of this title is not simply for the alliteration to match the other two sections. Patrick writes, "Along the course of my research, however, an odd thing happened—I became convinced that the complementarian position was the biblical position. I came to believe that God has reserved the office of elder for men" (14). He goes on to share, "Husbands in the home and pastors in the church are not more valued or more gifted, but they are charged with more responsibility" (16). This view is held so strongly by Patrick that not only does he name the first section of the book "The Man," but also he actually takes the entirety of the preface to explain his viewpoint. Patrick is no doubt entitled to his opinion, but he takes that position with the possibility of ostracizing a great number of others who take the egalitarian viewpoint.

A second reason that *Church Planter* is not a perfect book is that it is now inconsistent with the testimony of its author. In April 2016, even after this review was being written, Patrick was asked to step down from his church and outside leadership responsibilities with The Gospel Coalition and the Acts 29 Network due to unethical misbehavior described as "pastoral misconduct and a historical pattern of sin."[1] Despite this enormous setback in the author's life, the content of the book is still solid and worth reading.

[1] "Leadership Update." The Journey. http://thejourney.org/Leadership-Update. Accessed May 26, 2016.

Church Planter makes several significant contributions to church planting thought. Certainly, anyone who is considering church planting, or really any form of full-time vocational ministry, would benefit from reading this book. It provides an excellent framework for Bible college or seminary students who are giving their first thoughts to their pastoral identity, and it is a book that I would wholeheartedly recommend them to read. *Church Planter* is also a tremendous resource for seasoned pastors and established churches. For them, it is a valuable reminder of the basics of pastoral ministry that are needed to grow any church. Personally, I gleaned much from this wonderful book, and I would recommend it to anyone interested in pastoral ministry, church life, church plants, or other forms of vocational ministry.

Looney, Jared. *Crossroads of the Nations: Diaspora, Globalization, and Evangelism.* Portland, OR: Urban Loft Publishers, 2015. 330 pp.

Reviewed by David B. Srygley. He is pulpit minister for the Arlington Heights Church of Christ in Corpus Christi, Texas, and holds an MS in Biblical Studies from Abilene Christian University and a D.EdMin from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Crossroads of the Nations has fast become a premier resource for both academicians and practitioners of missiology. Dr. Looney received his D.Miss from Fuller Theological Seminary where he learned and employed, very effectively, the teachings of Donald McGavran and Ralph Winters. Through Global City Mission Initiative, which Looney established, a well-researched plan was developed and executed to identify and harvest the lost souls of New York. This book represents Looney's understanding of the challenges facing diaspora communities in global cities and his approach to reaching the lost within them.

Crossroads of the Nations is divided into seven chapters, each providing invaluable information for a reader desiring to understand the current world setting of missions. The first two chapters provide extensive data from well-researched sources on the current trends in urbanization and globalization, while the third chapter emphasizes the need for and role of love in reaching the unreached. From these first three chapters, it is clear that the book is written with missiology students in mind, at least as a secondary audience to missiologists and practicing missionaries. The information and admonitions ensure the reader is starting with a solid grasp of the situation, demographically and spiritually, and will not launch out into mission work unprepared or misdirected in his or her efforts.

The remaining four chapters delve deeply into discussions about diaspora communities and churches, the impact of globalization and technology, and opportunities and challenges presented by these developments.

The final chapter weaves together the many and varied threads discussed throughout the book into a tapestry of the modern global city. These cities are vibrant, colorful, and complicated, and they are the doorways to parts of the world once closed to the gospel. Looney's book will help any student, missionary, or minister understand this mosaic and work effectively in the harvest field.

Looney introduces his work with a challenge to traditional missiological definitions. He states, "In many respects our contemporary global context has begun to transcend our traditional missiological categories" (24). In particular, Looney identifies "the global dynamics of mobility and networking" as global trends that are driving the need for new definitions and strategies (24). Members of diaspora communities are no longer cut off from their homelands. Through technology and global networks, immigrants can maintain relationships with family members across the globe and participate in family and religious practices from thousands of miles away. This connectivity may create more challenges for missionaries working in global cities, but it also opens doors into houses and communities all over the world.

While technology would allow diaspora communities to develop anywhere, this global networking is occurring most often in urban settings. Looney writes, "In large measure, diaspora missiology cannot be separated from urban mission as cities are essentially the nodal centers for migrant activity on a local and global scale" (30). The resources available in urban areas and opportunities for interpersonal networking remains a significant draw to immigrants. However, it would be a mistake to approach diaspora missions with a purely urban missiology, just as it would be to develop a diaspora missiology without considering its urban setting. The two methodologies are not the same, but they must be considered simultaneously in developing strategies for reaching the lost.

Just as Looney notes that the dichotomy between global and urban has begun to disappear, so have many other dichotomies. Looney states that missionaries, both domestic and abroad, face a "fluid set of challenges" (102). Global cities and diaspora communities challenge the many dichotomous debates about methodology in missions and evangelism. If a Chinese immigrant driving a cab in New York is interacting daily with his family in mainland China, discussing religious, political, and local issues, will urban mission strategies, foreign mission strategies, or lifestyle evangelistic strategies work best? The answer, per Looney, is all of the above.

Looney challenges churches, missionaries, and missiologists to carefully consider Ralph Winter's evangelistic typology. E-0 and E-1 evangelism, the sharing of the gospel within a culturally homogenous group, has been the primary focus of churches and evangelism training programs. E-2 and E-3 evangelism, which call for the crossing of cultural barriers, has been rele-

gated to the domain of foreign missionaries and the occasional immigrant community (e.g., Chinatown, Little Italy). That distinction, which Winter posited was not always a valid one, has certainly become less valid in the twenty-first century. Almost any church doing evangelism in the surrounding neighborhood quickly confronts the reality that its "neighbors" are as diverse as the global population.

Looney argues that local churches have two choices. They must become more proficient in utilizing E-2 and E-3 or, as Looney recommends, seek out partnerships within the resident ethnic group to empower them to reach their own. This approach may be counterintuitive to many urban churches who have approached evangelism in diaspora and ethnic communities as opportunities to help migrants assimilate into the host community. The assumption that migrants desire to, or even need to, assimilate may be invalid in today's global network.

In recognizing the uniqueness of individual groups within a diaspora community and the need for these groups to evangelize within their own ethnic community, Looney affirms Roland Allen's spontaneous expansion model and McGavran's multiplication movements theory (177). Churches grow through the expansion of indigenous, lay-led small groups and house churches throughout a homogenous people group. While churches and urban missionaries may face challenges crossing the cultural barriers which surround diaspora communities, Christians within those communities do not. Churches must begin developing discipleship strategies that empower Christians within these communities to become evangelists to those around them.

Even in this short review, it is easy to grasp the comprehensiveness of Looney's book. It would be a modest assessment to state that Looney has given McGavran's *Effective Evangelism* a twenty-first century facelift. It is everything an eager missionary or aspiring missiologist needs to know for the twenty-first century from the minds of McGavran, Winters, Allen, and other prominent missiologists.

Nevertheless, just as comprehensiveness is the book's greatest asset, it is also its greatest weakness. The amount of movement and networking within a diaspora community is overwhelming. Even if the book only focused on the positive and negative impact of movement and networking on local churches in a single community within the global city, it would be a challenge to digest. As is, Looney deals with almost every aspect of the diaspora's nodal function—inflow of migrants, inflow of ideas, local isolation, global interconnectedness, movement between communities, return of migrants to homeland, etc. Missiology students should expect such a challenge, but practitioners may find the amount of information overwhelming. (Looney's newest book, *Mosaic*, is an effort to pare down the information for local practitioners.)

Regardless of one's role, whether pastor, missiologist, or missionary, Looney's book is beneficial for anyone seeking to better understand the challenges of evangelism in America. He has approached today's mission environment with well-researched theories and data and, in the final chapter especially, offers practical suggestions drawn from both. While processing the many facets of Looney's work may take extraordinary effort and time, the payoff will be a thorough understanding of America's global cities and the challenges of reaching the lost who live there.

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DISSERTATION AND THESES NOTICES

Compiled by Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.

Issues of the *Great Commission Research Journal* have featured recent dissertations and theses of interest to our readers. Particular attention is given to publications that present research on evangelism, church growth, church planting & multiplication, missional church, emerging/emergent church, communication theory, leadership theory and other topics related to effective fulfillment of the Great Commission. Directors of doctoral programs, as well as graduating students, are encouraged to send notice of recent dissertations to Gary L. McIntosh, Dissertation Editor, at gary.mcintosh@biola.edu. Due to space limitations, and the large number of dissertations published each year, only a few dissertations are featured.

In particular this issue of the *Great Commission Research Journal* features recent dissertations that focus on some aspect related to church revitalization.

"Church revitalization: A case study of Bayview Church of Guam"

Author: Elwell, Kevin W., D.Min., Talbot School of Theology, 2016. 136 pages.

Abstract

The purpose of this case study was to discover the answer to the question: Is there a workable strategy for revitalization for Bayview Church of Guam? For nearly a decade Bayview has experienced a plateau or decline. This case study examined factors such as the history of the church and the island culture of Guam that affect growth.

A study of Scripture was also undertaken to identify biblical principles regarding revitalization that could be applied to a turn-around strategy. Literature covering three main schools of thought for church revitalization—the Church Growth Movement, church health, and missional church—was also incorporated into the study.

A plan for reinvigorating vitality was presented including necessary steps and goals for a period of five years. Each year of this plan prioritized what is important for each consecutive year so that in the following years of the plan growth can be built upon better support for greater growth.

"Equipping a select group of leaders of Holly Grove Baptist Church, Spring Hope, North Carolina, to pray in preparation for church revitalization."

Author: Lee, Sean Allen, D.Min., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016. 111 pages.

Abstract

Christians face a primarily spiritual battle, not a physical one. The preparation needed for spiritual warfare has escaped a vast number of leaders, and Satan seeks to disarm followers of Christ who seek to make an impact on eternity. In short, too few church leaders pray well, and too few congregations pray well. The local church needs proactive prayer to help in attacking the enemy, Satan, especially in church revitalization.

A plethora of literature exists pertaining to the individual's petitioning God, but rare are the books that promote prayer as the driving emphasis for the support of church revitalization. The project director values the importance of prayer and conceptual framework of team ministry, and he sought to equip leaders of his church to pray in preparation for church revitalization. Holly Grove Baptist Church has a desire to rise above the mediocrity present in a myriad of churches, and prayer would be the first step in that direction.

The project director prayed for God to direct him toward six Spirit-led congregants to form the group he would train in prayer. The group of seven individuals (project director included) represented approximately 10 percent of the church. The prayer group met over an eight-week period to study prayer, to consider the health of the church, and to petition God to use them as a catalyst for church revitalization.

"Assessing congregational culture for effective leadership."

Author: Mattingly, Chad, D.Min., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2016. 142 pages.

Abstract

A great puzzle faces many churches of various denominations around the world. Once strong and influential congregations are now stagnant and declining, and many pastors seem unequipped to lead their people into a new season of ministry and mission. The downward trends paint a bleak picture and many pastors are starting to ask these important questions. First, is there hope for revitalization in these established congregations? The Scriptures offer an emphatic "Yes!" Hope exists because the Christian God is one with a reputation for resurrecting things, tirelessly working to bring new life and wholeness to all Creation. Second, what are the causes of the sustained decline of so many local churches and how can pastors lead in this monumental revitalization task ahead? This project asserts that successful revitalization efforts require understanding church culture and practicing contextual leadership. It is imperative to know that effective leadership varies from congregation to congregation because each church possesses a distinct culture and functions uniquely. This distinctive culture is made up of unique beliefs, behaviors, attitudes and postures stemming from the collective experience of the church. In Culture Shift, Transforming Your Church from Inside Out, Robert Lewis, Wayne Cordeiro and Warren Bird suggest that "culture is the most important reality in your church" (3). The pastor seeking to lead effectively in the local church must be aware of these unique dynamics and modify leadership philosophies and practices accordingly.

The purpose of this study was to identify and utilize a church culture assessment tool to help the Kingwood Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) pastoral staff and lay leadership understand the unique culture of the congregation in order that they might modify leadership philosophies and practices to promote congregational revitalization. Upon completion, the assessment process revealed that cultural education and evaluation in Kingwood Christian Church provided a revelatory, hopeful and reliable

groundwork for congregational understanding. The assessment provided a foundation for truly contextual leadership strategies and practices, thus enabling Spirit-empowered efforts for resurrection and revitalization.

"Developing a training module for church revitalization utilizing church planting methodologies with a select group of members of Fontaine Baptist Church in Martinsville, Virginia."

Author: Shanks, Andrew P., Ph.D., The Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016. 156 pages.

Abstract

Fontaine Baptist Church rests near the southern border of one of the southernmost counties in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Henry County, with the city of Martinsville at its heart, once boasted a booming economy, due to the bustling textile and furniture factories operating there. Fontaine thrived along with the local economy. Founded in 1919, Fontaine reached her zenith in the three decades between 1960 and 1990, a fitting microcosm of the local community. As the fortunes of the surrounding community declined, however, so did the vibrancy of the church. Fontaine slid slowly from an active membership of over 300 in 1985 to only 65 at the present time.

While the decline of the local economy and the depression of the surrounding community serve as a convenient excuse for Fontaine's decline, other factors play a part as well. Most notably, members of Fontaine failed to see themselves as a missionaries within their community, failed to share the gospel with their community, and as a result, failed to witness any significant growth.

The project director designed the project to catalyze revitalization at Fontaine by re-orienting the church around a missionary mindset. To accomplish this, the project director attempted to cultivate a church plant mindset among a select group of members of Fontaine through the implementation of a six-week training module. The project director designed the training module to imitate the kind of training church planters employ with their launch teams. By utilizing church plant methodologies, the project director hoped to cultivate the vibrancy and passion that often characterize new church plants.

As a result of the ministry project, the project director grew in his understanding of church revitalizations in general, and of the specific challenges facing churches in Martinsville and Henry County in particular. The training module itself yielded mixed results from its participants. The project director hopes that with some adjustments, the training module will prove useful for implementation with future groups.

"Revitalizing Wesley United Methodist Church by reclaiming a biblical understanding of the role of pastor."

Author: Vanden Langenberg, Tim J., D.Min., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, 2016. 238 pages.

Abstract

This project sought to address the need for revitalization and restoration of church health at Wesley United Methodist Church in Wausau, Wisconsin, following a decade of high turnover of pastors. The results of this high turnover included conflict within the congregation, mistrust of denominational leaders, and mixed and often contradictory expectations of the pastors.

To address these issues and to seek a remedy, the project examined the role of the shepherd-pastor through biblical and theological literature and in a general review of contemporary literature on the subject. Next, the project presented a six-session class for the church members to share information about how a biblical understanding of the role of pastors is critical to church health. A six-part sermon series, utilizing the class material, was also part of the project. Interviews with key congregational and denominational leaders contributed rich insight into the issues involved and the need for the revitalization which the project hopes to achieve.

Few church members and leaders chose to participate in the class. Lack of participation did not render the effects of the project as null, however, but revealed the depth of the issues ingrained at Wesley United Methodist Church, which the scope of the project was unable to fully address.

Revitalization through this project as applied in future ministry contexts can offer hope of church health and even growth, using God's plan of leadership.

"The anthropological pastor: Navigating the culture of an established church by implementing anthropological tools and resources."

Author: Turpin, Christopher Eric, D.Min., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016. 311 pages.

Abstract

This dissertation explores anthropological tools and resources and their potential usefulness in navigating the culture of an established church. The application of the principles contained herein can be used for church revitalization, pastor transitions, and established church leadership. These principles can also be applied to business and organizational cultures. Chapter

1 presents the research question that serves as the investigative guide for the dissertation. This dissertation argues that the pastor(s)/elders, and/or potential pastor(s)/elders, of established local churches, should know and implement many of the tools and resources of cultural anthropology within their ministry context in order to enhance understanding and communication between the pastor and his congregation, resulting in healthier pastor-congregation relations, healthier churches, and greater Kingdom effectiveness. Further, this chapter proposes an amalgamation of the research from the fields of anthropology/missiology, relevant organizational culture literature, and church leadership materials. Chapter 2 serves as a survey of much of the relevant literature surrounding the study of anthropology/missiology, church leadership, and relevant organizational culture literature. This literature review traces an overview of the development of anthropological thought and the value of anthropological tools and resources. The review then demonstrates how anthropology is being discussed in church leadership materials, but without significant interaction with anthropological resources. Due to the scope of this research, the author narrows his interaction with church leadership material to materials that include sections that seem to recognize that each established churches exhibit culture. Chapter 3 presents the author's findings from anthropological research most relevant to the work of a local church pastor. Paul Hiebert's book Anthropological Insights for Missionaries serves as a blueprint for the outline of the chapter. The chapter continues to look at available anthropological tools and resources, the ways they are understood and implemented by others, and potential applications toward established churches. Chapter 4 examines church leadership literature resources that consider established churches to exhibit culture. Aubrey Malphurs' book, Look Before You Lead, serves as a blueprint for the outline of the chapter. The primary objective of this chapter is to demonstrate the fact that church leadership authors interact very little with the writings, research, paradigms, and tools of anthropologists or missiologists. Chapter 5 presents the author's findings and conclusions. The focus is on developing the field of congregational cultural anthropology for the purpose of equipping pastors to understand and work through established church cultures. The author introduces a rapid assessment process (RAP) for understanding and navigating congregational culture. He concludes with an adaptation of Paul Hiebert's method for engaging in critical contextualization, but for the purpose of transforming congregational culture. He also proposes the development of a field handbook for rapid assessment processes among established churches and an expansion of the field of congregational cultural anthropology.

GREAT COMMISSION RESEARCH NETWORK OFFICERS

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What is the Great Commission Research Network or GreatCommissionResearch.net?

The Great Commission Research Network is a worldwide and professional association of Christian leaders whose ministry activities are based on the basic and key principles of church growth as originally developed by the late Donald McGavran. Founded by renowned missiologists George G. Hunter III and C. Peter Wagner, the GreatCommissionResearch.net (formally the American Society for Church Growth) has expanded into an affiliation of church leaders who share research, examine case studies, dialogue with cutting-edge leaders, and network with fellow church professionals who are committed to helping local churches expand the kingdom through disciple-making

Who Can Join the GCRN?

GCRN membership is open to all who wish a professional affiliation with colleagues in the field. The membership includes theoreticians, such as professors of church growth, and practitioners, such as pastors, denominational executives, parachurch leaders, church planters, researchers, missions leaders, and consultants. Some members specialize in domestic or mono-cultural church growth, while others are cross-culturally oriented.

Why Join the GCRN?

The GCRN provides a forum for maximum interaction among leaders, ministries, and resources on the cutting edge of Great Commission research.

The Annual Conference of the Great Commission Research Network (typically held in early November each year) offers the opportunity for research updates information on new resources and developments, as well as fellowship and encouragement from colleagues in the field of church growth. Membership in GCRN includes a subscription to the *Great Commission Research Journal.*

How Do I Join the GCRN?

For further information on membership, the annual meeting and registration, please visit www.greatcommissionresearch.com

Membership Benefits

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- Discounts for Annual Conference Registration
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The Donald A. McGavran Award

Once a year, the Great Commission Research Network (formerly the American Society for Church Growth) presents the Donald A. McGavran Award to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the Church Growth Movement in the United States.

The award recipients to date are:

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Carl F. George	1991	Charles Arn	2005
Wilbert S. McKinnley	1992	John Vaughan	2006
Robert Logan	1993	Waldo Werning	2006
Bill Sullivan	1994	Bob Whitesel	2007
Elmer Towns	1994	Bill Easum	2009
Flavil R. Yeakley, Jr.	1995	Thom S. Rainer	2010
George G. Hunter, III	1996	Ed Stetzer	2012
Eddie Gibbs	1997	Nelson Searcy	2013
Gary L. McIntosh	1998	J.D. Payne	2014
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Bill Sullivan	1991	Eric Baumgartner	2007–2008
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John Vaughan	1994	Mike Morris	2015–2016
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Submission of Articles: The *Great Commission Research Journal* welcomes articles of original scholarship and of general interest dealing with all aspects of Church Growth, effective evangelism and successful Great Commission strategies. Reasoned responses to past articles will be considered, as well as book reviews. All manuscripts should not have been published elsewhere unless specifically approved by the editor.

- The article should represent original research, never before published.
- Your article should be 12–25 pages in length, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font in a Word document file format. Book reviews should be 3 to 5 pages and article responses 7 to 10 pages in length.
- Follow the guidelines for style found in *The Chicago Manual of Style* or K.L Turabian's *Manual for Writers*. Footnotes should be at the bottom of each page.
- At the top of the page, please include your name, professional title, physical mailing address, email, and phone number. We will not print your mailing address or phone number in the journal.
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