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## Introduction

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Alan McMahan, General Editor

With many pertinent themes to cover it is somewhat rare that one is repeated in this Journal. However, the theme with which we led the last issue was so popular that the editors decided to extend the theme through this issue. That theme, featuring articles on restoring growth to plateaued churches is certainly timely given the grave predicament many U.S. churches (and others worldwide) find themselves.

Gary McIntosh looks at various ways to initiate turnaround in declining churches depending on their size and age. Whether that change occurs in terms of evolution or revolution will depend on the factors examined in this article.

David Rumley explores how the pastor's leadership style relates to church effectiveness. Engaging in a statistical study of 15 churches in Illinois, Rumley makes a case for using a transformational leadership model to build positive momentum between the pastor and his (or her) followers in accomplishing the church's mission.

Danny Von Kanel suggests ten indicators that your church may soon be closing its doors and offers solutions to correct the problem. His rhetorical style communicates easily to lay leaders.

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After examining eight of the most influential works on church health, Russell Huizing conducts a meta-ethnographic study of these sources in which he synthesizes their findings to discover areas of overlap or areas of neglect. He then compares the results to the metaphors used in scripture to describe the church and suggests helpful next steps for future research.

Drawing attention to the increasing numbers of international migrants in U.S. cities, Anthony Casey provides helpful suggestions for locating and then building bridges to immigrant communities. Demonstrating the tremendous opportunity on our doorsteps for reaching the nations for Christ, Casey offers helpful strategies for meeting their felt needs, communicating in their preferred styles, and partnering with existing churches to minister to these receptive peoples.

4 Recognizing the difficulty in building a core group for church planting that survives into the second year of ministry, J.R. Miller presents the results of his research in building self-replicating teams. Looking first at Paul's ministry and then surveying successful, contemporary church planters Miller concludes with a list of factors that help sustain and grow core through the early years of church development.

To answer a question that many observers are asking, John Hammett explores how a multi-site church can function as one church? Reviewing historical and theological understandings of the church, he offers thoughtful insights that contribute to the dialogue on a model that is becoming increasingly popular across the U.S.

From Australia, Ian Hussey offers fresh case study research on a class of churches that are attracting a high percentage of previously unchurched attenders in a context where church attendance rates are falling. Beginning with helpful theological perspectives the author provides insight into the factors that lead to the successful assimilation of newcomers into the life of the church.

As always, a significant section of each issue of the Journal are the book reviews that help alert you as a reader to important publications that inform effective Great Commission strategies. J.D. Payne, in his role as book review editor, has done an outstanding job since this Journal was launched over three years ago. J.D.'s passion for the Great Commission is not only seen in his own publishing history (*Discovering Church Planting*, 2009; *Evangelism: A Biblical Response to Today's Questions*, 2011; *Strangers Next Door: Immigration, Migration, and Mission*, 2012) but it comes out in the ways that he sponsors scholarly thinking among others writing in this field. Sadly for the Great Commission Research Journal, J.D. will be stepping down from this role after this issue to pursue a new ministry position. We wish him the best in these next steps and will continue to

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look forward to the good work that he will, no doubt, continue in the years ahead. For this issue, he has assembled five book reviews that span a wide variety of subjects. Special thanks go to the reviewers who have contributed to this effort.

In our section on dissertation and theses, Gary McIntosh highlights seven studies that focus on pastoral leadership styles and behaviors that are correlated to healthy, growing churches. As usual, Gary's keen ability to recognize significant research into this important field is appreciated.

Our next issue of the Journal will feature the founders and key thinkers of the church growth movement. Submissions on this theme are encouraged. May God stretch you and empower you as you read these pages.