

FANNING INTO FLAME THE GIFT:
UNDERSTANDINGS AND STRATEGIES
THAT EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT A
SPIRITUAL DNA OF OUTREACH
IN A LOCAL CHURCH

A PROJECT REPORT
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY
BY
STEPHEN L. DUNN

WINEBRENNER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
FINDLAY, OHIO
JULY 2005

UMI Number: DP18572

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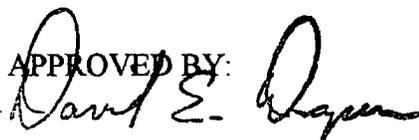
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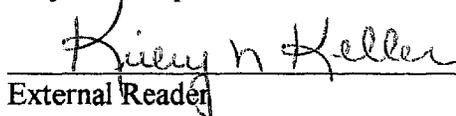
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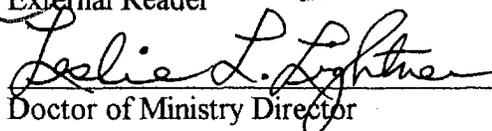
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CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ix
ABSTRACT	xiii
CHAPTER	
ONE - INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT	1
The Context of the Problem	3
The Statement of the Problem	5
The Purpose the Study	7
The Methodology	9
Research Questions	15
Significance of the Study	16
Assumptions and Limitations of the Study	18
Definition of Terms	20
Organization of the Study	23
TWO - BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS	26
Critical Background – Cultural Exegesis	26
The Scriptural Compass	34
The Great Confession – Jesus is Our Savior and Lord	39
The Great Identification – The Church as the Body of Christ	43
The Great Communion – Called to be a Countercultural Community .	54
The Great Commission – How We Understand Our Mission	74
Looking to the Scriptural Compass	88

THREE - REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND OTHER SOURCES	95
Resources for Understanding the Emerging Culture	97
Resources for Rethinking Church (New Wineskins Ecclesiology)	103
Leading the Emerging Church: The Leadership of the Holy Spirit	122
Summary	134
FOUR - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES	136
General Overview of the Methodology	136
Thinking Forward Meetings	138
Action Plans (Elder/Staff Developed)	139
Action Plans (Outreach and Evangelism)	144
Survey Instruments and Focus Groups	151
Research Journals	153
Building Bridges of Truth and Grace	156
Summary and Conclusions	157
FIVE - RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA	159
Getting a Handle on the Data	159
Data from Action Plan Development	161
Data from Survey Instruments	179
Data from Anecdotal Journals	192
A Concluding Word on the Data Analysis	207
SIX - SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	208
Summary	209
Findings from the Data	213

Conclusions from the Findings	230
Recommendations	265
Some Concluding Thoughts	283
What is the Jesus in You Going to Do?	287
WORKS CITED	288
WORKS CONSULTED	292
APPENDICES	
1. Pastoral Diary Entry – July 2002	[296]
2. Pastoral Diary Entry – Easter 2003	[298]
3. Thinking Forward Meetings 2002	[300]
4. Core Values of the Church of God of Landisville	[303]
5. Embedding Core Values Through Teaching	[308]
6. Structure for Emerging Mission	[311]
7. Structural Principles for a Growing Church	[314]
8. Small Group Strategy	[317]
9. Associate Pastor	[320]
10. Partnerships With Community	[324]
11. Senior Center Team	[327]
12. Youth Center Team	[330]
13. Tsaille Mission Team	[333]
14. Hospitality Team and Newcomers Ministry	[336]
15. Core Values Survey Instrument	[339]
16. Summary of Statistical Surveys	[342]

18. Summary of Elders Commentary on Pastoral Journal	[365]
19. Thoughts on a Spiritual Gifts Counselor	[390]
20. Policy for Indigenous Ministries	[392]

TABLES

1. Brief Summary of the Findings as Related to Basic Research Categories .	211
2. Brief Summary of Conclusions as Related to Four Basic Research Categories	231
3. Summary of Recommendations	267

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was not the work of one man. It was the work of an entire congregation working together for a period of over three years to help me understand what it means to let the Holy Spirit lead a traditional and inward focused church into an outward focused ministry seeking to live by Jesus' missionary DNA in the world. In general, I must acknowledge the partnership of the Church of God of Landisville in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. They are some of the most delightful, creative, risk-taking, and God-loving people I have ever been privileged to pastor.

I want to begin by thanking Dr. David Draper, President of Winebrenner Theological Seminary, who served as my project supervisor, and who persistently encouraged my most creative instincts in this effort. In addition, I want to thank Dr. Leslie Lightner, the D.Min. Director at the seminary. In particular, his diligent eye and patient instruction helped assure this project would be in the best possible form for publication. And I must thank Dr. Kirby Keller, President of Evangelical School of Theology in Myerstown PA and Mr. Lance Finley of the Winebrenner faculty, who were my external readers. All four of these men patiently and faithfully read through many drafts of this project which we jokingly noted were measured in pounds instead of pages. I deeply appreciate their partnership in making this project a reality.

I need to acknowledge the ongoing partnership of two groups of persons without whom this wealth of data could never have been gathered or evaluated adequately. First, I need to acknowledge the members of my D.Min. Context

Committee, which was ultimately called The Reflection Team. These persons were my closest partners in the research that is reported here. I gladly thank those persons in my initial team, who were with me from the beginning through the conclusion: Robert Crosby, Lori Dixon, Beth Lebo, Randy Lefever, Doug Sutton, and Michael Spangler. In the spring of 2004, the Reflection Team was expanded. I need to add my thanks to Amy Baughman, William Dixon, Joe Jordan, Laurie Rogers, and Jessica Williams.

Second, I need to thank the elders of the church. They served as my strategic planning team, developing many of the action plans contained herein, praying for their pastor along the way, generously granting him time and space to write, and sharing in the evaluation of the data from over 250 pages of the Pastoral Journal. They were also my partners in helping the church follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Here I must thank Bob Crosby, Donna Crosby, Bulah Dougherty, Joe Jordan, Greg Nauman, Samuel Ruggiero, Barb Sutton, and Jim Snyder.

My two dear pastoral partners, Scott Lebo and Barry Sellers, are to be thanked in particular because of the personal inspiration they helped provide and the hard work they did of keeping the church on mission while I engaged in this research journey. All of these elders and pastors truly understand what it means to let the Holy Spirit lead the church.

A Few Good Men, the Busy Women/Busy Lives Sunday School class, the Ladies of the Evening small group, and the elders who worked through the *Building Bridges of Truth and Grace* study guide helped me refine what I consider one of the most important contributions of this project, the chapter on

theological foundations. They helped work out my own biblical understandings as senior pastor, chief preacher, and vision caster of the Church of God of Landisville.

My invaluable administrative assistant, Patty Baker, proofread several drafts of every page of this project and its appendices. Her editing was a serendipitous blessing. She also typed and distributed both sets of surveys. She listened to my venting about the rigors of academic writing. My daughter, Katie, who rescued me in several final production computer emergencies. Bob Crosby, who proofread early drafts, helped keep me on target.

In the research realm, I want to acknowledge Brian Reger, Vice President of Senn-Delaney Cultural Diagnostic and Measurement, who along with Michael Spangler, a member of my team and one of Mr. Reger's staff consultants, provided invaluable assistance in the organization of the statistical data used in this study. Their professional input was a great help to confirming what my Reflection Team was learning.

I would be remiss if I did not note the library resources of Winebrenner Theological Seminary, Evangelical School of Theology, and the Parish Resource Center. The latter, located in Lancaster, Pennsylvania provided access to many resources, particularly on the emerging church, as well as a quiet place to write. In this vein, I must thank Sally Bures, director of the center, who not only served as one of my chief cheerleaders; but graciously granted me the use of her retreat at Mount Gretna to write at critical times.

My deepest gratitude is to my ministry partner, beloved wife, and number one

supporter, Dianne, without whose patience and prayers, I would not have remained faithful to completing this D.Min. project.

And finally, to my four children, Christi, Michael, Chris, and Katie, all who kept telling their friends that Dad was in “demon” training (Katie’s early garbling of D. Min.) who kept encouraging me along the way.

I thank God for these partners who helped me follow my dream to discover what would happen when I as a pastor, and the church I was called to lead, would surrender to the true leadership of the Holy Spirit.

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the understandings and strategies needed to implement a spiritual DNA of outreach in a local church. This spiritual DNA of the church is theologically identified as (1) supernatural organism, (2) missionary nature, (3) countercultural calling, (4) transformational fellowship, (5) clearly worshipping Christ, (6) being a safe place, (7) led by the Holy Spirit, (8) kingdom-focused, (9) unleashing the priesthood of all believers, (10) gifted to sacrificially serve the larger community, (11) intentionally reconciling people to God, (12) incorporating them into a maturing relationship with Christ.. It describes the action plan research used to identify these understandings and strategies. It also includes data from survey instruments measuring the shared values that drive this DNA and anecdotal journals describing the impact of the action plans. The chief conclusions discussed involve helping a church exegete the culture in time of transition from modernity to postmodernity, the process of rethinking church within this matrix, and understanding what it means to allow the Holy Spirit to define, shape, and lead the local church. Churches are urged to: (1) adopt a missionary posture, (2) prayerfully develop a biblical mission, (3) help people build lives based on the Word, (4) teach biblical core values continually and creatively, (5) dare to be an authentic countercultural community, (6) find a senior pastor committed to leadership of Holy Spirit and team ministry, (7) encourage members to be missionaries, (8) find new wineskins of ministry, but incorporate old wine into them, (9) develop an eldership, (10) have courage to go

where God is leading, (11) continue to create small groups as essential cells
where DNA is passed along.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

We had just heard a presentation at the annual sessions of our local conference. The gist of the presentation by the outside expert had to do with strategic planning. In particular, how to communicate and build upon core values so that they effectively drove the particular mission of a congregation. For the preceding six months, the elders of our congregation and the senior pastor had been functioning as its semi-formal strategic planning group. Out of a sustained season of prayer and a structured dialogue with the grassroots of the congregation, a heart for evangelism and outreach had emerged. A church that sat for almost 170 years on Church Street had seen a community grow explosively around it.

The school district that really served as the center of this mobile and fluid community had constructed its major campus within a block and eye-sight of the church's campus. This physical proximity presents a powerful irony to sensitive observers. For in the churched culture that identified much of America in the 20th Century, churches were viewed as the primary formative institutions of a community. Now, in many communities including this one; it is the school to which the community looks for the formation of persons (Callahan 1990, 13).

There was a strong sense that the church had lost its way. This congregation's presence in the community had no clear relevance. Nor did it have any measurable impact upon the spiritual well-being and future of that community. Although there was a sense of satisfaction with the ministry delivered to the two hundred members; there was the troubling awareness that this benefit was extended only to that particular cluster of individuals. Little need was seen in the community for what this church had to offer, particularly because of the perception that this "good thing" was a well-kept secret. The elders were prepared to recommend that this 170 year old congregation embark upon a strategy to position itself for an outreach-oriented mission.¹ In a sense, to rediscover its evangelistic calling and to embrace the understanding that their mission field "began at the front door" of the local church (Klaas 1996, 8).

As they waited in the dinner line following the presentation, one of the elders in attendance ventured a personal thought. "You know, I've always been a part of what you call more traditional churches. And all of those churches talked about the need to do evangelism, but I don't feel like they really ever did anything about it. I'm not sure what plans they had to be more evangelistic, so I really don't know how a church goes about doing that."

The senior pastor responded with the conviction, born out of his passion for evangelism and his general optimism in ministry, that it can be done. "But yes, we really would have to take some time in developing a serious strategy for achieving that. And given your observation, it probably is an uphill battle."

This discussion, when related to the other elders in a major planning retreat, began to form a critical question in the minds of those strategic planners. “Can a traditional church with an admittedly inward focus turn its face outward and begin reaching lost and unchurched people in a significant way?” It was out of this extended dialogue in the life of the Church of God of Landisville that the beginnings of this D.Min. project was conceived.²

The Context of the Problem

“... on this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it (Matt. 16:18b).”

“In the same way, let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:16).”

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (Matt. 28:19-20a).”

These three statements of Jesus Christ are generally connected with the continuing mission of the church in the world. In practical reality, this mission is carried out primarily by local churches, faith communities, with specific gifts and passions and specific circles of influence, set in particular human communities.

Churches (congregations) are born and die across America every day. New churches are generally planted with a very clear vision. A vision is often embedded in the mind of the church planter who assembles a group of like-minded individuals who work together to establish a new congregation (Mann 1999, 1-7). This vision and its supporting values are referred to in contemporary

literature as the “DNA of the church” (Snyder 2002, 13-14). This vision is by necessity outward focused and intentionally evangelistic in nature. Ample documentation exists that after a period of time a church shifts from this outward focus to an inward one. The concern becomes maintenance of the institution and meeting the needs of its existing members. Increasing amounts of resources (time, personnel, gifts, passion) are expended on this inward orientation. Diminishing resources are expended on those persons outside the church and the evangelistic mission (although sometimes still explicit in the church’s documents) is diluted (Schaller 1994, 25). Some of these churches continue to grow but it is essentially transfer growth. Conversion growth that defined a congregation’s earliest days becomes a smaller part of the church’s overall growth. Increasingly, the significant relationships of those within the church are with other Christians. The result is that while these churches continue to deliver quality care to those within the church, the congregation’s circle of influence diminishes and its impact on the “lost” of the community lessens and every day opportunities to interact with people outside the faith receive less attention (Lewis 2001, 29).

From time to time, established churches seek to recapture an outward focus. This is generally connected with a renewed effort at genuine evangelism (i.e., bringing essentially pagan people to a faith in Jesus Christ). It is also connected to a moving of the Holy Spirit to awaken a passion for such a vision first in a core group and ultimately in ever increasing numbers within the congregation.

The Church of God of Landisville typified this situation. It was a traditional congregation that had experienced an extended period of inward focus. It now

sensed the leading (or shaping) of the Holy Spirit to become a new kind of congregation with an outward focus and an evangelistic emphasis. The leadership believed a new spiritual DNA was present in this local faith community. Core values had been identified that affirmed that new reality. There was a sense of expectancy that those values could be claimed by increasing numbers within the church's membership and, even more visibly, drive the ministry of the Landisville church.

Statement of the Problem

A church is an expression of its core values (Malphurs 1996, 41). Three core values would appear to be crucial to such a new outreach: a passion for evangelism that reaches out to the unchurched, a commitment to sacrificial servanthood towards the community, and a renewed valuing of all people (especially those who are not part of the church).

The Word of God uses a variety of terms to describe the Church, both universally and in its local manifestation. Included in those terms are: family of God, people of God, body of Christ, the flock, fellowship of the Holy Spirit. All of these terms imply a living entity, an organism rather than an organization. If we accept that premise, it is then appropriate to compare a congregation to an individual Christ-follower. Individual Christians are "born again" and receive a new nature through the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit. This is the instantaneous quality of sanctification. The sanctification of the individual is also progressive; however, this sanctification has to do with the character or nature of the individual believer. More could be said of this, however, suffice it to

say part of the problem is in understanding how this progressive portion of the sanctification is achieved in the life of an individual congregation.

Let us return to our earlier description of the Church as possessing a DNA. Living organisms are understood to have a genetic structure. This structure is described through a genetic code known as the organism's DNA. That code not only dictates specific aspects about an organism, but in the various combinations or pairings of a DNA strand one finds a uniqueness that distinguishes one living organism from another.

The concept of a church possessing a DNA is gaining popularity in the literature today as a useful metaphor, especially with writers trying to communicate with a postmodern audience. One of the very best treatments comes from Howard Snyder and Daniel Runyon.

If Jesus was human, he had human DNA. So in these days of genetic revolution, the question of Jesus' DNA arises. What does it mean that Jesus was made like us in every way, except without sin (Heb. 2:17, 4:15)? Surely it says something about his full humanity—including his DNA.

These are questions about the physical body of Christ. Amazingly, the New Testament calls the *church* the Body of Christ! ...

Clearly the church, Christ's body, does not have the same physical DNA of Jesus—even though the church is in some sense physical, made up of flesh-and-blood Christians living on earth. The church is the body of Christ spiritually. Yet it is to bear the image of Christ, just as surely as if it inherited his physical DNA. The church, as individual persons and as a social organism on earth, is to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29). There must be a family resemblance. Whatever Jesus' *physical* DNA, his DNA as head of the church—what we might call ecclesial DNA—is to be carried into every part of his body, into every branch of the vine, out to the last leaf and the last grape. (2002, 13)

Given the organic metaphors for the Church, the use of a DNA concept ties our understanding of its organization to the hand of the God who created both the human body (with a physical DNA) and the Church. (This, also, will be explored

more thoroughly in the theological section of the project). In this sense, it can be said that the Holy Spirit gives the renewing congregation a DNA whose markers or spiritual genetic strands carry the combinations of outreach and evangelism in a dominant fashion.

The doctrine of sanctification assumes that the work of the Holy Spirit is instantaneous and progressive. First there is the sanctification of the person. We might liken this to making a “new person” with a passion for reaching lost neighbors for Jesus Christ. Second is the sanctification of the nature by which the old nature is exchanged through a process of learning and maturation for a new nature. The inward focused church learns how to behave like the outreach focused church they are created and called to be.

Assuming that such a change of heart is generated by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, the question naturally arises, “How can a traditional and inward focused congregation activate this spiritual (ecclesial) DNA of outreach and evangelism? How do you fan into flame this gift of the Holy Spirit of God?”

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify specific understandings and strategies that provide an effective means of activating or implementing this new (or renewed) outreach focused, evangelism DNA in a congregation that senses the Holy Spirit is recreating (or calling) it in this direction. The congregation that forms the basis of this study is the Church of God of Landisville.

Strategies for effective change generally involve at least four components. Brian McClaren describes those four components as follows: “1. More Christians,

2. Better Christians, 3. Authentic Missional Community, 4. For the Good of the World” (2000, 28). This is one way of summarizing the result of an outreach-focused, evangelistic DNA. It would be appropriate to assume that conclusions drawn from researching this question would speak through the channel of those four components.

The benefit of our phenomenological research is that we already have a vehicle to acknowledge the supernatural element in this process. The identification of this qualitative element of the perceived experience of the Holy Spirit carries a high value in this study.

Thom Rainier, a Southern Baptist researcher, has noted that this is an issue for both traditional and non-traditional congregations (1995, 30-31). The congregation under study fits the former categorization of congregations, but the defining characteristic probably has more to do with an inward focus than being a traditional church. However, traditional congregations still predominate the ecclesiastical landscape in North America. Therefore, the study will carry the additional lens of a traditional church.

The Methodology

The emphasis in this research will be qualitative rather than quantitative. It is particularly action plan research based on the initial intention to indeed “fan into flame” the gift of a newly recognized DNA in an older, traditional, inward-focused congregation. I find the definition of action research put forward by Cohen and Manion to capture the spirit of what is being attempted in this project. To them it is:

... essentially an on-the-spot procedure designed to deal with a concrete problem located in an immediate situation. This means that ideally, the step-by-step process is constantly monitored over varying periods of time and by a variety of mechanisms (questionnaires, diaries, interviews and case studies, for example) so that ensuing feedback may be translated into modifications, adjustments, directional changes, re-definitions, as necessary, so as to bring about lasting benefit to the ongoing process itself rather than to some future occasion. (Bell 1999, 8)

After an initial investigation of the theological foundations for such an action plan (primarily looking at those core values that define such a DNA and drive its actions), and an initial investigation of the degree to which these outreached oriented values existed in the congregation under study, a plan indigenous to this congregation was developed, implemented, and evaluated. This particular plan's development³ attempted from the outset to include a practical embodiment of the four components of effective change identified by McClaren, which were noted at the beginning of the previous section of this chapter. Because of the time constraints imposed on the research by the Doctor of Ministry process and the *kairos*⁴ of the congregation that formed the basis of this study, there was an attempt to do all these at once (relatively speaking).

This research was primarily action plan in nature. We focused on the experience of one congregation in its attempt to answer this question in its own faith life. That congregation was the Church of God of Landisville, located in a small town/suburban setting within the growing metropolitan area of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The research, however, borrowed from some of the insights of phenomenological research. Phenomenological research attempts to describe the experience by identifying the process and analyzing the outcomes of that process (Merriam 1998, 158-9). Some quantitative factors presented themselves that

aided in that analysis, but we largely depended upon the reported assessment of those who participated in the experience. Also, in keeping with the spirit of action plan research, this research project was highly proactive.

Through the prayerful nomination of the elders, a Ministry Context Group was established for the project. This group was initially composed of six persons and the senior pastor. One was an elder on sabbatical who had been part of the original Thinking Forward process, and had been involved in doctoral work in other settings. Another was a professional woman (a human resources director) with a strong background in biblical understanding and small groups. A third, an elementary school principal with experience in academic research, had served as a member of the church's Commission on Christian Education. A fourth was an insurance broker who had been involved in church leadership over an extended period of time and was currently involved in a number of outreach ministries. A fifth was a new member of the congregation who had joined less than a year ago, but who was involved for thirty plus years in the leadership of another church in the community and who was particularly sensitive to the biblical workings of the Spirit in a church. The sixth was a long-term member who had left the church and then returned who had extensive experience in corporate values research. All six were active in the church's ministries, had good networks of relationships within the congregation, and were committed to the outward focus of the church, but did not at the onset occupy official positions on the church's administrative council.⁵

The Ministry Context Group began its work in March 2003 as the church entered

into the theological design phase of the project. This group also chose a more manageable name, the D.Min. Reflection Team.

One year into the project, the researcher's advisory committee at Winebrenner Theological Seminary noted that this reflection team was composed entirely of persons primarily in their forties and early fifties. Given particularly the issue of rethinking church in a postmodern setting, it was recommended the team be expanded. In February 2004, five more persons were added. One was a young homemaker and mother, involved in the church's women's ministry. A second was a young woman in middle management involved in the Commission on Outreach and Evangelism. A third was a college student at a nearby state university who was volunteering as a part of the Christian Education staff of the church. The fourth was a computer engineer employed in the security section of a local bank still searching for his place in the ministry of the church. The fifth was a computer engineer working with a large corporation. He had previously been an elder of the church and at the time served as the leader of a men's Bible study within the church. All five were in their twenties and thirties. The Reflection Team was then ultimately composed of the senior pastor and eleven lay members, six men and five women ranging in age from their early twenties to their late sixties. All but one were regularly involved in some formal ministry of the church. Two served on the Administrative Council and one on a ministry commission.

The action plan design was conducted by two groups. One, the elders, functioned as the strategic planning team of the church. The elders were

distributed among the five ministry teams (commissions) that developed specific details of the church's program. The elders attended to the strategy of communicating the core values and monitoring the overall structure to best support those values. The action plan dealing with programming for outreach and evangelism was being handled by the church's newly created Commission on Outreach and Evangelism. Most of the other commissions and other primary ministry teams were involved as needed. The senior pastor was a part of both the elders and the Commission on Outreach and Evangelism.

A variety of tools were used in an attempt to preserve the accuracy and reliability of the research. Two journals were kept of the church's experience with this intentional strategy, as well as the perceived working of the Holy Spirit. The first journal was kept by the senior pastor (who was the chief researcher). This journal dated back to the formative period in the senior pastor's anticipation of the project dating to early 2002.⁶ Since the movement toward identifying action plans was already underway, some attention was given to document what had gone before the formal research phase. This journal came from a pastoral perspective and was available for evaluation by both the Reflection Team and the elders. Ultimately, the confidential nature of items in the Pastoral Journal led to the elders evaluating the journal's data and reporting it to the Reflection Team. The second journal, The Holy Spirit Journal, was open to contributions by the entire congregation. Serious attempt was made by the senior pastor, elders, and the D.Min. Reflection Team to include anecdotal observations by both the leaders

and the general membership of the church. This journal was initiated following the first meeting of the Reflection Team in March 2003.

With the major assistance of the Reflection Team At least two survey instruments were designed. These surveys assessed the degree to which the core values involved in this new DNA impacted the congregation. Another way of saying this was to identify the degree to which these core values as identified by the elders were shared by the individual members of the congregation (Westing 1993, 32). The key survey occurred early in the project (August 2003) so that a benchmark could be established to assess the growth by individual members in the understanding of, commitment to, and involvement in this outreaching mission. The second survey occurred near the conclusion of the research phase of the project (August 2004) but prior to the evaluation of the data for the purpose of drawing the ultimate conclusions of the project. The first survey sought to identify (1) the degree to which specific core values were shared by the individual and (2) how those core values were being lived out in the behavior of the respondent. The second survey asked the same two questions, but with the particular intention of identifying changes in the degree to which those core values were shared and acted upon.

Focus groups were designed for both surveys, each time numbering approximately 12-15 persons. Those focus groups, along with individual interviews by both the senior pastor and members of the Reflection Team helped to clarify the data from the surveys, as well as reports from church leadership about the outcomes of action plans. They served as a way of describing the

experience through additional lenses. Minutes and reports from ministry commissions, ministry teams, and church staff also provided additional qualitative sources to identify and interpret data from the action plans that were developed.

As in all research done for D.Min. projects, a survey of the literature was conducted. From the initial examination of the problem, this survey included these sub-topics: the nature of the Church, the church in a postmodern matrix, leading a church through change, communicating with un-churched peoples in the USA, evangelistic methodology consistent with the realities and needs of postmodern America, leadership style and structures necessary for leading an outreach focused congregation. The works examined are identified in the Works Cited and Works Consulted sections of this paper.

The purpose of the literature study was twofold: (1) inform the strategy of the local church involved in the study and (2) to compare this particular congregation's experience with that of others wrestling with similar problems. Given the arguments regarding the seismic shifts in American culture in the last twenty years, this literature search was limited to documents and data published since 1985 with particular emphasis on research being applied to the cultural context of Middle America in the early 21st century.

As the project unfolded, it became obvious to the researcher that three areas of literature would be the most useful to persons ultimately examining this project. Those areas were the postmodern challenge to the church, rethinking church in

the postmodern matrix, and leadership. For this reason, Chapter Three is limited to describing significant works in these three areas.

Research Questions

Early on, four key questions were identified that would service the research process to produce useful conclusions to the basic research problem. The first question dealt with *intentionality*. Intentionality is assumed in an action plan. The intention is to translate the core values into a concrete action. It is safe to assume that values must be taught as well as caught. Therefore, the first question has crucial foundational implications. “What specific theological teachings are essential to accomplishing such a transformation of values and behaviors?” At least one observer admonishes us to not assume that those theological values are clearly in place (Lewis 2001, 47, 73).

The second question assumed that certain *skills* (and their accompanying underlying philosophies) need to be achieved by at least some portion of the congregation if it is to possess the human resources capable of giving concrete reality to the core values. The question is “What competencies need to be developed to enable a church to actualize its passion (value) for outreach and evangelism?”

The third question was closely related to the second and focuses on *strategies* (programs) rather than skills. This is the question. “What do the strategies being implemented contribute to becoming an outreach focused evangelistic community?”

John Maxwell is credited in numerous settings with observing that, “Everything rises and falls on leadership.” It would be our hope that the genuine or primary leader in any ministry enterprise is the Holy Spirit. But clearly, God historically uses human leadership to equip and direct a community of faith to discern and obey the leading of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, a fourth question became crucial in our research process. “What roles does leadership play and what kind of leadership is required to effect a fruitful partnership with the Spirit to accomplish the necessary outcomes expected in the areas of theological foundations, individual competencies, and community strategies?” Our final conclusions shed great insight on the answers to those more specific questions.

It bears repeating. At all times in this research, we hoped to ask the respondents to identify what they perceived to be the working of God in all of this. We sought to report specific examples of the Holy Spirit’s contribution as it was understood by the church in its everyday mission.

Significance of the Study

Given the complexity of congregations across America, the experience of this specific congregation in its attempt to achieve this overall “turnaround” goal should prove useful and informative to local church leaders, denominational executives, and to some extent, those involved in the theological training of parish pastors. A brief initial survey would indicate that only now, as the Church seeks to find a place of effectiveness in postmodern America (or post-Christian America) have traditional Protestant churches begun to take seriously even the

need for such a genuinely outward focus, let alone strategies required to achieve that vision in their local contexts.

Research that seeks to identify the workings of the Holy Spirit in cooperation with a local congregation, and not merely the human portion of the endeavor, can also inform congregations that are seeking to escape the mechanist mindset of the modern era. This mechanistic mindset often seems to predominate the methodology of church growth practitioners and their imitators (Snyder and Runyon 2002, 62). “Three easy steps to being an influential or growing church” or its sister seems to be the stated goal of so much teaching. Christian Schwarz in his work on Natural Church Development reminds us that the organic nature of the church compels us to keep clear what is our work and what is God’s work.

We simply cannot “manufacture” the quantitative growth of the church. We should rather concentrate our efforts on building up the quality of the church to make sure that the blessings, which God has already begun to pour out, do not pass by our church. (Schwarz 1998, 26)

The significance of this study is that it demonstrates that the Holy Spirit does play the primary leadership role in helping a traditional and inward-focused church live by a spiritual DNA that leads it to be outwardly and evangelistically focused. For the Holy Spirit to lead, however, requires a “renewing of the mind” (Rom. 12:1) of that traditional church.

This renewal of the mind begins with a commitment to, and modeling of, submission by the human leadership of the church to the Spirit’s leadership. It requires the church to see itself not as an organization to achieve a praiseworthy mission, but as an organism (the continuing body of Christ) carrying out the mission of Jesus Christ. It requires a church to rethink its identity and character

intentionally so as to be congruent with the spiritual DNA of Jesus. It requires the church to function as a distinctly biblical and countercultural community of witness. It requires a faith in the supernatural nature of the church and a call to be kingdom-focused. In the postmodern matrix, it requires the church to claim a missionary identity.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

It must be remembered that this was action plan research that was intended to have immediate and highly practical implications for a very specific ministry context. It is presumptuous to assume that a single congregation's experience can be the model for all congregations faced with similar challenges. One would hope that a specific research question would inform them of the dynamics involved in this process, although they would still need to design their own specific strategies. (Schwarz, as part of the above mentioned citation, suggests we use the language of "principles" instead of "models"). This project's chief researcher tends to agree with the observation of successful turnaround church pastor and writer, Michael Slaughter.

No longer can any one community of Christ's followers dictate what the church must do to succeed. I'm 'unLearning' [*sic*] the model of cloning someone else's blueprint. That era is over. God's kingdom is not best represented by franchises of McChurch. If you focus your energies on copying someone else's methodology or programs, you'll miss something crucially important. (2002, 15)

Lest we think this observation lacks theological foundation and significance,

Slaughter continues:

Every church leader has a specific call and distinguishing gift base of talent. You already have the God-given gifts you need. Your mission is to use them to excel in local implementation of the overall mission of Jesus Christ. Your effectiveness in the future will be measured by how well your church demonstrates the kingdom of God in unique ways to your indigenous community and beyond. Your goal is to connect people to an authentic experience of God in this world. (15-16)

Returning to the issue of action plan research, it is necessary to identify a very important assumption. In fact, it is of primary importance in this research context. This primary assumption is echoed in the counsel of Henry Blackaby in his outstanding work, *Experiencing God*. His counsel can be summarized like this: If you want to do the will of God, figure out what it is God is already doing, and go do it (1994, 68). This attentiveness to the working of the Holy Spirit, in conjunction with prayer, undergirded the philosophy of strategic planning of both the senior pastor and the elders at the Church of God of Landisville.⁷ It rejects the model of strategic planning whereby the leadership identifies a goal that is acceptable to the church at large, organizes it, and then asks God to baptize that plan with His power. It is also a view of strategic planning that highly values fluidity and flexibility. This approach to strategic planning, around since Old Testament days, has not been much in vogue in mainstream Christianity until perhaps the last five to seven years. A brief initial review of the literature indicated that a business planning model has been advocated most strenuously, especially by many proponents of the Church Growth Movement. Descriptions of the necessity and involvement of the Holy Spirit seem lacking. To the degree that such an action plan model is alien to the experience and expectation of those who will read the conclusions of this study, there may be an ideological barrier to

applying its findings to their own context. This issue received extensive discussion in chapter two of the project.

Definition of Terms

1. Action Plan – An intentional strategy implemented to achieve specific goals.
2. Church – For the purposes of this study, Church with a capital “C” is used exclusively to describe the church universal, the global embodiment of Jesus Christ. When using a lower case “c,” church will be an alternate term for a local congregation of the larger church.
3. Churched Culture – A term popularized by Kennon Callahan and others to refer to the historic period of western Christendom when the Church was the dominant or among the dominant institutions of the society. (Callahan 1990)
4. Church Growth Movement – A contemporary movement based on a philosophy of studying the target culture, emerging business and educational practices, and new methodologies to create a user-friendly church, or in particular, one more amenable to unchurched peoples.
5. Community – In this study this term is used exclusively to describe the literal human community in which a church or congregation is located.
6. Competencies – Practical skills and specific understandings that empower an action or strategy.
7. Congregation – A local embodiment of the Church universal. A specific and identifiable group of people attempting to engage in ministry to a local community.

8. Core Values – The essential values that define a congregation and determine its behaviors.
9. DNA – Borrowed from science. It refers to the “building blocks” or “genetic code” that shape an organism. Here used to describe the “building blocks” that shape a congregation as the living Body of Christ (see also, “core values”).
10. Elders – A specific, elected group of church leaders in a Churches of God congregation charged with the spiritual oversight of a local congregation. Elders possess a specific ruling function in a local congregation best expressed as “first among equals.”
11. Evangelism – The process of inviting people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and assisting them to make that connection in a lasting way.
12. Gifts – Referred too as the *charismata* in Scripture. Supernatural enablements (or empowerments) through which persons engage in fruitful service to God.
13. Inward Focus – An emphasis on meeting the needs of the existing members and maintaining the continued existence of the congregation.
14. (The) Lost – From Luke 15. A term referring to persons who have not yet entered into a salvation by faith relationship with Jesus Christ.
15. Modernity – A term used to describe a world view and a historic period dominated by the scientific method and confidence in the ultimate triumph of human reason. Various commentators mark the end of modernity during the last two decades of the 20th century, although its impact continues to define the thinking and values of a postmodern world.

16. Outreach – A strategy that seeks to serve Jesus Christ by serving others outside the church.
17. Outward focus – An emphasis on mobilizing the resources of the church to meet the needs of the community: physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual needs.
18. Phenomenology – A methodology that seeks to identify experience and its structures.
19. Post Modernity – A term used to describe the emerging world view where the limitations of scientific method and so-called rational thought are admitted to. A time when people resume the search for meaning where experience is the prime validation of truth. Most commentators believe the Post Modern Era began some time during the final decades of the 20th Century.
20. Strategic Planning – Action planning that is intended to position a group to achieve its most fundamental core values at the most appropriate of times. It thinks “outside the box” so that a group will be ready to be effective as specific opportunities present themselves.
21. Strategies – Action plans or programs that employ gifts to achieve the desired outcomes of strategic plans. Essentially the same as “action plan.”
22. Traditional Church – Churches that have maintained a mindset, values, and systems that have remained largely unchanged for multiple decades. In contemporary literature, traditional churches are also identified with congregations who had their inception in a church culture.

23. Turnaround Church – Popularized by George Barna and others to refer to churches that have moved from decline to renewal.
24. Unchurched – Persons who are not yet connected to a congregation and who are, in the spiritual sense, functionally lost.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into six chapters. The purpose of each chapter is identified by its title. These titles are:

Chapter One: Introduction to the Project

Chapter Two: Biblical and Theological Foundations

Chapter Three: Review of the Literature and Other Sources

Chapter Four: Research Methodology and Procedures

Chapter Five: Results and Analysis of the Data

Chapter Six: Summary, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of Chapter One was to introduce the reader to the problem under study in both its larger context and its more specific context. A brief description of the methodology being used, as well as key research questions, have been provided. A rationale for the research questions themselves is presented. The researcher attempted to speak to the potential significance of this study. He also identified the particular assumptions that frame his research, particularly as they apply to strategic planning. The researcher also sought to identify some of the more obvious limitations of the study as it was undertaken. A fairly thorough attempt was made to offer consistent and clear definitions to terms used throughout the writing. These terms are identified as much as possible with their

usage in the specific literature related to contemporary discussion of this problem under study. This chapter concludes with a very brief overview of the organization of the study.

Chapter Two identified the biblical and theological values that shaped this researcher's understanding of the problem under study. The chief researcher is the senior pastor of the congregation under study. These values were explored in with the elders of the church and by appropriate ministry commissions in the development of their action plans. This discussion reflects insights that seemed to be appropriate and fruitful in the furthering of those action plans. These values were also explored directly by several small study groups and reflects what was helpful to their understanding of the nature and mission of the church.

Chapter Three brought in additional voices that inform this process. Literature generated by both practitioners and theorists was considered and reported.

As we move to Chapter Four we enter an extensive description of the research conducted in this project. Particular attention has been given to descriptions of the action plans used. The use of anecdotal journals, including the identification of some of their limitations, is reported. The development of the core values survey has also been described in this chapter. The goals of the survey process were explained, as well as any adjustments made via the use of focus groups as the project progressed.

Chapter Five focused on the data generated by the research. Here the research was organized, analyzed, and reported. The data was reported primarily by its specific source: action plans, anecdotal journals, surveys.

Finally we come to Chapter Six. This is one of the two key chapters most likely to be read by the audience for this research (Vyhmeister 2001, 1994). This chapter carries the significant responsibility of summarizing the study and its findings. It ends with a statement of the conclusions that were arrived at and the recommendations that grew from those conclusions. It also includes some conclusions generated by the study groups that used Chapter Two and general recommendations generated by the proactive Reflection Team that assisted with the development and evaluation of this research.

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1. The documentation of this study is contained in the notes compiled by the elders of the Landisville Church of God in a series of group interviews with members and regular attenders of the church during the period of January through April 2002. This material is entitled, "Thinking Forward Meetings."
 2. This narrative is a reconstruction of an actual dialogue between Pastor Stephen Dunn and the chairman of the elders, Greg Nauman on April 29, 2002.
 3. In actuality, there are multiple action plans not a single one involved in this project.
 4. This is a congregation in transition from one pastoral leader to another that on the surface expresses a sense of urgency regarding the recapture of both focus and momentum in ministry. Already an indigenous movement towards outreach is manifesting itself in the hearts and minds of a portion of the congregation. The informal research of the abovementioned Thinking Forward meetings expresses an informal permission by the congregation at large to take first steps in this direction. Therefore, the researcher will attempt to conform to their time table.
 5. One of these members, the newest, was elected at the end of the first year as a deacon and member of the church's Administrative Council. A second, the insurance broker, was elected in 2004 as the Finance Chairperson of the church.
 6. A sample of that journal is attached as an appendix to chapter one. It pre-dates the clear delineation of the project into a statement of the problem and an identification of the purpose of the study.
 7. See Appendix I: Pastoral Diary Entry – July 31, 2002.

CHAPTER TWO
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Critical Background – Cultural Exegesis

It is essential to note that a missional church that understands itself as a living organism exists in a similarly living environment. We do not inhabit a dead planet nor dwell among an unchanging humanity. It is important for us to understand the times in which we must live and to identify ministry strategies that will truly speak to the times in which we are called to minister. There is a specific cultural setting in which we are experiencing and utilizing this new DNA from the Holy Spirit. This necessitates an examination of that cultural setting. This actively is popularly known as cultural exegesis.

At the beginning of my D.Min. studies I was introduced to the work of Bill Easum. Easum spoke of living at the “crack of history” He was speaking of more than the constancy of change in the modern world. He was speaking of the change in the world itself brought on by a change of worldview. “Trusted values held for centuries are falling into this crack, never to be seen again. Ideas and methodologies that once worked no longer achieve the desired results. The crack in our history is so enormous that it is causing a metamorphosis in every area of life (1993, 23). He spoke of paradigm shifts that collectively were reshaping our

view of reality. Referencing Jesus' image of new wineskins for new wine (Matt. 9:17), he challenged the church to look for new ways to package and proclaim the Gospel that would effectively communicate to this new world view. He warned of a church shaped by the past, exhibiting an almost fear-driven obsession with recapturing the past, that unless it adapted to this changing worldview would go the "way of the dinosaurs" (15). Easum is given to hyperbole (which ironically is often the accusation made against those in prophetic roles), but his fundamental analysis of the radical change of our ecclesiastical and human existence was dead on true.

Postmodernity and the Last Days of the Modern Age

The cultural context in which we minister in 21st century America is perhaps well-described by this word of scripture. "After that whole generation had been gathered to know their fathers, another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord nor what he had done for Israel" (Judges 2:10). We have come, in the language of our day, to call this cultural setting *postmodernity*.

Somewhere around the end of the 20th century sociologists, both within the church and in the larger culture, have acknowledged that indeed a fundamental shift has occurred in our worldview. This is not viewed as a mere passing fad. It is considered on par with a the shift that occurred around 1500 A.D. that produced the Modern Age, a time in western culture that persisted for five centuries (Kimball 2003, 43-44). The beginnings of postmodernism are traced by some to as early as the 1930's. Historian Arnold Toynbee used this word in 1940 to describe his observation that a new phase of Western history had begun. By now

it is safe to say that the values of postmodernity have shaped the way people think long enough that a new set of values and beliefs have firmly embedded themselves both in the culture at large and within the church (48-49).

Although much has been written about postmodernity, it still remains an elusive concept. It would be helpful to make some general observations at this point about postmodernity and its place in human history. Scholars divide history into basically five segments: prehistory, ancient, medieval, modern, and now, postmodern. Prehistory refers to what we often call the Stone Age, before the emergence of great civilizations. Ancient history begins around 2500 BC with the onset of those civilizations (e.g., the Sumerian, Egyptian, Babylonian, Greek, and Roman empires). Somewhere around the collapse of the Roman Empire in 500 AD, the Medieval World emerged and lasted until about 1500 AD. During that time the church and Christianity dominated Western Europe. (During this time the concept of Christendom also emerges).

Around 1500 AD the Modern Age begins to dawn, what historians also call the Age of Reason and Science. But now, as humankind begins to discover the limits and failings of both human reason and modern science, a new age has come to history. Beginning around 2000 AD it became appropriate to speak of the Postmodern Age (McClaren 2001, 14-15). Each age had organizing principles, a core worldview, and a way of perceiving reality or truth.

During the end of the 20th century, several things developed that began to reshape the way we perceive the world. The failure of human reason and progress to resolve the problem of human evil (from Hitler's gas chambers to the

persistence of genocide in Europe and Africa, to the mindless proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to the greed of corporations like Enron, and to a new age of terror that was manifested with 9-11) began to undermine our sense of certainty. Science moved on to post-Newtonian physics and the fuzzy logic of computers, thereby pushing back settled boundaries and revaluing things like intuition and creative imagination. The globalization of the world that began to undermine nation states and institutions and their independent economies broke the myth of control. The failure of atheistic, avowedly secular political systems to produce progress for the human condition was one more revelation. The resurgence of people's sense of a spiritual reality spoke of a continued human emptiness in spite of the progress of science and technology. The continuing breakdown of community and the erosion of common moral values that was accelerated by the relentless individualism particularly in Western Society, created a world that was still insecure and uncertain. And finally the sheer rapidity of change, along with the explosion of knowledge, began overwhelming humankind's belief that all things can be scientifically known, further undermining our sense of certainty and advancing the belief the most reality or truth is relative, that it changes with people, circumstances, and times.¹

The Emerging Postmodern World

As these things began falling through the "crack in history", a new world appeared to be emerging. McClaren notes that it may be too early to really describe postmodernism as a new historical age or world. Perhaps this is only a

“transition” to that new world. It is a matrix or environment where brand new things are taking form. A new world is emerging,² nonetheless (2001, x-xi).

Several comments can be made about the “postmodern matrix” that will be helpful. Perhaps the most important thing to say about postmodernism is an observation made by Robert Webber. “The dominant theme of the new world is relativism” (2003, 135). There is no overarching universal explanation of the world. There is no exclusive worldview in the minds of the inhabitants of this new world. This idea, we will see, is held passionately in the postmodern world. We could call this philosophical relativism. The postmodern world is one of pluralism, including religious pluralism (i.e., religious relativism). There are many gods and all are valid. (Note, this is not an age of atheism). This new world is one of ethical relativism. Moral codes can be shifted to suit the individual’s needs and desires (126, 130-1).

This new age carries with it a new epistemology. An old baseball story gives us some insight into this new way of thinking and knowing.

A pre-modern umpire once said, “There’s balls and there’s strikes, and I calls ‘em (“sic”) as they is.” Believing in absolute truth that could be found, earlier societies looked for evidence to discover that truth. A modern umpire would say instead, “There’s balls and there’s strikes and I calls ‘em as I sees ‘em. For the modernist the truth is found in one’s own experience. Now the post-modernist umpire would say, “There’s balls and there’s strikes, and they ain’t nothin’ until I calls ‘em.” No trust exists unless we create it. (Dawn, 1995, 36)

The Postmodern Challenge

Of particular impact upon the ministry of the church of Jesus Christ at the beginning of the 21st century is the spiritual epistemology that accompanies this

new world view. Spirituality is “in,” so to speak, as once again the culture reaches for the transcendent; but it is not the objective truth, rational thinking, or external authority lens that could describe the Modern Age. Spirituality is intensely personal and tainted with narcissistic tendencies. It is extremely relativistic in nature and persons have disconnected spiritual belief from the living out the faith in any genuine and accountable way. Personal viewpoints prevail, and to the postmodern mind, no harm is done (Kimball 2003, 53).

Unlike the Modern Age with its strong Judeo-Christian roots and the general, if sometimes contradictory, support it received from the culture in terms of the American civil religion and the Protestant work ethic; the postmodern era has increasingly produced persons raised outside the church or outside any identifiable biblical and Christian community. In the Modern Age, the church and the culture partnered in a way to create a world-view that more naturally supported a biblical faith. But like the Israel described in Judges 2:10, the times have changed spiritually. People no longer think like they used to think. They no longer think with the same common spiritual metaphors or experience, and they are not inclined to do so. The institutional church and organized religion belong to a different age; and in fact, may be the enemy of this new world view in the minds of contemporary postmodern culture.

Particularly problematic for the church formed in the Modern Age, but still commissioned to communicate the gospel, is how a postmodern perceives truth. Robert Lewis, whose work with Fellowship Bible Church in Little Rock,

Arkansas, highly influenced our initial theological lens as we sought our scriptural map (later renamed scriptural compass), has it put it this way.

Increasingly, truth is consistently and wrongly defined as a matter of one's own perspective or preference, if it exists at all... (Postmodernism is) an age hostile to absolute claims from any source... But to our age, truth is nothing more than talk—especially when you don't show it. The eye, not the ear, is the decisive organ. Our postmodern world is tired of words—it wants *real*. Real is everything. Real is convincing... We do not, as many think, live in an age that despises belief. Rather, it is an age that *wants to believe*, desperately so. Deeply disillusioned by the failure of human reason and logic, it is open to outside—and even supernatural—explanations. But it trusts nothing except what it can see and, more importantly, *experience*. (2001, 37, 38, 40, 40-41)

Historic Christianity, as it was expressed in the Modern Age was often tried and found wanting, even destructive. Many a postmodernist would subscribe to Gandhi's often quoted remark: "I like your Christ, but I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ." Modern Christianity was often consumed with concern for doctrines and rational proofs of the faith. This almost dooms us to failure in communicating the gospel to postmoderns. The *a priori* proof of truth for a postmodern is not persuasive words but persuasive experience. Dave Travis recently observed that in our more global setting, if you are asked to name a great Christian of the last century, Americans are most likely to speak of Billy Graham. Outside North America, Mother Theresa is the name most often mentioned. Graham, tragically and perhaps unfairly, is associated with a propositional presentation of the truth. Theresa is associated with an incarnational presentation of the truth (Easum and Roberts, September 22, 2003).

Note that we are not saying modern is bad, postmodern is good-or the reverse.

Nor are we saying that it is simply a generational phenomenon. There are clearly some young people (particularly those raised in the church culture) and there are older persons (particularly those who were not raised in the church) who have already made the leap to a postmodern worldview (Kimball 2003, 61-63).

The transition time, however, clearly is a time of crisis for much of the church as it finds expression in Western Christianity. Leonard Sweet's observation regarding this crisis is biting, but accurate:

Western Christianity went to sleep in a modern world governed by the gods of reason and observation. It is awakening to a postmodern world open to revelation and hungry for experience. Indeed, one of the last places post-moderns expect to be "spiritual" is the church. In the midst of a spiritual "heating up" in the host postmodern culture, the church is stuck in the modern freezer. (Sweet 2000, 30)

A Tremendous Opportunity for the Church

We clearly cannot turn back the pages of history. Postmodernity is soon becoming the predominant world-view of the day (if it has not already). Within a very few generations, most vestiges of the old Modernity will go the way of the Amish in central Pennsylvania. There will still be some Moderns among us, even strong in some pockets, but they will be increasingly marginalized in society. Marginalized communities basically choose to withdraw from the world as best they can. Marginalized communities have no real power to fulfill the Great Commission in a world that has redrawn its boundaries.

But in accepting this reality and seeking to engage postmodernity on its own terms, the Christian Church has a profound opportunity to engage this new age successfully with the gospel of Jesus Christ. For the Holy Spirit of God has

implanted some key building blocks in the DNA of the Church which are meant particularly for the age in which we are now called to minister. One prime part of that DNA we will see is the transformational community of the Spirit as an alternative to the rampant loneliness and impoverished communities of this age for those who come to recognize that they will never be whole without the *koinonia* of Christ. The incarnational nature of the church's ministry, where truth is indeed "proven" as pre-Christian people encounter persons who are truly being transformed by the indwelling Christ, will also be needed these times. We will also see that the priesthood of all believers, using their spiritual gifts under the Spirit led unity of the Church to engage our multi-natured, complex society with the Gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ is vital to ministry in the postmodern matrix.

Indeed the challenge to the church in the postmodern age is to reconcile the whole person to Christ. This must be done with the commitment to prove the truth of Jesus Christ with our works, so that people may come to experience the truth of our words and surrender themselves to the Truth Who indeed will set them free.

The theological foundations that we now turn to, I believe, are the DNA of the Church, and particularly the DNA that the Holy Spirit has imparted into the life of the Church of God of Landisville. These are the spiritual building blocks of the living organism that must do ministry in this present time in the mission field that is Landisville and beyond.

The Scriptural Compass

In the opening chapter we spoke of our scriptural map as found in Matthew

9:35-38. After venturing into this project, the idea of a compass seemed a better way to communicate with the postmodern mind, especially Generation Xers and beyond. Maps come in various forms. Road maps, for example, mark the locations of various destinations and identify the roads and bridges that have been constructed to allow persons to go from one spot on the map to another. A topographical map focuses on the contours of the terrain of an area—ridges, mountain ranges, passes, valleys, lakes, and rivers. Sometimes towns and villages are included, but a topographical map is about describing the land not identifying destinations.

When the first explorers enter a new territory, they do not generally have well-developed maps. They operate with a compass. Their first intention is to see what lies within that territory. The compass gives them a sense of direction in what is yet uncharted territory. A compass helps the explorer arrive at a destination even when a map does not exist. You simply need to have a way of orienting yourself to “true north” and a general sense of where that destination lies in relationship to “true north” from your starting point.

Postmoderns value mystery, exploration, intuition, experience. They see life as the journey more than the destination. Maps are the tools of destination. They are comforting, sometimes commanding clearly prescribed routes. Compasses are about the journey to the destination.³ This idea of compass fits the imagery of the Church the Holy Spirit and. Christ is the “true north” and the DNA of the Holy Spirit are the compass settings that keep us oriented on the “true north” (Easum and Bandy 1997, 24, 201). In keeping with our understanding of discovering the

will of God by following what might be considered the magnetic leading of God, a spiritual compass is a solid metaphor.⁴ Although we began with the metaphor of a scriptural map, from this point on we will use the more powerful metaphor of the spiritual compass. In any case, it is the starting point for the theological foundation that gives life to the ministry of the Church of God of Landisville.

Here again is the scriptural compass, Matthew 9:35-38:

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'

This text is particularly important because it explains the four theological issues that are at the heart of understanding a congregation with a Holy Spirit given DNA to be an outward-focused evangelistic church. Snyder and Runyon refer to these as: the Great Confession and the Great Identification which then lead to the Great Communion and the Great Commission.⁵ The Great Confession refers to our Christology, how we understand the person and the work of Jesus. The Great Identification refers to our ecclesiology, how we understand the church. The Great Communion refers to our understanding of community, the communion of saints created by the Holy Spirit. The Great Commission refers to our mission, particularly the disciple-making mission of Christ that becomes our mission in this present age (Snyder and Runyon 2002, 28-29).

Jesus is the center of the mission, in particular, Jesus as Messiah. The description of his work (e.g., teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good

news of the kingdom,) and the implied identification of him as a shepherd, match the Messianic images of scripture.

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it was written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened upon him, and he began by saying, ‘Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’
(Luke 4:16-21)

The Messiah’s work is a salvatory work, reconciling a sinful, fallen people to a Holy God. His work is moving them from the realm of darkness to the realm of light. Delivering them from death in their sins to eternal life in God’s newly granted righteousness. This indeed is our Great Confession.⁶ Adam Hamilton states this theological foundation with great clarity:

The practical implication of this insight is profound. *The driving mission of every local church must be to do the things that Jesus wants us to do—nothing less...* Jesus said that his driving passion was to ‘seek out and save the lost’ (Luke 19.10)... If this was Jesus’ driving passion, it must be our driving passion in our churches. (Hamilton 2002, 28)

It might even be said here that Jesus’ driving passion was for the church to exceed the things He accomplished in his 33 years of ministry in the flesh. John 14:12 records this promise to His disciples. “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” Jesus desired His church to embody His life in more than warmed over church programs and ritualistic formulae. He envisioned a ministry empowered by the continuing gift of the Holy Spirit. “And I will ask

the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth... (the Holy Spirit) will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:16-17a, 26b).

As we will explore more thoroughly, the Church sees itself as the Body of Christ, continuing His work in the world today. Again, the scriptural compass clearly points to the Great Identification in Jesus’ instruction to his disciples to pray. “Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” We will be those workers raised by the Lord of the harvest.

Speaking to his disciples, a community formed by His direct call from their various places in the world to join in His work, He points us to a work that will be more fully developed by the Holy Spirit (“My Father will send another helper ...”) that will come to be known as the *koinonia*, the fellowship of the saints. We would summarize this as our Great Communion. The compass points us to the God’s desire for the church to be working *together* in this harvest field.

Not yet explicitly stated is the Great Commission of making those who are “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” into disciples. But as we will see especially as we add the imagery of the community of the Spirit as salt and light (Matt. 5.13-16), the mission of Christ was not merely to bring them into the protection of the flock under the care of a shepherd, but to mobilize them into become fully maturing, fruit-bearing disciples.

I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing... This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. (John 15.5,8)

The Great Confession – Jesus is Our Savior and Lord

A brief word is in order here. Jesus Christ, second person of the Trinity, is the One sent from the Father for a very specific purpose. Paul speaks eloquently of both the identity and mission of Jesus Christ.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. As he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn among the dead, so that in everything he might have supremacy. For God was pleased to have all of his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (Col. 1. 15-20)

Four realities present themselves. In the flesh, Jesus was the revelation to all humanity of the nature and the intention of God. John testifies to this in the prologue to his gospel. “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1. 14). Jesus himself, in response to Philip’s earnest question responds, “Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me? These words that I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work” (John 14. 11).

Jesus is also the creator and continues to demonstrate his integral and supreme nature in new creation as the “firstborn among the dead.” It is a clear affirmation that no one can expect to live in the image of God and in the wholeness (*shalom*) God intended for His creation apart from the work of Jesus Christ. Jesus is Lord of all life.

This is further reinforced by the identification of Jesus as the agent of reconciliation between a Holy God and sinful humanity (v. 20). Jesus is Savior of the world. Colossians implies the exclusivity of Jesus as Savior. Again, Jesus himself makes that identity and mission plain. "I am the way and the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father except through me (John 14:6)."

Finally, Jesus is identified as the head of the body, which is the Church. With this simple statement we must again return to the observation of Snyder and Runyon who pose an important idea:

... the issue is not just what Jesus did but also who he is. Jesus is himself the 'chief cornerstone' of the church (Eph. 2:20), and the church is based on the confession on him as 'the Christ, the Son of the living God.' The church is based on who Jesus is and on what he provides for us in his life, death, resurrection, and continuing reign. The purpose of the church is not to help people be religious; it is to help them live like Jesus Christ seven days a week. (Snyder and Runyon 2002, 28)

In a world where God is out of sight and out of mind, the Church confesses that Christ, who was crucified for our sin, is now risen indeed and lives in us. We are not merely one more charitable institution promoting good will in a troubled and sinful world. We are the continuing revelation of Christ in the world.

Starting with the Great Confession is essential to our understanding of the Church. Much of the literature of recent years has sought to define the church primarily through its function. (This includes many of the resources that I will discuss in chapter three). But there is a potential flaw in such an approach.

... This literature usually emphasizes the importance of rediscovering the biblical ministry of the church and using these insights to make the ministry of the church more relevant to today's world. This approach proceeds from what might be described as the functional view of the church, one that defines a church primarily by what it does. Reshaping a church's ministry is seen as the solution for responding to a new or changed ministry context ...

All of these approaches, however, tend to treat the church in functional terms of what churches do. 'Doing' the church's ministry is absolutely essential to a full view of the church. But such a functional approach to defining the church leaves unaddressed some basic questions about the nature of the church. (Van Gelder 2000, 20-21)

The missing component often has to do with what the church "is." It is a spiritual entity. "It is the people of God who are created by the Spirit..." (25). This means the church has God's nature. God expresses His nature in His missionary activity. He is a God who seeks to reconcile Himself to humanity. To have God's nature is to have a mission. Van Gelder provides a good way to summarize this. He speaks of the duality in the nature of the church. "The church is God's personal presence in the world through the Spirit. This makes the church, as a spiritual community, unique. The church also exists as a social reality with human behaviors organized within human structures. But this human behavior, through the redemptive work of God, is empowered by the Spirit. This duality is inherent in the nature of the church" (25).

The Triune God is a missionary God. Particularly as we encounter Him in the person of incarnate Christ, His mission is not merely a function of His nature; it is a part of His essential nature. It begins in Creation, continues through the Cross, and continues in us by His resurrection (30-31). The Christ who we confess is the Crucified One and the Risen Lord.

Much has been made of the nature of the Trinity as the model for understanding the Church. The Trinity essentially reveals the community nature of God. Three in One, indivisible, yet providing us distinctive "persons" by which

we understand the character and will of God (John 15:26; Rom. 8:11, 16-17; 2 Cor. 13:14). If we follow this line of reasoning, then something powerful is said about the church. The person that we embody by the work of the Holy Spirit is the person of the Resurrected Christ, our Risen Lord. The Risen Lord is in community with the Father and the Spirit; and, in fact, cannot truly be separated from those three Persons and still be who He is essentially. Jesus Christ is God.

Historians comment that it was the encounter with the Risen Lord that turned ordinary and indecisive men into bold apostles with a mission to the world. No other reality can explain the transformation of these men and their willingness to become obedient vessels of the Holy Spirit's power (Strobel 1998, 246-8). In fact, boldness, authority, and supernatural power are cited as the distinguishing marks of these men after they met the Risen Lord. It is indeed as if they now possessed a new spiritual DNA that made them genuinely new creations.

In making the Great Confession we are confessing that like the apostles, we also are a new creation. We are freed from the old sinful flesh and its limitations. The old has gone. The new has come. With Christ we have passed from death to life. We have a new flesh endowed with resurrection power. It is the flesh of a new humanity, a redeemed people. We still live in the flesh on Planet Earth until Jesus comes, but we need no longer live in bondage to sin. We can live and demonstrate "... the most excellent way" (1 Cor. 12:31b). The life we live as the church in this day and age is the abundant life promised in John 10:10.⁷

The Great Identification - The Church as the Body of Christ

There are quite a number of metaphors or images for the church in the New Testament. Within the context of the ministry of the Church of God of Landisville and living by the scriptural compass of Matthew 9.35-38, we have been drawn to Paul's description of the church in 1 Corinthians 12.

The body is a unit; though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink ... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (vv. 12-13, 27)

Part of the power of this image is that it is organic, representing something living and growing; rather than institutional, which is often something more static in nature. We would tend to agree with Waldo Werning's observation, "God's design is a biblical model. It is the organic, natural body of Christ. It becomes a 'community of faith' church ... The institutional and organizational Christianity, established by Constantine 1700 years ago, has handicapped the church" (2003, 38.)

The Church exists to proclaim the Risen Lord. That proclamation was the heart of the apostolic message. The Risen Lord was the proof of God as the true source of life and His supremacy over all life. Even sin with its penalty of death, could not overcome the determined and compassionate mercy of God. Jesus gave the church a mission which connected us with him in his identification with his heavenly Father. "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you" (John 20.21).

We do not confess being the body of Christ merely as a metaphor any more than we confess the incarnate Jesus to be merely a prophet of the invisible God.

Jesus was literally God in the flesh and therefore, we are literally the Body of Christ as His work continues in this world. The logical extension of that theological affirmation is: "If the church truly is the body of Christ, it has Jesus' DNA (Snyder and Runyon 2002, 28).

DNA: Tool of the Creator God

The reality of DNA within the created complexity of the human body has begun to fascinate commentators on the Church. This is not the place for an exhaustive textbook examination of the scientific concept of DNA, but a brief description of the heart of the concept will be helpful to more clearly understand this project.

Briefly stated DNA has been called the "building blocks of life." Every living cell contains DNA. These strands of nucleotides contain the chemically coded instructions to the cell as to its form and function within the larger organism. The DNA, working with RNA as a messenger, literally sorts out the specifics of the genetic material that we have received at conception to produce distinct or unique characteristics that make up the new organism. In nature this process is exceedingly complex and produces increasingly complex organisms. A human being is the most complex of all living things. (Watson 2003, 61)

Related to this is the idea of *genome*. A genome is a cell that is specific to a species. Watson and Crick, the great pioneers of our understanding of DNA, described the genome as the container of the "great set of assembly instructions that guides the development of every one of us. Human nature itself is inscribed in this book" (166). Watson also notes that a genome is more than a simple cell

held in common by every living thing. There are, for example, chimpanzee genomes and human genomes. “Only the chimp genome can make a chimp, only the human genome a human” (165). This uniqueness and complexity reminds us of the scriptural definition of human life itself.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. (Ps. 139:14-15)

Often spiritual reality is first revealed in creation itself. DNA is a demonstrable part of the creation of our Creator God. It seems more than appropriate, given the pattern of revelation, for us to understand the creation or organism that is the Church, the Body of Christ by applying the reality of DNA to that organism.

The DNA of the Holy Spirit

For a number of years I had heard church planters using the language of DNA as they spoke of the process of building or creating a church often *ex nihilo*. In my initial literature search (which will be explored in chapter three), I found only two published works describing this process. One, written from a mainline (and modernist) mindset, took the position primarily of DNA as a set of programs to be applied mechanistically, albeit creatively, to an existing congregation in hopes of breathing life into said group of believers. Given what I will say at the conclusion of this chapter about the specific challenges of our emerging culture, it is clear to me that such mechanistic uses of the DNA idea will be stillborn in any attempt to bear fruit that will last for the Gospel.

The second, written by Howard Snyder with Daniel Runyon, sought to identify

the supernatural dimension of the church through a DNA expressed in scripture, historic creed, and emerging philosophies. Snyder and Runyon tie their explanation of the Holy Spirit and DNA to the literal person of Jesus Christ and to the thought that our work as a church continues in our confession of Jesus Christ as the Risen Lord. It is obvious from the preceding sections of this chapter that I have borrowed heavily from their focus and evaluation.⁸ With this in mind, we will first make some observations regarding the idea of a spiritual DNA as it relates to the body of Christ. We will then move on to the various spiritual building blocks woven together to create that Great Communion that is the Church and its Great Commission.

(1) DNA and Values

There are eight aspects of our spiritual DNA that are particularly appropriate to a church seeking to fulfill an outreach mission in the postmodern age. They are (1) supernatural organism, (2) missionary nature (3) countercultural calling (4) transformational fellowship, (5) Christ-worshipping, (6) safe place, (7) led by the Spirit, (8) Kingdom-focused. These have to do with the form and the function of the parts of the organism. Working together, they are what gives the organism its unique identity. We will examine the first two of these building blocks as we discuss The Great Identification. The remaining building blocks will be examined as we describe The Great Communion.

To give this a non-scientific application, the spiritual DNA is best equated with the shared values of the organism. Values essentially are the beliefs that shape a community and its identity. Core values are those particular values that drive our

behaviors or actions. They define how we intend or desire to live. Every individual has a set of values for their own life. Ultimately a community's identity and behaviors will be determined by the degree to which the individuals within a community share "common values." For it is those common or shared values that provide the measure by which we are held accountable to one another. Those values will shape our attitudes and behaviors as a community.

It can be said that the Body of Christ as a community has shared values or else it simply is not going to be a community. There is no unity without shared values. The Great Identification is a commitment to live as a community by the values imparted or held by the Holy Spirit who brings the Church to birth.

This understanding of the DNA as shared values is preferable to seeing the DNA as the spiritual gifts that make up the Body of Christ. Following the above discussion about *genomes*, there is a human DNA distinct from a chimp DNA. It is hard to ignore the reality that human beings bear some similarities to chimps, particularly in appearance and abilities. But it is not the appearance or the ability that defines the nature or identity. A good way to explain the distinction between DNA as values as opposed to gifts is this. All Christians are called to evangelize, to be a part of the great chain of activity that reconciles a lost humanity to its Savior. But not all Christians have the gift of evangelism. Some persons express their evangelistic DNA by the gift of hospitality, others by the gift of serving; still others by the gift of mercy. It is the DNA of evangelism that prompts each part to do its part in the mission of reconciliation.⁹

(2) Small Groups and the DNA of the Spirit

It is generally understood in the Church today, that a small group is the place of primary face-to-face encounter where the individuals of a congregation build relationships and experience some form of community. These groups take on a variety of forms: nurture and support groups, Bible study and discipleship groups, ministry teams (choirs and missionary teams), affinity or kinship groups (like youth groups and senior fellowships), and Sunday School classes. Despite the varying forms of additional purpose besides community, small groups are the primary place where persons experience *koinonia*, fellowship, and through which they identify their connectedness with the Church.

In human organism, the work of the DNA is done in cells. It is in this very small, simple unit of the incredible complex human body that the stuff of life grows. Unless these simple cells reproduce and multiply, the body neither grows nor continues to live. Before there is a body with hands and feet and a brain and a heart, there is a single cell of human DNA that does its work reproducing new cells that pass along the messages that define the human organism.

It is no accident that healthy churches grow from healthy cells. A healthy church is made up of healthy smaller parts, like human cells possessing distinct functions (e.g., cells that become hearts, cells that become feet), until each is knitted together and reaches the fullness that is the Body of Christ.

A healthy small group, where the work of creation, spiritual formation, and reproduction occurs, is essential to a church that is to function as the DNA of the Spirit intends. The great outward-focused movements of Christian history from

the New Testament Church to the Wesleyan revival to the Korean renewal under Paul Cho have all possessed the dynamic that the Church was born, formed and continually renewed by the work of small groups.

Note, we said “healthy small groups.” Let me offer a detailed definition of a healthy small group as determined by research and theological understanding.

... They must be *holistic* groups which go beyond discussing Bible passages to applying its message to daily life. In these groups, members are able to bring up those issues of immediate and questions that are immediate personal concerns.

Holistic small groups are the natural place for Christians to learn to serve others—both in and outside the group—with their spiritual gifts. The planned multiplication of such groups is made possible through the continued development of leaders as a by-product of the normal group life. The mean of the term “discipleship” becomes practical in the context of holistic small groups: the transfer of life, not rote learning of abstract concepts. (Swarz 1996, 32)

For practical purposes small groups may take one of the many forms identified earlier in this section. But as effective carriers of the DNA, small groups must attend to the issue of spiritual formation. Such groups are voluntary groups of individuals who covenant together to explore the Word, nurture one another in faith and ministry, and hold each another accountable to the leadership of God’s Spirit for edification of not only the individual believer, but the entire Body of Christ.

Small groups have the added asset of giving postmoderns an experience that begins to counter the rampant and destructive individualism of this culture. One of the core values taught by Jesus in John 15 is the necessity to “Love each other as I have loved you.” Without the benefit of connectedness to a small group, we live in general isolation from one another, generally lacking the daily opportunity

to put this value into practice. We cannot love God without loving one another, and without being together in intentional relationship we cannot truly love one another. The ethos of the postmodern age flows in the wrong direction. The small group, although not a perfect tool, starts the flow in God's direction (Frazee 2001, 72-73).

Here we have the direct model of Jesus Himself, as well as the early Church as it was formed by the Holy Spirit. Although Jesus worked among the masses, the heart of His work was done by investing three intense years into the lives of twelve persons. Through daily interaction with Jesus, observing Him at work, and sharing in His ministry these men were reshaped into the vessels who would carry the new DNA of the Spirit. He changed them from narrow-thinking and parochial men with an inward focus, to men who would proclaim the Kingdom of God not only to their fellow Jews, but to the Gentile world also. Small groups, as a tool of spiritual formation, are a part of Jesus' spiritual DNA that the Holy Spirit has designed into the church that seeks to follow Jesus Christ out into the world, reconciling a lost humanity to His heavenly Father.

The place of small groups and the spiritual DNA is perhaps best summarized by these words of Thomas Kirkpatrick:

This truth is *fundamental* in that close personal relationships that characterize Christian koinonia are at one and the same time Life producing for those who are a part of our Christian community, *and* Life producing for those beyond who find such relationships so attractive. Koinonia is an "evangelizing fellowship"—Life for ourselves and life for others. You see, if we are experiencing *real* Christian fellowship, real sharing and caring, we are an inviting, attractive group beyond ourselves. (1995, 6)

Supernatural Organism

The church is a supernatural organism. It is ordained by Christ (Matthew 16:18), created on the Day of Pentecost by the indwelling Spirit of Christ, and clearly destined to exercise the very resurrection power of Christ in carrying out its mission. As imperfect a portrait of the Church as some may consider the Jerusalem Church to be, it is clear from the record of Acts that it was a supernatural organism. Neither its unity, its strength, its magnetic effect, nor its witness came from its organizational structure, its programs of ministry, its facilities or its institutions. Its unity grew from the common experience that they had seen the Risen Lord and were obedient to the Spirit's leading. Its strength did not come from positions of power or human authority. Its magnetic effect was a combination of the signs and wonders performed by the apostles, the boldness of these unlearned men, and the incredible sacrificial spirit of the believers. Its witness grew from healed and transformed lives.

The church at Jerusalem had the barest of organization. (We will explore this below when we examine the spiritual building block of being Spirit led). It had no programs except that which grew out of each believers' desire to learn from the apostles, to pray for another, to break bread. The programmatic exception might be the distribution to the widows (Acts 6:1-6), but even that was a Spirit-initiated response to a physical need carried out primarily by men exercising their gifts rather than any strategized structure. The church had no physical structures except the borrowed Temple Courts and the believers' homes themselves. People were

concerned with their relationship with the Risen Lord who might return at any time. Institutions were not even on the radar screen.

And yet the church *grew*. Ultimately it turned its world upside down because it was a supernatural community. It was a living organism, the Body of Christ. The believers did not even have a name until someone in Antioch called them Christians (Acts 11:26).

One of the greatest handicaps of the Church in our time is that it substitutes hierarchies and organizations for true apostolic authority, and programs for the giftedness and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. The church has lowered its expectations of its vision and ministry by what is humanly possible. Michael Slaughter speaks of the need for what he calls “full term faith.” “Full-term faith is the confidence that no matter how ordinary or quiet my life is, God is going to work a miracle through it to touch the world” (Slaughter 2002, 202). Indeed if the Church is the Body of Christ then organizations, programs, or vision statements are not what define the church. What defines us is the supernatural power of God at work. It is a power that produces confidence in the supernatural God at work within us. Leonard Sweet adds that in Christ, “... we (the church) already have the keys we need to unlock the energies of the Spirit in our churches” (Ayers 2003, 7). Steve Ayers, who serves as pastor for a church that Leonard Sweet is describing says it this way:

As we minister in the twenty-first century, we have to ask ourselves how confident we are that the Jesus who walked on the earth two thousand years ago will still evoke ministries with supernatural power. I say, ‘Absolutely.’ Being confident in God’s power leads us to God’s provision and God’s perspective ... Confidence is learning to truly believe that what Jesus said is reality. What he says is true.” (148-149)

This is also one more reason why the imagery of the Body of Christ, complete a spiritual DNA, Jesus' DNA, is important. The Great Communion must see itself as an actual living organism not merely an organization. It is a supernatural organism with supernatural power.

Missionary Nature

We have observed above that God is a missionary God. This suggests that the Church has more than a mission. It is missionary by its very nature. This certainly is the suggestion of the every day movements of Jesus that are described in our scriptural compass in Matthew 9:35-38. It is found in Jesus' Great Commission given to his disciples in Matthew 28:18-20. I John 4:19 tells us that the love which empowers us comes from His love and that love has come to us because God acts out of His love to reconnect us with Him through the Cross (Rom. 5:6-11). The Church's missionary nature is found in Paul's description of them in Colossians 1:27 as having "Christ in you, the hope of glory." God's plan for reaching people begins with Christ but continues in people in whom Christ dwells.

Ron Crandall speaks of this missionary and evangelistic nature in this way: "Evangelism begins with God, not with us. It begins with God's own nature and God's activity. Any one of us who dare speak of the God who met us and who can meet others are only able to do because this is who God is and what God does" (Clegg and Bird 2001, 98). To have God's nature is to have a missionary nature.

It is this missionary nature that drives a church to turn to an outward focus. It is this missionary nature that does not permit us to hang out forever in the Temple Courts listening to the teaching of the apostles. We do not know if the Church intended to hang out in Jerusalem forever, but ultimately the Holy Spirit used the persecution of the church in Jerusalem to activate this DNA. For even when they were scattered, they focused not on hiding but in proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom (Acts 5:19-21). Sometimes our Jerusalem is the “church house” and the people we can attract inside, but to be missionaries requires us to engage the mission field beyond our front door, and beyond our immediate church family.

Clegg and Bird ask a probing question in their book, *Lost in America*. “My church’s neighborhood is a mission field. Your church’s neighborhood is, too. Does your church live as if that’s true” (82)? To try and operate as if we are not a missionary people could be saying that we are not truly the Body of Christ, that we do not possess His nature. Perhaps from the reason why the anointing of the Spirit seems to have departed many churches in North America is because they are denying their God-given missionary nature.

The Great Communion: Called to be a Countercultural Community

The Great Confession and the Great Identification lead us to understand that the church is an incarnational community created to glorify God in a world that needs to sit up and take notice of His continuing presence. Jesus succinctly describes this reality in His instructions in the Sermon on the Mount:

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot

be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and place it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. (Matt. 5:13-16)

We will return to this verse when we explore the DNA of evangelism or reconciliation. What is essential here is to note that Christ's message was inseparable from the person of Christ. In affirming this description of the nature of the church, its ecclesiology; we affirm the necessity of our taking on the personality of Christ. Apart from the our great identification with the One who is the object of our great confession, we cannot hope to fulfill that ultimate great commission unless we are truly transformed to be people, to borrow a popular expression by Max Lucado, who are "just like Jesus." This leads to our Great Communion, the community of faith.

Countercultural Calling

Until recent times not enough attention has been given to the distinctiveness or countercultural calling of the Church of Jesus Christ. Loren Mead has written: "Within the Apostolic Paradigm, the church formed itself into strong local entities or congregations and nurtured its people to reach out to a hostile environment to witness to the good news of the biblical story of Jesus" (1991, 28).¹⁰ Leslie Newbiggin, a missionary to India noted upon his return to the West that our culture had now become a mission field. The positivist, reductionist, scientific mindset of our culture needed to be confronted by the expanded consciousness of the Bible (Willimon 2002, 207). Will Willimon, who has written in detail about

pastoral leadership, adds this observation about the culture of the West and the culture that is the Church of Jesus Christ:

We live in a culture, that of liberalism, in which human experience is thought of as the supreme source of most reality, in which religion is seen as a mere accident of birth, a primitive means of expressing a human experience that could be as well expressed through some other medium. All religions are thus only different, culturally conditioned means of saying the same thing ... speaking of the church as a 'counterculture' does not mean that the church ... stands aloof from human culture, pointing a critical finger towards a predominately secular world. Rather, the church itself forms a culture that is counter to the world's ways of doing things. The church does not simply reach out and speak to the dominant culture; it seeks to disrupt that culture by rescuing some from it, then to inculcate people into a new culture called the church. (207-8, 209)

This is wholly consistent with Jesus' identification of His disciples in Matt. 5 as salt and light: one adds flavor, the other adds illumination. It is also consistent with Jesus' admonition to His disciples in John 15:18: "As it is you do not belong to the world; but I have chosen you out of the world."

The call to be a distinctive community is seen in Peter's words to the Church:

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ ... But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:4-5,9)

This distinctiveness implies a political or social reality that is at the heart of the nature of a Christian community. We are not called to be like the culture, or simply a better representation of the human community's best aspirations and features. We are called to present an alternate lifestyle, a new way to live that will satisfy humanity's deepest need in a way no mere human community can do. We are called to connect people with the truth of God's design for humanity as

revealed in His Word. We are called to help them become the kind of humans God had in mind when He created them in His own image, not the corrupted humanity produced by the Fall.

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. (1 Peter 2.11-12)

We are called to distinctiveness because we are called to be countercultural.

In a post-Christian society, the church needs to be an alternative culture. It needs to be defined over and against the ruling values of society. Like the early church, the church today is a pilgrim church in an alien and foreign land. The culture of the world in which we live is so thoroughly shaped by the principalities and powers that the church must become a sign, a foretaste, a witness to a humanity and a world shaped by the vision of God's reign over the lives of his people. This alternative culture is not just an individual here and there willing to live a life of radical discipleship, but it is local communities who gather to be church together. It is these people, these communities of faith that will evangelize, disciple and form Christians in a post-Christian world. These people, formed as Christians who live countercultural lifestyles, are the ones who will make the greatest impact on society. (Webber 2003, 158)

Another piece of the DNA of a countercultural calling is the way this will also transform the church that was formed in the church culture of the Modern Age. Because that culture was never as Christian as it claimed and because some of the worst features of modernity have invaded the church, often cutting it loose from its biblical moorings; a church living out this DNA may truly become the church God intended when He created it through the power of His Holy Spirit at the Day of Pentecost.

Transformational Fellowship

Adam Hamilton says there are four questions every church should ask: 1. Why do people need Christ? 2. Why do people need the church? 3. Why do people need this *particular* church? 4. To whom does our church belong? (2002, 21, 28). The final question is perhaps the most important to our understanding of the mission of the church. I find no better expression of the answer to that fourth question than the one Hamilton found in his own church experience. "*The church belongs to Jesus Christ. He is its Lord. He is its owner. The church is Christ's body, his representative to the world; a world for which he died*" (28).

The apostle Paul fleshes this out quite well when he speaks of the reconciling and recreating work of Jesus Christ that has been passed on to the Church of Jesus Christ.

So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old is gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Cor. 5:16-21)

Death to life. Old to new. Alienated to reconciled. Enemies to friends. These are transformation words. The church is called not simply to be a community of refuge from the ravages of a sinful world. It is called to be a place of transformation where we become new persons capable of going out into that sinful world with confidence and strength as we become partners in the mission of Jesus Christ Himself. One commentator speaks of this as bringing hurting selves into a fellowship where they receive the healing power of God so that they might

become receivers who give. Givers who never forget that they began by receiving the gift of grace through Jesus Christ our Lord, lest they see themselves as superior to others thereby creating one more barrier to a hurting person who has not yet found grace (Robinson 2003, 67).

In addition, the Church functions as a transformational fellowship when it centers itself around the written Word that bears testimony to the Word become flesh. The centrality and the authority of scripture is a core value that drives the behaviors of this new community. This Word gives form and clarity to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It cannot be ignored or downplayed in the pattern of that transformed community as it takes its shape under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. It is important to focus here on the description of the church in its formative stage as recorded in Acts 2:42-47:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

First in that chain of ministry was "devotion to the apostles' teaching." Added to the next elements of ministry, we see that this resulted in a new outlook upon community and its practice. "All the believers were together and had everything in common (Acts 2:44a)." Do the spiritual math and you see that the Holy Spirit's empowerment and the foundational commitment to the authority of God's Word produced a transformation quite unlike any other human community in history.

A community of transformation is, therefore, not only important as a place where salvation can be found; but also as a resource to commend the gospel of Jesus Christ to persons before they ever enter into the relational precincts of the Church. Thinking particularly of the Church as the community where we encounter the Word and its transforming power, Werning puts it this way, “The Word is to transform minds and lives. Paul lifts the Word as having an incarnational attribute that makes Christians ‘living letters’” (2003, 55).

The church is a transformational fellowship because it is intent on spiritual formation. It is the place where people are introduced to the “mind of Christ” (Rom. 12:2) so that they might be, to use Dallas Willard’s term, “Christ formed”. The transformational community is intentional about exposing people to the central beliefs, the central practices, and the central virtues growing from the experience of Christ and His Word that form our central mission (Frazee 2001, 66, 74). It is the place where persons discover *who* they were created by God to be, and more importantly, *who the Christ is* that dwells within them, and *whose* mission they are claiming.

Formation in Christ prepares persons to participate fully in the Church in Spirit. The changes our vision calls for can only become a reality when the members of the body of Christ have been prepared and equipped spiritually to participate in the new reality ... spiritual formation begins with a vital community of faith. And it expands with authentic initiation into this community, participating in the mission of the community, discerning the call of God, and learning to pray and worship. (Johnson and McDonald 1999, 138)

As we will see below, the DNA of transformation is what particularly produces the mission of evangelism, of reconciling people to God.

Clearly Worshiping Christ

Worship is the “core” core value of this community called the Body of Christ. Worship is the “first” expression of our Great Confession and Great Identification. It is the essential manifestation of our obedience to the Greatest Commandment. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matt. 22:37). It is through worship that the Great Communion is achieved and ultimately, the Great Commission is empowered.

Jesus described this phenomenon when he spoke the words:

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23-24)

For in worship the Spirit connects us with the Truth that transforms us into “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (I Peter 2:9).

Commenting on “true worship,” Gary Burge has written:

Worship, I believe, is a *divine encounter* that touches many dimensions of my personhood. It is an encounter in which God’s glory and word and grace are unveiled, and we respond, in songs and prayers of celebration. Worshipers seek an encounter with the glory of God, His transcendent power, his supernatural mystery—and in so doing, recognize a Lord whose majesty evokes strong praise, petition and transformation. (Barna and others 2000, 59)

From the confessions of David to the testimonies of Isaiah through the example of the early Church in Acts, worship is the first concern that those who have encountered the living God give themselves to.

(Worship) is the ultimate purpose of the church and has been since its beginning. The church of Acts could have tried to replicate the mass conversion event of Pentecost, but it did not. Instead, its first concern was to give God what was due: worship. (Morgenthaler 1995, 38-39)

It should be noted that the Bible does not define or dictate a specific worship style. What we have been speaking about is the substance of worship. That substance is an encounter with the living God where we as worshippers declare His worth and offer our sacrifices of praise and commit our lives to His service in the world. Rom. 12:1 is the classic text on this. "Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship."

True, style can help or hinder the substance of worship; but it is not the defining characteristic of worship. Traditional, contemporary, seeker-sensitive, ancient/future, liturgical, charismatic, convergence are all styles of worship that the emerging church continues to explore and utilize to achieve the goal of helping us be the worshippers we are called to be. Upon achieving that goal, they are available for the church's use and should be honored for what they contribute.

What also must be said is that worship must be Christ-centered. In other words, the Great Communion that comes from the Great Confession and Identification must clearly be worshipping Christ. This is not to deny or demote the other persons of the Trinity, nor abandon a Trinitarian expression of worship. But it must be said that since the Crucifixion and Resurrection, the Easter event is the central focus of who we are as a people in relationship to God. That is why the first sermon prompted by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost centered around the Christ event (Acts 2:22-40).

One of the scandals of Christianity to the postmodern mind is the claim of the exclusivity of Jesus Christ as the way of salvation. This is a truth that we not only must not shrink from, but must proclaim clearly and boldly. Worship, in this sense, is one of the most countercultural things that the church does in the postmodern age and it is precisely that commitment to “worship Christ clearly” that gives it its ultimate effectiveness as a community.

What does it mean to worship Christ clearly? Bruce Leafblad is instructive on this count:

An evangelical church celebrates and enacts the Evangel—the gospel of Jesus Christ—in its worship. Worship centers in Christ. The good news of redemption in Christ brings rejoicing, thanksgiving and celebration in the “psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” of worship. Sermons declare the manifold blessings and glories of salvation. The Lord’s Table reenacts and proclaims the heart of the good news.

An evangelical church affirms and teaches that those who are won by the gospel are to live by the gospel. The goal of the good news isn’t merely to provide a door of entry to heaven, but a path to maturity in Christ. Those who follow Christ will exhibit changed lives. Becoming more and more Christ-like in our character, our attitudes, our values, our relationships, our way of living—this is the norm. It’s by means of such personal transformation of individual lives that the church becomes salt and light in the world. (Barna and others 2000, 94-95)

Clearly worshipping Christ requires the church to approach the worship experience with an expectation to meet God *every time it gathers* and to do so with a commitment to encountering Him in spirit and in truth. We must open ourselves to being led by the Spirit as we worship, not simply repeating words and following forms that do not reflect the life we intend to live as we leave this place of worship. Likewise, we must come to worship expecting God to do a work upon our lives, for us to be transformed. And finally, we must we never make the mistake of bringing worship down to the level of mere sacred entertainment or to

make as the first evaluative question, “Was I fed today?” We prayerfully and obediently offer worship that gives an affirmative answer to the question, “Was God pleased with what we offered Him today?”

We have spoken of the dangers of being housebound as a community, to simply tie the ministry to a physical place, a building called “the church.” This is wise counsel, for the frontline of the church’s mission is no longer in its sanctuary set apart for the worship of God. (As if it ever truly were). Unfortunately, we still live in a time when those seeking spiritual truth seek out the recognized gathering place of the Church and the occasion they still prefer or choose for this first encounter is the gathering event called worship. This is especially true if these seekers have engaged Christians “outside the church” who have evidently been transformed by the worship that occurs within that transformational fellowship called the Church.

Much attention has been given, and rightly so, to the evangelistic potential of the worship experience. A worship service has some anonymity for a pre-Christian who does not wish to be personally confronted or held accountable for his or her response to the truth that is presented. Given that there are a lot of better things to do in the pre-Christian’s mind than to spend an hour on a Sunday morning in a place with strange songs and strange practices, the fact is that they generally come through the door with questions on their minds and some expectation that answers will be offered to those questions.

Yet at times we have recognized the evangelistic potential of worship, but forgotten the first purpose of worship. We may repeat formulas and methods that

no longer communicate to the postmodern mind and thus lose a prime opportunity to present the gospel, or we can so alter the nature of worship that we present a form without power which causes them to reject the gospel as insufficient to their deepest needs.

This is why worship must not be all about packaging—whether to preserve our sacred traditions or to make our sacred values palatable to a pre-Christian audience. No, worship must be about Jesus Christ! One of our core values at the Church of God of Landisville is stated in this manner:

The pulse of the church is worship. In our public and private worship life the presence of the Lord or the lack thereof will be manifest. We worship God because He is God and because we seek to glorify Him. In addition, our worship bears witness to the *truth that is found in Jesus Christ* (emphasis added). In worship praise and prayers resound. Fellowship abounds and the proclamation of the “good news” announces the grace of God. Worship is not about style or performance. It is about spirit and truth. We seek worship that beats as one with the heart of God. (Core Values of the Church of God of Landisville)

Persons coming through our worship door do not need a worship experience, they need an encounter with the living God. In fact, ample evidence exists through numerous samplings that postmoderns in particular want nothing less than a genuine experience of meeting God. They come to church to meet Jesus and the question a church must always ask is, “Did Jesus show up today?”

I would submit that unless the church keeps its focus upon Christ as the audience, as the recipient of worship; it will never be a transformational community. Again, the old apostolic formula is worthy of repetition. “We preach Christ and Christ crucified.”

For worship to contribute to our evangelistic DNA, we must clearly and unashamedly confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in worship, and encourage people always to look beyond us to the Christ who we worship. We must teach by both example and word how one who at first may only be a seeker, can approach the throne of grace and find the transformation that Christ will bring.

Being a Safe ‘Place’

Sgt. Phil Esterhouse was the fictional desk sergeant in the popular Sixties’ cop show “Hill Street Blues.” The show often opened with roll call, that pre-shift gathering of the patrol officers before they hit the streets. After informing them of the latest crimes and elaborating on instructions of how to handle various police matters, Esterhouse would lean across the podium, pause dramatically, and then with one finger pointed towards his officers, admonish, “Be careful out there.” Police work is not done in station, it is done in the streets and they are mean streets.

The emerging church at the beginning of the 21st century understands that the critical work of the church is done in the streets, streets where spiritual warfare occurs. Christians, to truly be effective, need to put on the whole armor of God and be instructed in how to conduct themselves faithfully and fruitfully. To serve Christ is to be the bearer of a dangerous message, one that confronts sin truthfully and one that entails great risk and sacrifice on the part of the messenger.

Yet increasingly people come to the church *from* the world. They arrive not as warriors, but as victims. They are drawn to the church out of the crises of daily living in a fallen world. They are wounded and fearful. Remember Jesus’

observation, “harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” The church must first deal with their healing before truly working on their equipping.

That is why the church must give careful attention to being what Bill Hybels has called, “A safe place for a dangerous message.” Jesus himself set this agenda when he issued the invitation: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matt. 12:28-30). The ministry of small groups, with a partnering of scriptural spiritual formation and nurturing one another in love, is a primary means of giving this theological truth a practical expression. (A fuller examination of this aspect of our DNA is found in the next section, “The Great Commission: How We Understand Our Mission” in the subsection, “Incorporating Them Into a Maturing Relationship With Christ”).

It would be helpful to understand what is meant by “place.” We do not refer to a geographical location but a spiritual one. It might be more appropriate to speak of a people who create a spiritual location, i.e. safe relationships. Those relationships are identifiable and concrete, and accomplish three things: (1) Draws us close to God. (2) Draws us close to others. (3) Helps us become the real person God created us to be (Cloud and Townsend 1995, 143).

To draw on the “location or place” imagery a bit further, however, we need to think of three aspects that create the safety. These might be summarized as dwelling, grace, and truth. The word dwelling in the Greek means “encamp” or “reside,” and suggests that safe relationships come from the incarnational

qualities of Jesus found in persons who abide in Christ (John 15:5). People are able to encamp or reside with those who abide in Christ, and by extension begin to enjoy the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) that are borne by those abiding in Christ (145).

One of my mentors, the late Dr. Larry White once referred to himself as “an unrepentant grace junkie.” This reminds us of an important aspect of the DNA of transformation. It is composed of grace. The community is created by grace and called to live in grace. The classic definition of grace is “God’s unmerited favor.” The church is called to identify with Christ whose sacrifice was the embodiment of God’s desire that His children receive the grace that comes from His unconditional love (John 3:16-17).

Which brings us to the dimension of truth. It is The Truth that the church must be prepared to exhibit in its life. We are all redeemed people, but not by our merit. Although we are forgiven, we were once sinners. Although we are gifted and empowered to function as healers, we are wounded healers. The Resurrected Christ did not hide His scars. He used them to bring Thomas and others to faith (John 20:24-29). We must not hide our scars nor deny our wounds or else the scarred and wounded people drawn to Christ will be confused and repelled by the Church that denies its brokenness. Ultimately, our security rests in God’s grace (Rom. 5:1-2; 8:31-39). We cannot be a “safe place”, a people who bring security, unless we are “unrepentant grace junkies.”

Dwelling, grace, and truth make God's people a safe place to hear the ultimately dangerous message that comes from drawing closer to God, closer to others, and becoming the person God created us to be.

Led By the Holy Spirit

This leads us to the most critical aspect of our spiritual DNA, the acknowledged leadership of the Holy Spirit. Political correctness often leads us to claim that our church is led by the Holy Spirit, but in reality it is something else that leads. The absence of the particular building blocks of supernatural and transformational may give lie to this claim of the Spirit's leadership in some congregations. At other times the leadership style and ministry structure of the congregation do so.

The presence of this building block is tied to how we view the leadership and ministry structure of the church. There is the reality of the Holy Spirit that defies highly defined chains of authority and heavily layered decision-making processes and flow charts which defined the expected outcomes of every ministry plan.

Although the New Testament speaks of elderships and delegated authority, it is intentionally vague on how that was lived out in the early Church. It appears that a variety of structures were used in the pre-Constantinian Church. The key seems to be a consistency with the vision and the giftedness granted through the Holy Spirit, but with a fairly high allowance for flexibility. The dispute over the neglect of the Grecian widows in Acts 6 gives us an insight here. In the organism that was the Church at Jerusalem, explosive growth had produced some unmet needs. The structure that had worked until that point was no longer producing the desired

ministry fruit. Therefore, the structure was expanded to include seven deacons. The apostles examined these deacons in order to preserve a unity in the church's core vision, and then they granted them both the responsibility *and* authority to meet this need.¹¹

Following the emergence of this new leadership dimension two things occurred. (1) More persons took significant roles in ministry. (Stephen actually went from spectator to evangelist to martyr). (2) The overall impact of the church *multiplied*. "So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7).

To return to Henry Blackaby's observation in our first chapter about divine guidance, a church that views itself as an organism will see leadership in a more organic form focusing on following God's leading and bearing observable fruit for the Kingdom. Although structured to some extent, it chooses leadership that reflects the person of Christ over simple organizational efficiency, and is flexible enough to unleash that leadership (and the ministries under its care) to bear the fruit that is needed for that present time. Or as Michael Foss puts it even more stridently:

Discipleship congregations simply cannot tolerate a structure that discourages passion, impedes creativity, stifles innovation, and simply takes too much time to get things done. They need to equip leaders with the skills and resources necessary for particular ministries and then authorize those closest to the ministry to make and implement appropriate decisions. (Foss 2000, 143)

The Church has struggled mightily in these past years for a leadership model that will empower her to accomplish her complex and changing task in an

increasingly hostile and uncooperative environment. Whether it be the professional model of a highly trained and carefully vetted clergy (priest) or the charismatic model of a shepherd leader (prophet) raised up for a particular *kairos* time or the CEO model (king) to manage a mighty army of gifted volunteers or the therapeutic model of a pastor (shepherd) intent on feeding and guarding the flock until Jesus comes; these and other models have been found wanting. Added to this is the particularly American tendency to democratize the church so that the authority for leadership is vested in the will of the people.

These models often fail because we have not considered God's biblical plan for leadership in the Church. The Holy Spirit is the leader promised by Jesus (John 15:8-15). Just before His ascension Jesus reinforced this. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8) When the church was born, it was through the empowerment and direction of the Holy Spirit who "filled" the church (Acts 2:1-4).

Even when human leaders are called to share responsibility and give physical voice to a specific direction, the Word does not see this as a substitute for the Holy Spirit's primary role or as an abdication of the Holy Spirit's responsibility. In the formative experience of conflict resolution and vision casting described at the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15, Luke is careful to record the words of the apostles in their very specific instructions: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us ..." (vv. 15.28a). Note both the word order of their communication and the

place given the Holy Spirit in the chain of authority represented by those instructions.

Acts 2:42-45 in particular reminds us that those first apostles, transformed by the Risen Lord and the indwelling Holy Spirit, moved from men competing for primacy to men working with extraordinary unity. Ministry decisions were made out of the four-fold context of devotion to the “apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” They anticipated the direction and empowerment of God to come through a common commitment to the Word, to living out their call to community, to that constant remembrance of their Lord’s sacrifice, and to opening themselves up in direct communication, not simply with one another but with the Lord.

Likewise, to new believers they communicated the expectation of the Holy Spirit’s presence and leadership in their own faith lives. Peter’s Pentecost sermon plants this truth. “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2.38-39).

Anthony Robinson notes that this leadership was particularly effective because they possessed a constant awareness of both the grace in which they lived and their ongoing need for the Holy Spirit’s leadership. ‘Leaders are those who are led’ is his intriguing phrase (2003, 72). Reflecting on the experiences described in Acts 2 and elsewhere, Robinson continues, “Their leadership is funded by

worship experience, by prayer, by study of the scriptures... Leaders are those who are led—led by the Spirit. They are givers who have received” (72).

It is the awareness of this promise and its reality at work in the life of our own congregation two thousand years later that has led us to constantly seek and identify the specifics and dynamics of the leadership of the Holy Spirit. This particular theological issue will be addressed more fully in chapter five as we share the results of our own anecdotal research.

Kingdom-Focused

“Jesus went through all the town and villages ... preaching the good news of the Kingdom ...” (Matt. 9:35).

Jesus was Kingdom-focused. Many of his parables were descriptions of the Kingdom and creative invitations to claim citizenship in that Kingdom. The vision given to John in Revelation Complementing the Great Commission given by Jesus for the church is the vision given to John in Revelation to understand that the only boundaries of ministry are the kingdom boundaries that include every nation, tribe and tongue (Rev. 5:9-14), all who call upon the name of the Lord for salvation.

The first century church is perhaps the most powerful example of the Holy Spirit creating a new community with an outreaching, evangelistic DNA. Commentators frequently draw the connection that the church entering the postmodern age faces a cultural situation similar to the first century church. Living with the words of Jesus still ringing in their ears, and the images of Jesus’ ministry embedded in their minds, there is little doubt that the first century was

given an unmistakable mandate to live with a kingdom-focus. In the first century, “the purpose of the church was to model and proclaim the coming of the kingdom of God” (Easum, and Travis 2003, 15).

The implication for the church with a kingdom focused DNA is that it will stop thinking in terms of building up its own little congregation. It will begin to think of partnering with other congregations to advance the Kingdom of God in communities and ultimately the world. Denominational labels and differences in ministry style will be viewed as diverse tools that extend the Kingdom’s effectiveness instead of sources of division and exclusion. The church will see that this involves investing its energies beyond the boundaries of its in-house congregational programs to investing its ministry energies in the larger community and even cooperating in the ministry of other congregations whose particular passion complements the unique passion of the congregation sharing its gifts and people. It will lead the church to begin praying for believers beyond its congregational boundaries; indeed, to have a far more global sense of its local mission.

The Great Commission-How We Understand Our Mission

We repeat what we said at the beginning of the previous session. The church is a supernatural institution. True, it is composed of human beings who form its eyes and ears, hands and feet. But those human beings dare not seek to accomplish their task apart from the supernatural empowerment of the Spirit of God. “Not by might nor by power but by my Spirit,” says the Lord Almighty” (Zech. 4:6).

The Foundation of Prayer

The mission begins with prayer. It is through prayer that we receive the empowering of the Holy Spirit. Steve Sjogren, who pastors a unique outward focused church in Cincinnati, Ohio has an unusual way of looking at this:

We need to take action. I've been a coffee drinker for years. I enjoy, the smell, the taste, the look—the entire experience of coffee. I'm a raving fan of the drink. Maybe the church as a whole needs to drink more coffee to get more motivated. It's good at getting us going. But we need more than coffee to do what is discussed in these pages. We need the power of the Holy Spirit continually upon us and on what we are stepping out to do. In Norwegian, the word for coffee "bean" is the same the word for "prayer" ("*bonne*"). That coincidence makes perfect sense to me. At the root of our success as an outward-focused church is the need for stimulation beyond us. Coffee helps. Prayer and the empowering of the Spirit are essential. He is ready, willing and enthusiastic about filling us with his power to change the world. (2002, 8-9)

The pattern of Christ Himself was to maintain a persistent and intentional communication with His Heavenly Father through prayer. Again, the scriptural compass points to the task before us (i.e., the plentiful harvest). We are to "pray to the Lord of the Harvest..."

This is not simply prayer for power. It is prayer for guidance as is found in the pattern of the early church. Confronted with the life-threatening division over the manner of including Gentiles in the Body, the disciples counseled with one another and with the Holy Spirit. And so we read of that marvelous outcome that was communicated to the Gentiles in Acts 15. The words that precede the specific action plan are most significant. "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us ... (v. 28). Note first the word order. Clearly there was a sense of the Spirit's direction and blessing, and then an agreement or submission of the Church to that

direction. The result was wondrous days of fruitfulness for the Church of Jesus Christ.

Unfortunately, in a church captivated by its organizational systems, this particular dimension is relegated to a generalized recognition of God's presence or an after-the-fact request for God to baptize that which man has already decided to do. Prayer keeps us from thinking that we work in our own strength. "I can do all things *through Christ* who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13). It keeps us from accepting the limitations of our humanity as the limitations of the church. "And now unto him who is able to be immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us... (Eph. 3:20)." Prayer also keeps us from subordinating God's will to our willingness. In the Model Prayer, Jesus himself told his disciples to begin: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matt. 6:9b-10)."

We must also note the necessity of prayer. Jesus modeled this in His own person, turning to it both as a form of being in touch with His Father's will and for power in times of crisis and challenge. Note that he began his public ministry following 40 days of prayer in the wilderness (Luke 4). Mark 1 reminds us that in the intensity of daily ministry, Jesus would rise up early to be alone with His Heavenly Father in prayer. The death of John the Baptist and the turmoil it added to the community led Jesus to forsake the crowds and be alone in prayer (Mark 14:23-25). Jesus' call of the twelve disciples grew out of an all-night prayer meeting (Luke 6:12-13). Dann Spader gives us a succinct reference to the

foundational necessity of prayer.

If ever any man could have claimed that he didn't need to pray, Jesus was that man. After all, He knew that Father's heart, He knew His mission, He was a master of discerning needs, and he was the second member of the Trinity. Yet he was continually devoting time to prayer. (Spader and Mayes 1991, 101)

Ultimately, the Great Commission remains stillborn if we, as the Body of Christ, neglect the example and priority of the One Who we confess is our Head.

Our Great Commission begins in the crucible of prayer. It is unleashed through the priesthood of all believers exercising their gifts to sacrificially serve the larger community. This service is done so that we might salt the world with grace and light it with love drawing pre-Christian people to glorify God. It is lived in an intentional work of reconciling people to God. It is a work that is not complete until they are in a maturing relationship with Christ that turns them from those who are being served to those who are serving. It is a work that forms us passionate, maturing persons who build bridges of relationship and service, by which the culture and community are impacted by Christ, and then brought into the redemptive community of Christ.

Unleashing the Priesthood of All Believers

The teaching of both I Cor. 12 and Eph. 4 clearly remind us that (1) the church is not the hierarchical structure we have made it for the last 1500 years; and (2) the people of God, all the people of God, are intended to function as the mediators of God's grace.

The postmodern world has discovered this reality powerfully and values it highly. George Cladis writes:

Effective work groups in the postmodern world do not emphasize hierarchy. It is a structure that does not motivate people to give their best. Instead, the interchange of ideas among everyone involved in an enterprise is valued and considered important. A premium is put on including people in decision making rather than excluding them. Hierarchical structures tend to stifle innovation. Only the creativity of the few *on the top* was felt throughout the organization. *Flatter* structures draw out more innovation of all work group members not just of a few. Furthermore, those working in flatter settings feel more a part of a team accomplishing an objective that has meaning and not simply people doing a job. (1999, 20)

Max De Pree has even noted that this move in the culture reflects a scriptural truth about leadership and work as outlined by Jesus in Luke 2:46-48 (1992, 10).¹²

An argument broke out among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. Then he said to them, ‘Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all—he is the greatest.

Translating this into the DNA of the church, the emphasis is not on authority but on ministry. This is not to say that there is no one in authority. It does say, however, that authority is derived from the Head, which is Jesus Christ and is exercised by those who are obedient to using the grace gifts that God granted them. If the Holy Spirit indeed resides in each believer, gifting them and empowering them; then it is incumbent upon the church to be structured in a way that unleashes these persons to follow their calling from God. Given the magnitude of the task, this scriptural principle also carries an undeniable practicality. Jesus in the flesh ministered only to a limited number of persons in a narrow geographic vicinity during a specific time in history. The Great Commission that He initiated is for all the world and all of time until He returns. This means many incarnational persons reaching more and more individuals in ever-increasing circles. “You shall be my witnesses” was not spoken merely to

the apostles but to the Church; and as we see in the scriptural witness, the Spirit was continually raising up new workers in new places to carry on the work that at best the apostles *could only begin*.

This has powerful implications for the concept of the ordained clergy and their role within the Body. Eph. 4 clearly teaches that “pastor” is a *charisma*, a spiritual gift granted to the church for equipping. Acts 4 describes the apostles, who clearly had leadership authority, as exercising that authority, in part, through their role as teachers of the Word. (In the early days of my own denominational heritage, we would have spoken on this function as the “teaching elder.”) The testimony of Titus 1:5-9 indicates that there were elders appointed in the churches and the implication seems to be this was an office (a “ruling elder”).

In the Modern Age we have come to blur the line between *charisma* and office (*overseer*). The reality is that those who hold the “office” of pastor often exhibit gifts other than that of teacher/equiper. (Some hold the gifts of faith, leadership, exhortation, apostleship). Those who exercise the “gift” of teacher/equiper often are located among the laity. Ironically, the Holy Spirit has planted, by design, His gifts into the church to follow the scriptural pattern that enables the organism to function in a healthy manner in spite of our sometimes unhealthy, human hierarchical systems.

In the New Testament there seems, however, to be no clergy and laity dichotomy when it comes to ministry. All of us are called to minister. There is a description often published in bulletins, “Reverend *Such and Such*, Pastor and *The Whole Church*, Ministers. This is more than formula. It is an important scriptural

distinction. The organizational understanding of a pastor as the exclusive agent to impart grace does not find good support in the New Testament. In fact, Eph. 4 strongly suggests that grace is imparted when each member of the Body does their part in the work of the ministry.

Ministry as an expression or work of grace is precisely a key to the DNA involving the priesthood of all believers. The ministry grows from God's gift of grace and requires those in authority to recognize God's grace at work in each and every believer within the Body of Christ. "God's grace carries permission. You're allowed to try things on for size, to make mistakes, to lurch forward without extensive planning, to charge instead of waiting. You're allowed to enjoy being God's steward" (Sitze 2002, 22). In fact, it actually begins to open persons to the concept of being stewards of the work of God, stewards who need to be bold, risk-taking, obedient, and active until Christ returns.

The church formed by the Holy Spirit, led by the Holy Spirit, and empowered by the Holy Spirit will become far more interested in structures and leadership committed to releasing people for ministry than hierarchies concerned about control and permission-giving (Easum and Travis 2003, 38).

Gifted to Sacrificially Serve the Larger Community

Charles Bayer, a most provocative commentator on the postmodern church, has written: "The world is not to serve the church. The church is to serve the world" (Bayer 2001, 171). Scripture emphasizes this with three teachings of our Lord. One, we are called to be servants (John 13:13-17). Two, our primary or

ultimate field of mission is not the saints within but the lost without (Luke 19:10).

Finally, such service to the world is to be sacrificial (Luke 9:23).

This clearly implies an outward focus. Our Great Mission is thwarted when our spiritual DNA lacks a passion and heart for the lost and when we try to program our DNA to stay inside the walls of the church's building or the boundaries of its internal ministries.

Robert Lewis speaks of this as the principle of the Bridge.

Jesus Christ was a daring bridge builder of another kind. Against overwhelming odds, he imagined a bridge of unprecedented spiritual influence—one that would span a chasm roaring with skepticism, indifference, hostility, even persecution. He imagined a bridge able to connect his people—'my church,' he called them—to a disbelieving, disinterested world. (2001, 27)

Basing this principle on Matt. 5:13-16, Lewis thinks of the church as being mobilized to live out the implications of the gospel in a world where pre-Christian people will be able to encounter the truth and its proof in the lives of those unleashed believers. Bridge-building is a particularly useful metaphor because in the real world bridges allow two-way movement between one community and another. Life is enriched by this two-way movement. "Bridges give life through two-way movement!" (31). As the church moves across the bridge into the world it truly lives as Jesus intended through its missionary nature. As people from the world come across the bridge into the community that is the church, they find the abundant life God desires for them. Bridges move the church into the culture where they can impact people for Christ. Bridges move the people of the world into the church where their lives can be transformed. Calling this Jesus' *Big Idea* Lewis asserts:

The church... should be a force of *irresistible influence* in its community. By building bridges of real spiritual integrity between itself and an increasingly skeptical society, we possess the power and authority to be a catalyst for change and an engine of influence. (56)

Ironically the Latin word *pontifex*, which is translated *priest* and is used in Roman Catholicism to describe the Pope, the *pontifex maximus*, means *bridge*. The bridges that we build out into the culture and the larger community are manifested in the lives of maturing disciples poured out in ministry. Carrying the metaphor of the church as an organism, a living entity, further, not only does the church build bridges, but by becoming people living out an outreach-focused DNA, we are the bridges to the culture.

The witness of Christian history reinforces this theological reality. Where Christians lived out their values in the world, their influence was indeed irresistible and magnetic. Church historian Rodney Stark speaks of this proof offered by Christians during the two great plagues that devastated the Roman Empire in A.D. 165 and A.D. 251, each time a third of the population died:

The willingness of Christians to care for others was put on dramatic public display ... Pagans tried to avoid all contact with the afflicted, often casting the still-living into the gutters. Christians, on the other hand, nursed the sick, even though (some) died doing so ... Christians also were visible and valuable during the frequent natural and social disasters afflicting the Greco-Roman world: earthquakes, famines, floods, riots, civil wars, and invasions. Even in healthier times, the pagan emperor, Julian, noted the followers of The Way 'support not only the poor, *but ours* as well.' (45-46)

We also have this testimony of historian Will Durant:

Never had the world seen such a dispensation of alms as now organized by the Church ... She helped widows, orphans, the sick or infirm, prisoners, victims of natural catastrophes; and she frequently intervened to protect the lower orders from unusual exploitation or excessive taxation. In many cases, priests gave all their property to the poor ... others devoted fortunes to charitable work. The church or her rich laymen founded public hospitals on a

scale never known before ... *Pagans admired* the steadfastness of Christians in caring for the sick in cities and stricken with famine or pestilence. (46)

This was while the church was still in the minority, viewed with suspicion because of its countercultural ways, without secular power, and often persecuted out of fear and ignorance by the populace and the powers that be. How different than the vague commitment to social justice and the strident “culture war” position taken by the church in the church culture at the end of the 20th century.

Is this not the logical extension of Jesus’ own self-confession of his mission (Luke 4:16-21) which we spoke of back in the section on the Great Confession? The Great Commission that flows from the Great Confession ultimately is one of sacrificially serving the larger community, especially a hostile and even unappreciative world. The genius of the Spirit at work in the early church was that this DNA of sacrificial servanthood began to earn, not only the respect of the pagan world, but to draw people to become Christ-followers themselves.

Intentionally Reconciling People to God

The 20th century in particular seemed to create a forced dichotomy between the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. This was often articulated as a choice between being a church of evangelism and discipleship (committed to reconciling people to Christ) or a church of social justice (helping the poor and the oppressed). This dichotomy often led to churches that were concerned primarily with soul-winning, but had little demonstrable impact or influence on the justice of the community and the treatment of the needy. Or it led to churches that were so consumed with the works of justice that they neglected to expend

significant resources on the greatest act of love of all, introducing persons to their Savior.

To understand this we need a more wholistic concept of conversion and evangelism. Early church historians note three things that Christian conversion required in the Greco-Roman world of the first century:

- (1) Christian conversion required belief. In pagan religions one was not asked to believe in a god but to perform rituals or duties for the god.
- (2) Conversion to Christ implied ethical transformation. In Roman culture there was no connection between religion and behavior. You could follow this god or that and behave any way you wanted.
- (3) Conversion in a Christian sense implies devotion to Jesus and a belonging to his community. This also was strange to the Hellenistic mind. The mysteries were only open to those who belonged, but they did not demand an exclusive embrace. One could belong to other groups as well. (Webber 2003, 66)

Does this sound at all familiar to the world view in which the church is now called to communicate the gospel, to evangelize?

We are also reminded that both to stay true to the New Testament and effective to evangelize in the postmodern world, we engage in evangelism not simply as an individual enterprise, but as a community one. Leslie Newbiggin has summarized this well:

I confess that I have come to feel that the primary reality of which we have to take account in seeking for a Christian impact on public life is the Christian congregation. How is it possible that the gospel should be credible, that people should come to believe in the power which has the last word on human affairs is represented by a man hanging on a cross? I am suggesting that the only answer, the only hermeneutic of the gospel is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it ... (all evangelistic tools) have power to accomplish their purpose only as they are rooted in and lead back to a believing community. Jesus ... did not write a book but formed a community. (Newbiggin 1996, 22)

This cannot be overstated. Both commands are given by Christ and that alone suggests that a church must find a way to include both aspects of Christ's ministry if it is to be faithful to the DNA that the Holy Spirit imparts. One church does not receive an evangelism gene and another, a servant gene. Jesus Himself proclaimed the Good News of the kingdom and healed the sick.

This also means that a church that seeks to evangelize with respect to the DNA we have described, must see its task as three-fold. We must represent the gospel, proclaim the gospel, and connect people to the gospel this will result in persons who give evidence of their conversion in believing, behaving, and belonging (66). Evangelism requires us to help people reach the decision (whether in a crisis point or in stages) that they, too, make the Great Confession (believing), the Great Identification (behaving), and are incorporated into the Great Communion carrying out the Great Commission (behaving/belonging).

Incorporating Them Into a Maturing Relationship with Christ

As we have said earlier, salt represents flavoring and light represents illumination. It is indeed a reminder that we are to be distinctively and unashamedly Christian in all that we say and do. The purpose of our living as salt and light, however, is to point others to God and influence them to glorify Him. A few years ago, our church carried the vision statement, "Building a Great People for God," but as our elders began following the scriptural compass of Matthew 9:35-38, they felt compelled to rewrite that statement. It now reads, "Seeking to be the people of a great God." Our compass points people to the great God who wants them to be holy as He is holy.

A church that wants to act as salt and light must truly be salt and light. This requires a church to make a serious commitment to spiritual formation as the disciples of Jesus Christ. Paul speaks of “having the mind of Christ.” Acknowledgement of the Spirit’s leadership, prayer for guidance and empowerment, worship as both the focus of a community and witness to the world are not enough without the intentional process of growing in Christ. This is accomplished when a church is committed to the spiritual formation of its members as an expectation of membership and is structured to equip people to grow in Christian maturity (Eph. 4:11-16). This requires the church to back up its confession of the authority of scripture with an intentional means to knowing and applying scripture to our lives (2 Tim. 3:14-16).

We must know the truth that the Scripture teaches so that the message we live before the world will also be the truth. But a “head” knowledge of the truth or the ability to pass the test of doctrinal correctness is not the ultimate measure of our knowledge of the truth. It is when that truth is embodied in our lives. We must not merely be a people who understand and proclaim forgiveness, we must be people who practice forgiveness. We must be people who know what the Bible teaches about community and we must be people who live in community as the Bible has taught us.

The Reality of Spiritual Warfare

One of the realities of truly being the Body of Christ in mission is that we have an adversary. Ephesians 6 is the classic description of this:

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not with flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the evil day comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. (vv. 10-13)

The gospel of Luke makes a point of saying that as Jesus began preparing for the public dimension of his ministry, he was immediately engaged in spiritual warfare (Luke 4:1-13). Given our earlier discussion, it should be noted that out of prayer, the weapon God gave Jesus with which to do battle was scripture.

Ephesians 6:17 refers to this as "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Spiritual warfare necessitates being grounded in the Word and prayer.

A church as it truly seeks to live by the DNA of the Spirit to become an outward-focused, evangelistic and life-transforming organism of ministry must expect opposition. It must expect to be hated and despised by the "principalities and powers" and Satan himself. The more effective the church becomes, the more vigilant it must become to take on the whole armor of God. "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil goes around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

The church must be prepared to support and empower its leaders and its people in prayer. It must be alert to those who are weak among them, who Satan will tempt with doubt and discouragement. It must be alert to the accusations and dissensions that Satan attempt to sow to undermine the unity. It must be alert to the seduction of worldly goals that Satan will offer to take the Church's mind off

the goals of Jesus Christ. It must understand that as the Church prospers, the warfare will intensify. It will intensify on all fronts.

The church must openly teach not only how its individual members and the Body collectively fight these spiritual battles, but must vigorously teach that the outcome of that battle is never in doubt. Jesus tells Peter "... on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matt. 16:18). And then Jesus reminds His disciples at the Last Supper, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 15:33b).

The reality of spiritual warfare can easily become such a discouragement and distraction to church leadership it that begins to feel as if it is always under fire or always being called to put out fires. You begin to see spiritual warfare as a distraction from mission or an impediment to that mission. You will come to resent the three steps forward, two steps back dynamic of warfare. But the scriptural truth is that engaging in spiritual warfare bearing the whole armor of God ultimately deepens the mission. "The mighty men" of David's army were no mere conscripts. Those who have been through the fire and "still stand" find that they have been refined, deepened, and strengthened (1 Peter 5:10). The church that embraces spiritual warfare with the power of Christ finds itself being taken to a whole new level of mission, with the potential of an even greater fruitfulness for the Kingdom of God.

Looking to the Scriptural Compass

Having explored the theological issues concerned with being an outward-focused church, a living organism embodying the gospel in this present age, we

come full circle to the scriptural compass that guides us in this journey. Before moving on to the descriptions of that particular journey described in our research, we need to make two further observations.

Spiritual DNA and Free Will

We need to be wary of trying to make any metaphor “walk on all fours.” What we understand about DNA at this point is a product of scientific thinking yet largely dominated by the Modern Age. Scientists (including Watson and Crick) believe that one can manipulate the DNA to achieve certain outcomes. Such an understanding, for example, drives cloning research in the early 21st century.

Our use of the DNA metaphor is a bit like the biblical writers use of anthropomorphic language to describe God (does God have a literal hand?). Or it is like John’s use of symbol and metaphor to describe the New Heaven and the New Earth and its inhabitants in Revelation. In each case we are using limited human language to convey some portions of the mystery and majesty of the workings of a Holy God to finite human beings who possess a limited ability to understand Him. It is a mistake to try and twist the metaphor (a mistake prompted by our rationalistic way of thinking) of the DNA just as it is a mistake to mix the purpose of a parable with that of an allegory in hermeneutics. The DNA metaphor is more a parabolic than a scientific (literalistic) way of describing the complexity of the spiritual organism that is the Body of Christ.

Having said that, we need to note that DNA can be manipulated; but that the manipulation is done by the Creator not the creature. The church cannot manipulate its Spirit-given DNA to make a church in “its image.” There are no

programmatic ways to play with the DNA and produce a church that is still truly the Body of Christ. Without the indwelling and leading of the Holy Spirit, there is no true Church, just a human clone of a divine entity.

In reality, an inward focused church and an outward focused church have the same DNA. Otherwise, one is the Body of Christ and one is a counterfeit. The difference between an inward focused church and an outward focused church has to do with the exercise of one of God's foundational gifts to humanity – a free will. It has to do with obedience, exercised in freedom, to the call of Christ to live as a New Creation.

Here, my Arminian theology lends itself well to a thinking of the Church in a postmodern context. The sovereign God “self-limits” Himself out of love to allow His creature to choose Him. Through the Cross, He gives us all the spiritual DNA to live “in Him--to conform to His likeness and image. But He still gives us the “choice” to receive the gift of grace by faith. To a rationalistic mind that seems messy, self-defeating, even unloving and unwise when the creature in freedom does not chose to obey Christ. As Christians we have the experience of wrestling with our old flesh, even after becoming New Creations. But do the reality of temptation and the experience of disobedience make us not Christians?

Inward-focused churches have a missionary DNA. Inward-focused churches have the DNA to be safe places. They possess the DNA to be kingdom-focused. They have all the DNA of Jesus. They have, unfortunately, exercised their freedom and chosen to be disobedient to the Christ in them (“Who is the hope of glory”). Like the people in Genesis 11, they want to build a tower to heaven

without regard to the expectations of the *Lord* of Heaven. They think they can manipulate the DNA of Jesus by ignoring the parts of that DNA that call them out of their comfort zone—that allow them to remain who they want to be instead of being like Jesus. Sometimes this is the willful choice of people who want to choose their own road to heaven, Sometimes this is choice made by ignorance of the Word and the Spirit at work within them. They are too busy playing church to *be* the Church the Spirit calls them to and empowers them to be.

Having made the necessary caution, we want to return to our DNA metaphor for a moment. One of the ways that our DNA operates is by the pairings of the DNA called double-helices. These double-helices form connective strands to give the DNA its uniqueness and to ultimately produce complex functions. The DNA described in the previous sections often works in these combinations or pairings or strands so that one part strengthens the other part. Different combinations work together to produce characteristics that produce behaviors in the organism.

Easum and Bandy speak of the double helix of spiritual life and spiritual calling (1997, 200-201). Or as we might speak of it, our Great Communion and our Great Commission, which, as they are uniquely connected or woven in a specific congregation, will produce a unique expression of the Body of Christ which is a local church.

Using the Compass – Cultural Exegesis

A word needs to also be added regarding the vital nature of cultural exegesis, a topic with which we began this chapter, as we live out this spiritual DNA. Veteran pilots remind us that in the journey itself it is not merely a matter of knowing

where “true north” (or magnetic north) is in relationship to your flight and destination. If you set out on a flight from Harrisburg to Findlay, you must take into account a number of factors. The temperature, the wind speed and wind direction, the weather fronts through which you must pass, the adjustments required by topography. These are adjustments you need to make in order to arrive at your destination. You do not simply take a compass reading off of “true north” and take off. You must adjust your instruments to account for the factors that can confuse you along the way.¹³

Although Jesus Christ and His gospel are unchanging, there are currents and factors within the culture that can pull us away from our destination if we do not understand and allow for them. Instrument settings made for a flight in the Modern World will work against the scriptural compass as it helps you identify a plan for a flight in the Postmodern World. In the Modern World flight there may have been no turbulence created by the powerful fronts of relativism and anti-authoritarianism. But those fronts affect all flights in the Postmodern World. In the Modern World flight the currents of relentless worship of reason and rationalization required a different approach than the Postmodern World flight where the winds of mystery and spiritual hunger once again blow. Even armed with the compass of the Word, you may end up off course and miss the destination the Spirit intends if you do not allow for the conditions through which you must fly.

Within our congregational context and based on the exegesis of the culture of our mission field, we have summarized these theological foundations with a mission statement that reads:

The Church of God of Landisville
 ... seeking to be the people of a great God
 by serving where the Spirit leads
 by creating a safe place for people in need
 and by sharing God's love with all.

This might be a way of describing the double-helix strands that form the particular identity of the Church of God of Landisville. These words echo a similar description of the DNA of outreach and evangelism by Robert Lewis:

A church passionately committed to Jesus Christ and to the proclamation of the gospel; a church of winsome lifestyles punctuated by high moral standards; a church of radical love and selfless good deeds that amazes the world around it" (2001, 74)

In chapter four we hope to show the impact of these theological foundations on the ultimate expression of ourselves as a community granted, by the grace of God through the Holy Spirit, the DNA of outreach and evangelism,

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1. This analysis does not come from a single author, but is a blending of my reading these past 12-15 years of the writings of many persons including: Os Guinness, Frances Schaeffer, Michael Horton, George Hunter, Leslie Newbiggin, Leith Anderson, Charles Colson, Rebecca Pippert, Brian McClaren, Bill Easum
 2. This is why I prefer to use the term "the emerging church."
 3. This idea was stimulated by a discussion with Dr. David Draper of Winebrenner Seminary, but the application to postmodernism is essentially mine.
 4. We began to use the image of the compass in our teaching about the nature and mission of the Church in February of 2004. The first specific use was in a membership class of February 22, 2004 taught by the Senior Pastor.
 5. I have chosen to capitalize these categories as they will be the key theological descriptors in this study.
 6. The Great Confession is also the starting point for mission found in the book that initially influenced the formative stages of the Church of God of Landisville in its mission of outreach and evangelism; that work being Robert Lewis' *The Church of Irresistible Influence*.
 7. C.H. Dodd spoke of this as "realized eschatology." We might then say the church is an eschatological organism bearing in its flesh the firstfruits of the promise of eternal life.
 8. Easum and Bandy in *Growing Spiritual Redwoods* use the DNA metaphor frequently and in the manner of spiritual reality put forward by Snyder and Runyon. They simply do not attempt to explore the metaphor in depth as do Snyder and Runyon.
 9. This understanding was prompted by a discussion in one of our small groups, A Few Good Men, that was studying an early version of chapter two as part of the action plan research.

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10. Mead is using the expression Apostolic Paradigm to refer to the model derived from the church in the Apostolic Age.
 11. This text and others also clearly imply that the Holy Spirit works through teams of leaders. In fact, as the emerging church is discovering, team leadership is particularly effective because it honors the organic metaphor of the Body where each part does its part to build up the whole Body. More will said about this below.
 12. For continuity I have quoted this text in the New International Version rather than the version quoted by De Pree in his observation.
 13. This particular idea was suggested to me by Dr. Kirby Keller, past president of Evangelical Theological Seminary in Myerstown, Pennsylvania and an avid pilot of small planes.

CHAPTER THREE

SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

There has been a surprising explosion of literature on the ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ at this transition point between the Modern Age and what some are calling the Postmodern Age. Although the assessment of whether this time in history is a blessing for the Church or a time of difficulty may vary to some degree, most of those writing share the common understanding that change is upon us and the Church must take a new approach to ministry within the changing worldview of contemporary, emerging culture.

This researcher has chosen to limit the survey of the literature primarily to resources developed since 1990, with a preference towards those that have been written since the year 2000. Part of this decision grows from the fact that some literature is still trying to chart a flight plan for the Modern Age rather than honestly tackle the journey into the emerging one. Part of this decision grows from the reality that some of the observations of materials produced even in the 1990's are being eclipsed by new data. This decision has allowed the researcher to set some manageable parameters on the material that can be read and digested given its daily growing volume. Since this project will likely be read some time after mid 2005, this researcher felt that materials rooted in the knowledge and

experience gained particularly in the last five years would be the most useful.

One evening one of our small groups that is highly intergenerational in its composition was discussing the issue of ministry in this changing time by examining the scripture lesson from Matthew 9:17. The inevitable question came, “Can the new wine and the old wine co-exist?” After some wrestling with the text, the consensus unfortunately seemed drifting towards the answers “no” or “probably not.” It was a bittersweet direction because these persons have a genuine affection for one another. Then one of the older members responded, “Yes, the old and the new wine *can* co-exist.” A spark of hope re-entered the discussion and he concluded, “But only in the *new* wineskins. Old wine can live in the old wineskins, but the new cannot or the skin is burst and the wine is lost” (Pastoral Journal April 21, 2004).

I am no wine connoisseur, but those who are tell me that sometimes the old, seasoned wine is the very best. As we have come to understand this text at the Church of God of Landisville; if the old wine will allow itself to be placed into new wineskins, then it can mix with the new wine to the betterment of all.

Two of the strongest conclusions that our research ultimately has identified have been the need for rethinking church and letting the Holy Spirit lead that church. Both conclusions also involve an understanding of the emerging culture, sometimes called the postmodern age. As such, this literature survey will focus on these three areas: understanding the emerging culture, rethinking the church, and following the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

The fields of evangelism, small groups, servant outreach, and worship reflect the many combinations of those DNA strands. We have learned that by simply focusing on those fields, it can be tempting to simply try and imitate methodology, a subtle form of attempting to manipulate the DNA. Therefore, I believe that one is best served by focusing on the literature that has as its main focus the issues of the emerging church, rethinking church (the new wineskins of ecclesiology), and adopting a leadership style that allows the Holy Spirit to lead—in other words, letting our Creator God do the manipulating of the DNA instead of the creatures trying to do so.

Resources for Understanding the Emerging Culture

Postmodernity is the primary lens through which many view the emerging culture. Although much has been written about postmodernity, it still remains an elusive concept. We referred to several excellent commentators at the beginning of Chapter Two: Dan Kimball, Robert Webber, Brian McClaren, and Leonard Sweet. These men are among the most incisive and helpful commentators for a local church context. Having previously identified some of their ideas, we will limit ourselves here to their key ideas and the implications of those ideas for our ministry context as a traditional church following an outward focus.

Dan Kimball gives us an excellent, highly readable look at postmodernity in his book, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (2003). Kimball is the pastor of Vintage Faith Church, Santa Cruz CA, and a frequent contributor to the many websites involving The Emerging Church. He notes that somewhere towards the end of the 20th century sociologists, both within

the church and in the larger culture acknowledged that a fundamental shift in our world-view had occurred. This was viewed as no mere passing fad. It was considered on a par with a shift that occurred around 1500 A.D. that produced the Modern Age, a time, particularly in western culture, that persisted for five centuries. The beginnings of this postmodernism are traced by some as early as the 1930's. In 1940 historian Arnold Toynbee used this word to describe his observation that a new phase of Western history had begun. By now, Kimball observes, it is safe to say that a new set of values and beliefs has emerged (43-44, 48-49).

Kimball makes these observations to help flesh out our understanding of the postmodern world. This emerging world has "a self-deterministic and pluralistic view of its culture and religion." There is nothing wrong with accepting conflicting views and beliefs. He also notes, "Power and faith is in personal experience" (44). There is no external or objective revelation for the postmodern mind which thus leads to an automatic skepticism or suspicion of authority. The Bible is but one religious book and it is open to many interpretations. What Christians call the Word of God carries no absolute authority for the postmodern.

This creates a new ground of apologetic for Christians. They must contend with people who place high value on happiness, particularly personal happiness. Happiness is the filter through which people not only view experience but test its validity. Through instant communication, postmoderns constantly receive input with which to challenge the propositional truths so often put forward by Christians educated in modernity. And because it is an instant age, postmoderns

have little patience with a message that cannot be plainly and creatively communicated.

In our own ministry context, this has led us to take more seriously the particular questions being asked by postmodern seekers instead of the questions they may not be asking. It has also led us to re-examine the values that drive our behaviors. Do we really live by biblical values or cultural values disguised in biblical clothing? Do we live as people “under authority” of the Word so that we can demonstrate the value of that authority?

Robert Webber, a professor of theology at Wheaton College, has a most useful exploration of this postmodern world-view in his work devoted to evangelism, *Ancient-Future Evangelism* (2003). His most important observation for ministry, has already been referred to in Chapter Two, “The dominant theme of the new world is relativism” (135). Postmoderns believe that there is no overarching universal explanation of the world, and that there is no exclusive worldview in the minds of the inhabitants of this new world. This could be called philosophical relativism. The postmodern world is one of pluralism, including religious pluralism (i.e., religious relativism). There are many gods and all are valid, (note, this is not an age of atheism). This new world is also one of ethical relativism. Moral codes can be shifted to suit the individual’s needs and desires (126, 130-1).

In our ministry setting, this has taught us to stop fighting a war against atheism. Atheism was a false god of modernity. Atheism has been overwhelmed by the rebirth of spirituality in postmoderns. It has also led to our re-emphasizing the biblical understanding of community. In an age of relativism, the necessity of

rediscovering interdependence is a vital tool in responding to the inevitable destructive impact that comes from worship of the individual and the ultimate disconnectedness that it produces.

In *The Church on the Other Side: Doing Ministry in the Post-modern Matrix* (2000), Brian McClaren speaks of the emerging culture as a matrix increasingly dominated by a postmodern world-view. McClaren serves the Cedar Ridge Community Church, Spencerville MD, and contributes to a variety of resources on the reality and impact of postmodernism. As things start falling through the “crack in history,” a new world appears to be emerging. McClaren cautions that it might be too early really to describe postmodernism as a new historical age of the world, but simply as a “transition” to that new world. It is a “matrix” or environment where brand new things are taking form. A new world is emerging, nonetheless (218).

McClaren provides in this work and his highly creative narrative *A New Kind of Christian* (2001), a highly detailed and fairly optimistic look at this postmodern world. He helps us understand the emerging world by looking at the modern age, which he believes was marked by at least seven dimensions: conquest and control, mechanization, critical analysis, secular science, a belief in absolute certainties, individualism and consumerism. If, as modernity declares, the universe was “an intelligent machine—and science is the master screw-driver to take it apart—then analysis is the ultimate form of thought, the universal screw-driver” (2001, 16). “It was an age aspiring to objectivity... which we believed would yield absolute certainty and knowledge” (17). What was unknown

(including the mysteries of God, if there was one) could ultimately be known by human reason and understanding. Anything that could not be scientifically proven was discarded or dismissed as not true. Religion and the supernatural were forced into the backseat.

It was an age of modern nation states and organizations, with people being seen more and more as an organizational element. Ironically the individualism promoted by this age destroyed communities, leaving individuals disconnected. This ultimately led from a focus on “we” to a focus on “me.” Happiness was often pursued through consumerism “...when people often quoted the maxim, ‘Money can’t buy happiness’ but seldom acted like it” (16-17). On the spiritual front, Protestantism and institutional religion dominated the scene but began losing credibility as the other aspects of modernity were undermined.

McClaren offers two observations, myths, that initially may seem to contradict what has been said by other writers. “Postmoderns don’t believe in absolute truth ... Postmoderns don’t care about truth.” Postmoderns don’t so much reject absolute truth as absolute knowledge. There may be an absolute truth out there, but it just can’t be grasped absolutely. In other words, it cannot be finitely or finally known. McClaren says that postmoderns yearn for honesty, genuineness, authenticity. This is part of their spiritual hunger. They are not atheists. That is a philosophical position more at home in modernity. Postmoderns just question the traditional ways of understanding or, better, obtaining those aspects of spiritual satisfaction (2000, 166-7).

Postmoderns tend to be skeptical of certainty. Knowledge is relative to our context (time or group) and its truth may change in a new context. Interestingly postmodernism “leans towards the humorous.” Since everything is biased by the group to which we belong and the situation we are in, we should be careful about taking ourselves too seriously. People who take themselves too seriously or are absolutely sure of themselves are often guilty of hurting others (liking initiating *jihads* or bombing abortion clinics). “For postmoderns, togetherness is a rare, precious, and elusive commodity.” This emerges from the vacuums created by the disconnectedness, loneliness, and rugged individualism promoted and produced by the Modern Age, and results in an almost relentless desire to practice tolerance appreciate diversity rather than destroy their community. If truth destroys love, beware of what claims to be true (162-6).

In our ministry setting, an understanding of the core values of postmodernity particularly strengthened our commitment to creating “a safe place for people in need.” By cultivating a place where authenticity was valued and relationships were built through gentle respect, we would gain a strong platform and ultimately introduce people to the truth of Christ that is rooted and grounded in love.

Leonard Sweet, whose work on the church we will more fully explore, contains one more dimension of our postmodern understanding, one that lets us see challenges and opportunities in ministry within this age. “In this New World, you don’t have to explain everything. Unlike Enlightenment culture, where everything had to ‘make sense,’ postmoderns luxuriate in mystery” (2000, 44). What moderns recoil against as uncertainty or uncomfortable unpredictability,

postmoderns simply see as a reality to be embraced. He also says, “Postmoderns have replaced the work ethic with an experience ethic. They value nothing higher than accumulated experience and will sacrifice everything for it, including committed relationships” (45). Moderns view this as the height of dangerous irresponsibility. Postmoderns see this as the chief means to personal fulfillment.

The material from sources like those examined above, when combined with the general observations made in Chapter Two, reinforce the great challenge that postmodernity poses to the Church in this emerging culture.

Resources for Rethinking Church (New Wineskins Ecclesiology)

The Great Confession is summed up in the words, “Jesus Christ is Risen and He is Lord.” We often quote Heb. 13:8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.” The challenge to the Church is to communicate the eternal nature of Christ in language and forms that connect with persons whose worldview is not informed by the Bible or the church culture of the 20th century, but is increasingly influenced and shaped by post-modern thought and its bedfellows.

As with our introductory observation, the “new wineskins” are a critical issue. In other words, we need to rethink Church. We need to rethink our definition of the Church in order to free it from baggage of the culture from which we are emerging. We need to rethink how we “do” church, i.e., live as a Great Communion engaged in the Great Commission. This is particularly important because the institutional church has too often partnered with and shared in the failings of the gods of modernity.

One approach that seeks to acknowledge the new world in which we minister is to focus on a refinement, or a rediscovery, of the Great Confession that Jesus Christ is the Lord and the Great Identification that we are the contemporary Body of Christ. A theological assumption, the desire to connect with values and behaviors of Jesus, drives this approach. Robert Lewis in *The Church of Irresistible Influence* (2001) and Ben Campbell Johnson and Glenn McDonald on *Imagining a Church in the Spirit: A Task for Mainline Congregations* (1999) are two excellent insights to this perspective.

Three approaches to rethinking church directly confront the postmodern challenge. One is the first century model that seeks to recapture the New Testament church and replicate it in the 21st century. This is the position taken by Erwin McManus in *An Unstoppable Force: Daring to be the Church God Had in Mind* (2002). The second is the ancient-future model which makes a serious attempt to reconnect the emerging church with the best of early Christianity, and, at the same time, encourages the church to embrace new models that will have a timeless significance. This approach is represented by Leonard Sweet in *Post-modern Pilgrims: First Century Passion for the 21st Century World* (2000) and reflected in a variant form in Robert Webber's *Ancient-future Evangelism: Making Your church a Faith-forming Community* (2003). The third form is a church that does not abandon the ancient faith's valued forms, but understands that given this new matrix, will have to emerge into something new. Dan Kimball chooses this route in *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New*

Generations (2003) as does Reggie McNeal in *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church* (2003).

A final approach calls for a radical disconnect with the church of previous ages. It involves rethinking the theological assumptions that orthodoxy has held dear. Charles Bayer is one such example in *A Resurrected Church: Christianity After the Death of Christendom* (2001).

Recapturing the Person and Mission of Jesus

Let us turn first to those approaches that seek to recapture the person and mission of Jesus in their expression. Formative to my own congregation's examination was Robert Lewis' work, *The Church of Irresistible Influence*. (2001). Lewis directly assaults the fortress, the "us versus them" mentality of the institutional church, that had defined many western Christian churches in the last century. He offers instead the metaphor of the bridge. The church builds bridges by which the Christian community is mobilized out in the larger community. It is "across" the bridge where the critical and primary work of the Church is done. But those bridges form two-way travel. By capturing people's imagination for the Christian faith, while working for their benefit in the larger community, we seek to invite them back into the nurturing context of a faith community that is committed to a counter-cultural lifestyle and an equipping mission.

Lewis uses as the core theological assumption Jesus' own words in Matthew 5:12-15, which he calls The Big Idea (I²). We must rethink the church as a group concerned with being salt and light. In the simplest form, it is teaching people how to be like Jesus and then unleashing them into the community to do the work

of Jesus. The church is not concerned with growing in numbers but growing in impact. We become people whose lives embody the Truth. We then engage the community through good works, and acts of servant kindness. The church does not hide from the community but enters the community. The purpose of entering the community is to cause people to glorify God because of the God they see at work within us.

In this model, the church first creates community among new and existing believers by an emphasis on kinship groups. These center around common ground for relationships. To guard against an inward focus, after two years people are asked to reconfigure into common cause groups. These latter center around common ground for ministry (98-107).

The brilliance of Lewis' idea is its simplicity. This vision, glorifying God so that people will be drawn to Him, is simple. The method, creating an outward focused community of people grounded in Christ and committed to a ministry that touches the outside community is simple. The expectation, each person finding their uniquely gifted place in ministry and engaging in it, is simple.

The loss of vision afflicts many churches today, particularly mainline congregations. The vision is not rediscovered by more and better programs or systems. It is rediscovered by returning to the practical implications of being the Body of Christ. Ben Campbell Johnson and Glenn McDonald call for this exploration in mainline churches, with the challenge to begin by "imagining a Church in the Spirit." In their work of that title, Johnson and McDonald describe the mainline church's chief problem as being issue-driven, a therapeutic model of

ministry that allowed the social service of the church to dominate its vision for ministry. The church has been captivated by a CEO model of pastoral leadership that is too uncritical of such a model's limitations. Maintaining the organization, allowing too close an identification with the culture and its agenda, an under-emphasis of speaking personally about the Christian faith, and the lack of the practice of prayer, scripture study, and ministry describe the character of such a church. Campbell and Johnson summarize that loss of vision as "going through the motions of being the church without spiritually transformative power and spiritual urgency" (1999, 3). This problem is not new. It is actually similar to the one faced by the second generation Christians who eagerly anticipated the return of Christ. They became discouraged and their passion for mission waned as the days since Pentecost lengthened (4).

There is a key to rediscovering this passion and rekindling this vision. "The community must re-present Christ, his person and his mission in an authentic form" (6). To do this the leaders of the Church must move beyond self-centered community, status quo programs, and stifling practices. They must begin to discuss what it means to be a Church in the Spirit. "The reimagined Church in the Spirit requires Jesus Christ as its foundation" (8). Another way to say this is that this Church expects and confesses the divine presence of Christ to permeate the Church. It requires continuing "what Jesus began in the flesh," and understanding that the corporate body must look to the Spirit to continue. The church must acknowledge that it has a supernatural nature to its human community. That nature is not derived by culture or previous practice but from Christ. The Church

understands itself to be the continuing incarnation of Jesus Christ and to expect to take its cues for ministry from Jesus.

The determining issue in mission rests upon the call of Christ. What is Jesus Christ calling a particular congregation to be and do, in this place, at this time? This disclosure of Christ comes to a congregation through the Spirit. The Spirit calls, and when the church hears and responds, Christ embodies himself in each particular ministry. Do you not find it amazing, a small group of believers becomes his body doing ministry? Mission grounds the congregation in Christ, and his call is mediated through the Spirit in a personal, responsible manner. Affirming Christ as the initiator of mission relates every act of the church to him so that the church does indeed become the visible, tangible presence of Christ in the world. (76)

Making known that call is crucial. Johnson and Campbell offer these tangible suggestions for knowing that call and obeying it. "The primary and normative instrument of the call is the text of scripture" (77). Returning to Word of God as the definer of our values and behaviors is essential. The context of the church is derived by constantly asking the question, "How can our actions manifest Christ in this context?" The physical form of Christ (community) may appear in a variety of shapes that is usually determined by need. But the calling, which determines mission, must remain constant by prayerfully and scripturally asking the manifestation question.

This is defined in part by the gifts of the people. Ask yourself what are the gifts of the Spirit that God has brought to this congregation and how are they made available? We need to unleash our creative imagination ever looking for the work of the Spirit as He brings new gifts, provides new opportunities for ministry, and changes the community around us. This is the revealing work of the Spirit, a Spirit that will remain true to the three above-mentioned means of identifying God's call (77-79).

Directly Confronting Postmodernity

Erwin McManus uses the image of a “mosaic” to describe the church. A mosaic is a series of fragments of various colors, sizes and shapes that when put together by the artist present a picture for us to see. In the church, the Spirit is the artist and His ultimate goal is to present a portrait of Christ to the world using those various, often ordinary and overlooked, pieces that now come together in the mosaic portrait (116-117). He also argues strongly, along lines similar to Snyder and Runyon in *Decoding the Church*, that a church must be seen as an organism, a living entity, designed and created by God, and empowered and led by the Spirit to carry out the mission begun and commissioned by Jesus Christ (14-20).

In this postmodern matrix, McManus believes that rethinking the church requires a recapturing of the “apostolic ethos” of the first century church. “It is essential that we return to the origins of the church and re-establish the elemental faith of the first disciples” (206). By disciples McManus is not speaking particularly of the Twelve, but of the church born at Pentecost. What was born was a movement, a mission to transform their families, then their communities, then their culture, and ultimately their world with the leadership and love of Jesus Christ. A key here was that the church, as we see it in the book of Acts, was “a movement of the *all*, not the elite” (206). It happened to common persons not simply extraordinary ones. It was a church of lay leadership, that emerged as new challenges, and new needs were revealed to the church. It was a church that emphasized faithful fellowship with Jesus Christ which can be described as

“being full of the Spirit and wisdom” (207). It was an ever-expanding mission that had no room for spectators. Everyone was a participant.

Unlike some, McManus does not propose we go back to the forms of the New Testament Church but to its assumptions. There is no hint of legalism in this way of thinking and, ultimately, behaving as a church. This means going back to zero by “putting aside all our assumptions and allowing *the Scriptures* to speak to us afresh” and ask the question, “*Why are we doing what we are doing?*” (188). A church seeks to understand, and its leadership begins to expound, (as did the first century church) the heart of God and His prophetic purposes. It is a church that seeks to fundamentally understand its calling from Christ. Once again we are warned away from methodologies and pragmatic practices to those directions that grow from our scripture-informed passions.

This church also dealt with its “family problems.” It admitted them, it confronted them, and sought to resolve them by the Spirit’s direction. Here the emphasis is on a healthy church of people reconciled not only to God, but one another (191-192). The Church born of Pentecost, however, was not afraid to create problems by taking the risks and suffering the persecution and misunderstanding that came from engaging the culture. It accepted that as the vision increased under the Spirit’s leadership, problems would increase that needed to be engaged creatively (193).

The church placed emphasis on identifying and equipping point men and women. It attended at all times to solidifying key spiritual leaders who could transition the church into each new arena of ministry, or each new locale of

mission (194). The church also equipped its people by helping them clearly understand the *why* of mission. “We need to lead God’s people to that place where the *why* is weighty upon their heart,” says McManus (195). When that occurred, out of the gifts and passions provided by the Spirit, the creative juices of the people produced the *hows*.

Which leads to one final observation. The church needs to see itself as a culture that embraces change creatively in all that it does so that it can respond effectively (he uses the word *instantaneously*) to the challenges before it in our complex and rapidly changing world. This requires the church to be a place not of control by the few, but of creativity by the many. It must be an environment in which people are challenged to think scripturally and intelligently about the culture, to dream God’s dreams for addressing that culture, and to be mobilized by the leadership to live out those dreams. It must be a community essentially that doesn’t just call people to *changes* but to *change* as God continues to do a work in and through their lives (196-197).

Leonard Sweet operates from the premise that “ministry in the twenty-first century has more in common with the first century than with the modern world that is collapsing all around us” (xvii). He warns, however, that the solution is not for Christians to either embrace a postmodern worldview or adapt to it. We need to adopt an “ancient-future” approach to the Church and its message which seeks to engage the postmodern world in an exploration of how faith is lived out “in light of the classical Christian tradition.” This involves both a lifting up of the

Cross of Jesus Christ and helping postmoderns see its timeless relevance. “A cross Christianity” was the passion of the first century church (xvi).

Our problem, according to Sweet, is that the Church is thoroughly modern in its world view. Rethinking the church requires us to disconnect radically from the modern world view and its measures of success and fruitfulness. We start by “double-listening” to the absolutes of the God of the Bible and carefully listening to the culture around us. The purpose is not to conform the latter to the former, but to see how biblical testimony can be clearly and appropriately communicated to the postmodern mind.

Sweet challenges us to think of an “epic church for epic times.” The model for this rethinking is experiential, participatory, image-driven, and connected. Experiential respects experience as the desired way of learning about life, including life in the Spirit. Postmoderns do not want a “second-hand” God, a God that someone else (church traditions, church professionals, church bureaucracies) defines for us. “Each one of us is a Jacob become Israel, a wrestler with God. The encounter, the experience *is* the message (43).” This requires worship and ministry that is not so concerned with everything making sense as to allowing persons to engage the mystery and being taught by the Spirit.

Participatory requires ending the detached, spectator mentality of church ministry. The Church instead emphasizes choice in its ministry, providing the tools, the coaching, the empowerment to allow persons to find their own place in the ministry of Jesus Christ. It involves trusting people to listen to the Spirit,

make sacrificial choices, and serve in diverse ways that cannot be easily controlled by those in power (60).

Image-driven respects that “images generate emotions, and people will respond to their feelings” (86). We concentrate on delivering the message of Christ through stories, pictures, and metaphors instead of propositions. The Church sees that Jesus Christ is the greatest image. We create ministry that begins with an image of Christ and then incarnates that image in our ministry.

Connected is the final piece and by that Sweet means a re-emphasis or rediscovery of the power and necessity of community. “Relationship issues stand at the heart of postmodern culture” (113). The Church looks for ways that affirm the individual instead of the institution. It looks for creative ways to teach persons that they are communal creatures. The Church that seeks this approach will stop being program or systems minded, and become “individual-communal” minded (112). This community must be faith-based, not just a conglomeration of postmodern preferences. This is accomplished by elevating Jesus Christ, teaching how His Holy Spirit works in us, and understanding that the end product is a community that reflects Jesus (134).

Robert Webber explores the “ancient-future” model of the Church calling for a church that emphasizes evangelism and discipleship firmly rooted in the Scripture. He believes the church of modernity has emphasized evangelism to the detriment of discipleship. He also believes that the individualism of modernity has stripped the church of its sense of being a community in mission. Historically, Webber believes, that a church engaged in evangelism “occurs by way of a

community that lives out the message” (14). That community concerned itself with the process of spiritual formation. This was a fourfold process that did not simply win converts but helped to form an informed and substantive faith. It was viewed as a clearly ordered journey, following a cycle of believing, behaving, and belonging, and was accomplished in the context of a worshiping community (24). Conversion is the goal of the church, but it comes through a worshiping community that effectively catechizes a person coming out of paganism.

Worship and teaching that predates medieval Christendom focused on conversion that involved belief not merely rituals. It was conversion that implied ethical transformation. (The Roman world, for example, did not connect religion and behavior). Conversion also promoted devotion to Jesus and involvement in his missional community (66). Facing the unfocused spirituality, ethical relativism, and disconnectedness of postmodernism, an approach to the church that seeks to reintroduce the world to those ancient, pre-modern patterns, can have a better impact than the church that has been corrupted by modernity.

The approach proposed by Webber has strength because it involves engaging the culture as a community, an “otherworldly community” (159), that will offer a clear and authentic contrast to the secularly shaped communities of modernity and postmodernity. There is no question about its countercultural nature. But since that culture is rooted in an understanding of Christianity uncorrupted by the Enlightenment and its Christendom model, it may effectively assist in the transformation of persons who are spiritually seeking but find the church of

modernity wanting. Its weakness is that it may require more patience than a postmodern seekers possess.

Dan Kimball calls for us to rethink the church by becoming something different from the church of previous ages, but also reintroducing what had been useful for previous ages of Christianity. Two issues that concern him include deconstructing postmodern ministry from its roots in modernity and reconstructing a new church that creates a new validity for vintage Christianity. We have already examined at length Kimball's concerns about understanding and engaging postmodernity. He warns that focusing on methodology without understanding the emerging culture will undermine mission effectiveness. The program driven ministry and the propositional proclamation of the gospel favored in the modern age will neither communicate with nor meet the spiritual needs of postmoderns. Kimball notes that there will be no single, clean model for a church ministering in the postmodern matrix but hundreds and thousands. The emerging church itself is actually more a mindset than a model, a mindset that measures success missionally. Kimball warns, "The emerging church must redefine measure success by the characteristics of a kingdom-minded disciple of Jesus produced by the Spirit, rather than by our methodologies, numbers, strategies, or the cool and innovative things we do" (15).

Church is not a place to go. Looking at the etymology of *ekklesia* in Acts, Romans, and 1 Corinthians, Kimball says we must define church as the followers of Jesus. We must teach people that they are the church. They do not simply attend one. Without this rethinking, the church creates consumer Christians

instead of servants on a mission together for Christ (94, 95). The result of deconstructing postmodern ministry from its roots in modernity will be a reemphasis on people who see themselves as ambassadors of Christ, persons who are more desperately dependent upon prayer. They will see themselves as a family or community on a mission together where evangelism and sacrificial servanthood grow naturally because the church “is always on a mission (locally and globally)” (96).

Kimball does not call us to abandon the faith once delivered unto the saints. He calls us to repackage this “vintage Christianity,” reintroducing the ancient truths and values in new forms. For example, ancient creeds are to be used but perhaps translated in contemporary language or presented via media and music, rather than hymnbook or rote memorization. In fact, worship is the central arena for such a reconstruction of vintage Christianity in an emerging world. We rethink church first by rethinking worship. Postmoderns are multi-sensory, visual learners. This must be reflected in our worship and teaching forms. We need to help postmoderns discover an awe for God by creating sacred space that recaptures a sense of God’s presence. Our worship must again concern itself with transcendence by but communicating to postmoderns through the arts, worship leadership that is male and female, worship gatherings that call for participation, and conducting services that honor old and young together. Technology is a necessity, but it must not become the focus of worship. Technology can be used creatively to introduce ancient symbols, our Jewish roots, and theologically sound

hymns. Preaching must again use Jesus' methodology of storytelling. Prayer and divine readings are needed alongside modern drama.

Kimball sees this appealing particularly to postmoderns who seek authenticity in their religious experience and a genuine encounter with God. Out of such a worship emphasis, persons will begin to see that their faith that has a very contemporary missiological focus (communicating to emerging generations with methods that meet their needs), and honors the roots of the vintage faith which has driven the mission for two thousand years.

Worship is not an end unto itself in Kimball's approach. "The emerging church needs to put everything into the primary goal of discipleship" (214). The gospel that is proclaimed in worship must carry the focus that Christ died for us so that we can be "his redeemed coworker *now* in what he is doing in this world" (202). The baby boomer church used worship primarily for evangelism (or just good entertainment) but did not necessarily draw people into a mission-minded *community* working together loving God and loving our neighbor.

There is little question that worship continues to hold an essential place in the ministry of the church. This approach to rethinking has particular value because it emphasizes creating worship experience that confess Jesus Christ as Lord and facilitate the transforming work of the Spirit. The newly formed or maturing Christians who have an authentic worship experience will then be drawn to ministry that allows them to continue this experience daily by *living the mission of Jesus*.

Reggie McNeal's work *The Present Future* is a self-confessed polemic.

McNeal believes that the church has "forsaken its missional covenant with God to be a part of kingdom expansion" (2003, xiii). It is institutionally preoccupied. This preoccupation leads to a search for models that short-circuit a leader's, and by extension, the church's, obedience to God's leading. "The Bible is not a book of models; it is a record of radical obediences of people who listened and responded to the direction of God for their lives" (xvii). McNeal believes that although the church culture in North America is dead, the church established by Jesus is very much alive. The heart of rethinking the church is to recapture the church's missionary nature, what he calls a "missional fix," thus ending our "mission amnesia." "The appropriate response to the emerging world is a rebooting of the mission, a radical obedience to the ancient command, a loss of self rather than self-preoccupation, concern about service and sacrifice rather than a concern about style" (18).

At the core of rethinking of the church is the adoption of a new set of questions. For example, the church has too long asked "How do we grow this church?" McNeal declares that the appropriate question is "How do we transform our community? (How do we hit the streets with the gospel?)" (24, 26). The church that is alive in the "present future" (McNeal's term for the postmodern matrix) will need to stop being consumer-oriented in its methodology and see that the ultimate goal is building up the kingdom of God. This particularly impacts the church's mission for evangelism and the apologetics need to return to the forefront. It is an evangelism not done by telemarketing but by taking the gospel

to the streets, exhibiting the truth in love. Servant evangelism will be the norm for the church.

One of McNeal's most important challenges is to change the thinking about God's people. He calls this the new Reformation. "The original Reformation decentralized the church. The new Reformation decentralizes ministry" (43). This Reformation is about releasing God's people for ministry. It requires the church to move beyond the question of "How do we turn out members into ministers?," an approach that largely serves the inward focus of an institution. We need to be asking the question, "How do we turn members into missionaries?" This means the church will have to develop a missiology that helps people understand the mission field that is North America and what is required to connect people with the gospel. It mean understanding the spirituality of postmoderns and learning to develop honest answers to their authentic questions. Before the church can do this, it must disconnect from its commitment to modernity. "We have a church that is more secular than the culture," declares McNeal (59), committed to business models and institutionalism instead of helping people find and experience God.

Like many who propose rethinking the church, McNeal challenges us to be concerned with developing followers of Jesus rather than church members. Spiritual formation is the critical element of this process, with an emphasis on life-coaching. This piece of McNeal's rethinking requires a return to something very old in the church but largely abandoned by the church of modernity. He believes that "Jesus facilitated spiritual formation in his disciples by introducing

them to life situations and then helping them debrief their experiences” (85).

Spiritual formation is not an academic model of Christian education by an experiential one, with an agenda set by the learner.

Although I did not encounter McNeal’s work until the end of the project, the Holy Spirit certainly had led us to understand that a positive, advancing missionary approach to ministry was needed rather than an approach that emphasized retreat and refuge. As our action plans ultimately demonstrated, the church thrived when persons saw themselves unleashed to be missionaries rather than merely tied to the program of the church.

Replacing Orthodoxy with Orthopraxis

There are those who see the Church as hopelessly corrupted by its long marriage to Christendom. Thomas Bayer is one such commentator. The result has been a church that has been intentionally exclusive (which he equates heavily with conservative fundamentalism) or naively inclusive (which he identifies with traditional mainline groups). The one perpetuates power structures and absolutes that will never allow the disenfranchised and the postmodern non-religious to be a part of the Church. The other is content with political action (or political education) about social justice, but continues to distance itself from the poor and its problems (25-27).

Bayer proposes that the church jettison most of its positions, methodologies, assumptions, and values, reducing itself to one concern only; “celebrating the evidences of the reign of God wherever and whenever they appear” (155). This, Bayer declares, was the work of Jesus Christ. A church that dies to its old self,

and is resurrected as a new self, is the only hope for the church maintaining relevance and effectiveness in the postmodern world. The church needs to be concerned with *orthopraxis* instead of *orthodoxy*. It needs to move away from tying the truth to texts handed down as authoritative, to truth that is done rather than declared. It must reject the building of communities that become fixated with insider-outsider concerns or even the place where God is discovered. The church must put its people out into the world where they can find God and do God's work. (156-157). The strongest assumption that this approach allows is that "The God we see in Jesus Christ is ethical" (116). The church must seek its evidences of God and build its testimonies among the dispossessed and marginalized of the world. Bayer believe the church must stop making its message revolve around the exclusivity of Jesus as the only Savior (156).

Destroying or rejecting an imperfect church is certainly a radical way of rethinking church. The obvious problem with this approach is that it simply seems to "adapt to postmodernism" (Sweet's term) rather than give it a healthy, holy alternative. As we have seen from our other sections on theological foundations and the postmodern challenge, a church that emphasizes only a concern for *orthopraxis*, particularly when that is based on an elusive and ultimately non-authoritative image of Jesus' practice, does little to end the spiritual confusion and disconnectedness of the postmodern world. Sharing our pain until Jesus comes (which I am not sure even Bayer's view of the church anticipates) reduces the reign of God to simply imperfect experiences in an imperfect world made lighter only by periodic experiences of grace. It does

ultimately nothing to confront the culture or redeem people caught in the downward spiral of a culture that has marginalized God. It is, however, a temptation that many churches, not having come to grips with the Great Confession (Jesus is Lord), flirt with at the beginning of the 21st century.

Leading the Emerging Church: The Leadership of the Holy Spirit

Wrestling with the uniqueness of spiritual leadership in a world of multiple leadership models is at the heart of this discussion. These models fall into three subsets. One subset speaks plainly about leaders who seek to reflect Christ-likeness. This is the approach of Ben Campbell Johnson and Glenn McDonald, and Henry and Richard Blackaby, two teams of authors we discussed earlier. It also is the approach of Leonard Sweet. This approach speaks directly to the character of the church's human leadership. The second subset focuses primarily on the concept of the spiritual gift of leadership as the means for being obedient to the Holy Spirit's leadership. Bill Hybels present this approach. Finally, there is an approach that seeks to focus on the leader's place within the Body that is created and led by the Spirit. For this we will turn to the writings of Michael Slaughter and Ron Martoia.

The Model of Christ

Let's return to *Imagining a Church in the Spirit: A Task for Mainline Congregations* (1999). Johnson and McDonald have a vital chapter on the specific issue of leadership. They define leadership in this helpful way.

Leading a church in the Spirit in many ways contrasts with managing the church towards humanly conceived goals and objectives. Leadership in the

Spirit emerges from the church as a spiritual organism created by Christ and infused with his presence. Christ heads up the church and provides the energy and life for those chosen to lead. Leadership, therefore, must be rooted and grounded in Christ. This rootedness in the Lord requires leaders to know him, grow up in him, and trust him as the head of the church, and the one who leads them as they lead the people of God in their mission.

(117)

Leadership in the Church is not about professionalism and churchmanship among the clergy, or emphasizing theological knowledge apart from a life surrendered to the Lordship of Christ. Leadership is not about laity as a separate class from the clergy. In fact, one of the critical issues is holding both to the standard of “spiritual leadership.” Lay leadership has at times been perverted into a criterion of skills, resources, and social status instead of genuine oneness with Christ reflected by an evident and fruitful faith life (118).

Johnson and McDonald propose these criteria of spiritual leadership. Leaders are persons in Christ who are submitted to Christ, who pray, who uses their gifts in obedience, and listen for the voice of God in the scriptures. They are Christ-directed. They give careful attention to helping the congregation discern the call of Christ, and guard against surrendering the church to the personal will or desires of individuals or power groups. They have the capacity to create community. They work to help members realize and fulfill their relationships with Christ and in Christ. They are vision casters who live it and hold it before the eyes of the congregation. They understand that vision comes “tinged in mystery,” seen through the example of Christ’s ministry, and “costs a congregation faithfulness, commitment, and often sacrifice.” They are discerners of the Spirit and spirits. They learn the rules of discernment and are constantly

asking, “How do we distinguish between Christ and our own unconscious longings? How do we know that our vision for ministry comes from Christ?”

One further note is that such leaders operate this way not only in their capacity as leaders of the church, but in their personal walk with Christ (119-130).

Henry and Richard Blackaby expand on the whole issue of spiritual leadership with an in-depth look tied to the premise that Jesus is the role model for such leadership. Writing in *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda* (2001), the Blackabys identify the leadership challenge. Experiencing leadership in so many realms of their lives, people see leadership as the panacea for all human problems and needs. High expectations exist, as do high frustration levels, on both the leaders when they cannot live up to those expectations and the followers when they experience poorly conceived leadership. Particularly because of politics, there is a general public distrust of leadership. The partial success of business leadership models have led many within the church to adopt those models without understanding that there is a difference between secular and spiritual models. They acknowledge the confusing array of leadership models that have been presented to the Church and practiced by the Church. “People are warily looking for leaders they can trust” (5). Returning the church to effective, spiritual leadership is a tremendous challenge given the recent, troubling experiences of the Church (3-13).

To remedy this, the Blackabys make one important foundational statement: “Only when we understand leadership in light of God’s calling on our lives will we be equipped to lead effectively. According to the Bible, God is not necessarily

looking for leaders, at least not in the sense we generally think of leaders. He is looking for servants (Isa. 59:16; Ezek. 22:30). When God finds men and women willing to be molded into his servants, the possibilities are limitless. People are looking for someone to lead them into God's purposes, God's way. They need leaders who truly believe God will do what He says. People will follow spiritual leaders who understand God's agenda and who know how to move them on it" (xi).

The Blackabys note that even secular leadership writers "recognize Jesus as a compelling model of good leadership" (24) But they reject the idea that Jesus had good strategies and good people skills. In his incarnate form, Jesus continually sought guidance from his Heavenly Father and pointed his disciples to the Father. He made sure the Father got the credit for what was accomplished at all times. Although He wrestled with some uncertainties, He kept alert to His Father's leadings and committed Himself to fulfilling His Father's mission. He confessed to those around Him, "By myself I can do nothing" (John 5:30) (24-28).

The key to Jesus as a model for spiritual leadership was not his methodology.

...Rather, it is seen in his absolute obedience to the Father's will. Current leadership theory suggests good leaders are also good followers, and this is particularly true of spiritual leaders. Spiritual leaders understand that God is their leader. If Jesus provides the model for spiritual leadership, then the key is not for leaders to develop visions and to set the direction for their organizations. The key is to obey and to preserve everything the Father reveals to them of his will. Ultimately, the Father is the leader. God has a vision of what He wants to do. God does not ask leaders to dream big dreams for him or to solved the problems that confront them. He asks leaders to walk with him so intimately, that, when he reveals what is on his agenda, they will immediately adjust their lives to his will and the results will bring glory to God. (28-29)

These authors would acknowledge that in our continuing context, the Holy Spirit serves as our “leader”. For them, a critical aspect of leading the Church has to do with the leader’s decision-making. They identify various elements of how human spiritual leaders seek to lead people according to God’s agenda.

Leaders make decisions by seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is done by prayer, which is not only the first course of action, but a daily course of action. “Neglecting their prayer life is foolhardy presumption by leaders who assume they already know God’s agenda and who believe calling upon God as a last resort is a legitimate function of leadership” (180). They also understand that the Holy Spirit speaks through other believers. They cite the safeguard of wise and multiple godly counselors. They create safe and intentional environments where that counsel can be received. They also watch for circumstances. They are not victims. They watch for God’s activity in the midst of their circumstances and listen to the messages of God’s doesn’t activity (179-85).

The list continues and does not need much elaboration. Leaders strive to be teachable and master their history. They study and learn from the history of the people they lead, and the history of God’s people in general. Leaders give an account to God. They recognize their visibility and influence. “Spiritual leaders make every decision with the awareness that one day they will have to give an account to God” (190) .

How a leader deals with decisions is crucial. After a decision is made leaders accept the consequences, admitting (and learning) from their mistakes, yet standing by their decisions. This is rooted in meticulousness, not stubbornness,

but. They have carefully sought the will of God. They understand that indecisiveness may reflect an over concern with pleasing people and that less mature persons need decisiveness to help prompt them to obedience to the will of God. Decisiveness also guards against chasing every latest fad. (190-194).

Spiritual leaders also improve their decision-making by evaluation. However, even more important is that they improve their decisions by cultivating their relationship with God. They seek God's vision and wisdom. This final set of principles has the added dimension of keeping a leader and those they lead faithful to the continually emerging will and mission of God. (195-199)

The biblical record tells us that the Holy Spirit led the Church out of the exclusivity of the Jewish culture into the pluralism of the Gentile culture(s). A clear issue of leading the emerging church in the 21st century is to understand the implications of the Spirit's leadership in this situation as it is reflected in the life of the leader. Leonard Sweet, writing in an anthology of action plans for outreaching churches gives some valuable insight.

The scandal of Incarnation is that God sanctifies each cultural setting as a site for the divine birth. Leaders are those who immerse their character in the context of which they are a part.

Leaders don't stand apart from culture and then reach down with ice tongs to pick it up. Leaders must be in their context and love their context. Leaders know the microclimate of the weather patterns (intellectual, social, political, and scientific) in which they love, not to the end of Christ transforming culture but to the end of Christ transforming persons and communities in every culture. The worst state for a church touched by God's love to be is a church... *out of touch*. (Sjogren 2002, 180)

Building upon Colossians 1:27, Sweet reminds us that the character of the leader is crucial. It is not "the commodity self" where we construct our own self from the contemporary, consumer culture, but character that is "transformed by

Christ.” In our age of self-worship, leaders must commit to being transformed, for their own transformation is a model to the church, and is a part of the movement of the church to be obedient in each new cultural setting. This involves understanding that an indwelling Christ will enhance our uniqueness and identity. “You become more *you*, more unique, more original, the more you become like Christ” (178). As we as leaders have the honesty and courage to be transformed, those under our leadership will find the same honesty and courage. The more we are like Christ, the more confident we are – and the more we will be able to be “out there” engaging the future and a changing world (181).

The Gift of Leadership

Bill Hybels is often identified with the Church Growth Movement, a movement firmly rooted and grounded in the Modern Age. His leadership methodology has often been closely identified with business or secular leadership styles. And although his writings on this topic seem to be heavily dosed with what others are tempted to use as mechanical or problematic manipulations of a church’s context, Hybels clearly communicates the supernatural role of the Spirit in leading the Church. Writing in his volume, *Courageous Leadership* (2002), Hybels makes this observation: “The local church is the hope of the world and its future rests primarily in the hands of its leaders” (21).

On the surface, that seems a humanistic solution until you understand that Hybels is speaking of those with the *charism*, the Holy Spirit’s gift of leadership described in Romans 12:8. He places a heavy responsibility upon a core who have been called and empowered by the Holy Spirit to step up and do the job God

has given them to do. “People supernaturally gifted to lead must yield themselves fully to God. They must cast powerful, biblical, God-honoring visions. They must build effective, loving, clearly focused teams. They must fire up Christ followers to give their absolute best for God” (27-28). Hybels adds that such leaders need to be on the look-out for others with these gifts, helping to mentor and mobilize them so that there is an ever-expanding basis of gifted leadership to guide the Church (131-2).

The Holy Spirit plays an active role in all this, according to Hybels, beyond merely “gifting.” He guides. Hybels refers to the Holy Spirit as the “final data source.” There is no substitute for learning all the skills, practicing all the methods, if you are not committed to be in tune and obedient to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. A heavy weight is placed in this approach to the Holy Spirit’s “promptings.” (179-80). The key to hearing these promptings is persistent prayer and vital walk with God on the part of the leader, evidenced by a life fully yielded to God (199, 215).

Left unanswered by Hybels and others who use this highly method-driven approach are several questions. Will a church fail to live up to its spiritual DNA without gifted persons exercising the spiritual gift of leadership? Can people lead without the gift of leadership? Can God use other gifts to lead churches in specific cultural contexts or at particular points in their body life where not all of the gifts are apparent or being used? Given what we are learning about ministry in a postmodern context, rediscovering a “community approach to ministry” and the yearning for *all* Christians to understand their significance and to have an impact

on their world despite the obvious differences in their giftedness, such an approach as Hybels may be too rooted in the modern world-view to serve us well in following the Holy Spirit's leading in the emerging church.

The Leadership Team Shaped by the Spirit

Certainly more helpful is the approach to leadership that first emphasizes the fruitfulness and obedience on the part of *all* leaders. Michael Slaughter speaks of a partnership between those raised up to lead by God with the Holy Spirit who is the ultimate leader of the Church. "Leaders are carriers of the DNA, the shapers of the core values, the influencers. Churches become what their leaders embody. They replicate what the leaders model" (2002, 98). He encourages us to "unlearn" the ideologies of leadership style, embracing technology or innovative methodologies and move "way beyond these emphases. (To be) more interested in the spirit, content and soul of leadership" (99). He, like Hybels, emphasizes the mentoring dimension of leaders who are acknowledge they are under the leadership of the Holy Spirit in a church under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Such leadership does not occur up front, so much as in the daily encounters within a countercultural community. Leaders live alongside others in community, modeling what it means to live by the Spirit (106).

Slaughter would present (although he does not use this term) a John-the-Baptist approach of decreasing so that others increase. The Holy Spirit leads the church *from* the leadership of the one gifted person *to* the leadership of the many. This approach is in keeping with the particular understanding of spiritual gifts whereby all persons have the potential to lead the church when they are exercise

their gifts in their area of giftedness. People with the gift of leadership lead, but so do those with the gift of giving or the gift of service or the gift of mercy, when others see their example, acknowledge their fruit, and are motivated to be obedient to God. Human leadership is all about connecting people to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. He quotes one such “unlearning leader,” Todd Hahn, a Presbyterian pastor in a post-modern setting in Charlotte.

I have had to unlearn that the vision for ministry comes primarily from the senior leader and is then disseminated down through the ranks. In fact, the vision is given to the people, and the job of the leader in partnership with the people is to discern, articulate, shape, and then champion the vision God has already given to the people he or she gets to lead.

This means the first job of the leader is to listen—to God, to the people he or she is leading, and to the culture around. And at every point in the visioning process, the leader has to trust—God, certainly, but also the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the community. The Holy Spirit’s work flows most freely when our leaders give up control and choose to trust, even in risky ways. The job of the leader is a vital one, but it is a secondary one. We don’t come up with the stuff on our own; rather, we work with the raw material God the Spirit has already placed in the hearts of the community we lead. (107)

The Church learns to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit when their human leaders exhibit a commitment to the integrity of the heart. Rather than entitlement, they choose humility. They live by faith and an obvious, evident love for the people they are called to lead. They have a passion that goes beyond reason to commit themselves and lead others in a kingdom-honoring lifestyle (117-9).

Again, note what was stated above. Most important to leadership here is not specific gifts, but faithfulness to work from our God-given gift mix. Part of trusting the DNA that has been given to us by Christ is to work with the gifts given a particular congregation. We do not try to be who we are not, but who God

made us and intends us to be. Slaughter sums up this leadership understanding in this way. “UnLearning leaders understand their God-wiring. They work out of their sweet spot, their center of passion and giftedness. As they serve out of their personal call and gift mix, they honor God, benefit others, and experience personal joy” (127).

Morph! The Texture of Leadership for Tomorrow's Church (2003) is Ron Martoia's contribution to this discussion of cooperative leadership with the Holy Spirit. Morphing, a term from computer technology, describes a change before your very eyes of one thing into another with a quality of liquid smoothness. Martoia says this term has its roots in Paul's words in Gal. 4:19 where he says, “My dear children, for whom I am again in pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.” This word *formed* in the New International Version is *morphe* and refers to a transforming change (9-10).

Martoia contends that in a rapidly changing world like the postmodern matrix, leaders must be ever changing. For this change to be not merely responsive to the external push of the culture, the leader must be involved in an ongoing process of inner transformation. Leaders learn to manage and lead the ministry by learning first to manage and lead the self. Instead of pursuing an endless round of programs producing products of ministry, the leader needs to give attention to his or her own spiritual health and formation. “Jesus builds individual churches through building individuals and customizing his imprint on the souls of the leaders” (50). He uses the term “soul ergonomics.” Soul ergonomics involves positioning our soul to receive God's imprint on our lives so that service and

ministry flow from a reservoir of fullness and strength. This involves gaining experiences with God's Holy Spirit rather than information about the faith. It emphasizes a personal relationship with God so that the leader gains experiences in understanding how God works. The leader then leads the church by sharing relationships with the people by which they are encouraged to follow the promptings of the Spirit. Leadership, to Martoia, is first a relationship with God and then a relationship with fellow travelers for Christ. Leadership is not about position or institutional authority. Leadership is preparation for obedience.

Perhaps the most helpful idea is found in his appendix, "The First Strand of Leadership DNA." Like Kimball's understanding of the emerging church, Martoia's idea for leadership defies singular definitions or models. "Christian leaders, especially point leaders, have a unique encouragement or motivational ability that is more than simply good vision-casting. There's something spiritually empowered when leadership is rightly conceived" (197). This ability connects with the idea that "leadership is influence." Hitler was a great leader if influence is the only determining factor. In fact, influence as the definition "makes Hitlers of the world's incredible leaders" (197). This is why definitions of leaderships must more directly connect with the functions of the Holy Spirit in the Word.

Martoia's first function is *kerygma* which means proclamation. Leaders are concerned with bringing people into the kingdom. The second, *didache*, refers to teaching. Leaders are concerned with teaching people how to live in the Kingdom. *Paraklesis* is the third and means encouragement, exhortation, consolation, and comfort. Leaders stir up, motivate, and encourage people to live

the kingdom life as they live out their mission from God. In this sense, leadership is an art through which one learns to lead people to moments of understanding and moments of action. Leadership is not about keeping the wheels turning. It is about helping people fulfill their part in the Great Commission.

This is not leadership by the group. It is not team-designed. It does come from persons who are called or commissioned as leaders. “It wasn’t a team. Paul appointed elders. It wasn’t a vote. From first to last, Scripture is clear that direction is mediated through a leader” (203). These are leaders who are building teams through the relational process of spiritual formation. They are nurturing the spiritual DNA in their own lives and the lives of the people. Out of his or her relationship with the Spirit, the leader listens for “Spirit soundings” and helps the congregation to form those same soundings. What is then heard and generated by the Spirit, God’s “what if’s,” is released in the church (203). Morphic leadership is leadership that submits to continual formation by the Spirit and then assists in the transformation of people so that they can claim their God forming mission.

I discovered this document late in the project. Once again, though, the Holy Spirit was at work. Essentially this is the model that we chose to develop in our eldership of Christian point leaders. Starting with studies like Blackaby’s *Experiencing God* and formative encounters with the Word to identify the core values for our lives and for the church, and moving through extended and regular times of prayer and self-examination, we sought to maximize Christ’s imprint on our own lives so that we might indeed help others make the same discoveries for their lives. Ultimately this is what helped the church claim the mission God was

giving us. We had *prepared* leaders and *prepared* people, prepared by the Holy Spirit.

Summary

We have restricted ourselves to published books for this examination. By the time this research project was completed, alternative forms of information have appeared (and disappeared) that would inform a serious student. Web sites and conferences have gained particular popularity in our multisensory, visual, and experiential learning environment. Websites are particularly intriguing, but unfortunately seem to have a fairly short shelf life as they tend to morph into something else within a year or so. Search engines like Google ® could provide a diligent student of this topic with the latest in a continually emerging pool of material. We have attempted to share literature that informed or confirmed what we learned during this project. As we will demonstrate in subsequent chapters, giving careful attention to cultural exegesis in the postmodern matrix, seriously rethinking the church, and honestly considering a more Spirit-driven concept of leadership for the church are needed for effective ministry.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

General Overview of the Methodology

The heart of this research methodology involved a partnership between the chief researcher (i.e., the senior pastor) and the D.Min. Context Committee, which was renamed, the Reflection Team. Early on we discovered that this team was both suited to and interested in an active role in the design and implementation of the research, as well as its interpretation. This was particularly true of the survey instruments by which we sought to assess the shared values of the congregation as the project progressed. The team not only served as an ongoing focus group for the overall findings of the project as action plans were undertaken, but it also became the “point persons” for the specific focus groups designed to interpret the survey findings. This group actually began functioning as the unofficial research arm of the pastoral staff, elders, and commissions as they designed, implemented, and evaluated various action plans. This unanticipated by-product of the research project’s design added an authenticating dynamic that we believe insured even greater validity to our findings. It is also now being considered for incorporation into the ongoing ministry structure of the Church of God of Landisville as an additional tool of the congregation’s future effectiveness.

The research methodology and procedures can be divided into six major components. The first somewhat predated the project. This was the data derived from the Thinking Forward Meetings conducted by the pastor and elders in the winter/spring of 2002. Initial action plans and leadership commitment to this project were rooted in the movement of the Spirit identified by this research. (Appendix 3: Thinking Forward Meetings 2002). The second component was the development of a series of action plans by the elders and pastoral staff of the church, who served as the overall strategic planners for the group being studied. The third component was the action plans developed by the specific team charged with taking the “point” on following the DNA outwardly from the Body. This group was the Commission on Outreach and Evangelism. The fourth component of the methodology was the design and use of two survey instruments by the Reflection Team, and the focus groups created to help interpret the data from this component. The fifth component was the research journals of the senior pastor and the congregation. At the encouragement of the D.Min. Committee at Winebrenner Theological Seminary, a sixth component was designed. This involved the creation and use of a study guide based on Chapter Two. This guide, “Building Bridges of Truth and Grace,” was written by the senior pastor and used by at least three small groups plus the D. Min. Reflection Team. This “action plan” was used in the congregation during the period of March through September 2003.

Thinking Forward Meetings

During the period of January through April 2002, a series of small group discussions were held in various homes of the congregation. Every member and active participant was invited to participate in these Thinking Forward Meetings. Initially, the groups were built by specific invitation with an intentional effort made at “mixing” the congregation’s sub groups. These sub groups were defined by length of time the participants had been identified with the congregation (further defined by attendance and participation) and which of the congregation’s two worship services they generally attended. This latter element was used in recognition of the reality that multiple worship services generally create multiple congregations within a congregation. The elders easily accepted this reality, especially since the two services had the added dimension of distinctively different styles of worship. Toward the end, an open invitation was made to the final two groups in an attempt to include any “stragglers” in the input.

The participants were asked to consider prayerfully two questions and to come prepared to answer those questions. The two questions were: (1) What is it that you believe God is doing in your life and in our church at this particular time that we need to be working in cooperation with? and (2) Given your heart and gifts, as well as those you identify in the congregation, what is something you believe God wants us to be open to doing in the future? Except for a brief introductory comment about process, the leadership made no proposals. Input was only offered to clarify or answer questions of immediate concern. Each session had the senior pastor as moderator and 2-3 elders as a “listening team.” One elder was assigned

the responsibility of taking notes of *every* comment made and its *frequency*. At the end of the meeting, the recorder read back what he or she had written. The participants were encouraged to add missing items or to put the comments in more accurate terms.

Eighty persons participated in eleven such Thinking Forward groups. This was out of a total of 151 adults who would have formed the research pool at that time. An additional Thinking Forward session was conducted with sixteen teens. Notes from these meetings were then circulated to all elders. At the conclusion of the research, the elders conducted a one-day prayer and reflection retreat to review the data and to make recommendations from their findings. This occurred in April 2002. Six elders (three men and three women), three former elders (two men, one woman), and the senior pastor formed this research team. Six of these elders continued in some capacity to participate in the subsequent formal research elements of this project (two on the reflection team and four continuing as elders). Major conclusions of this foundational pre-study, used to shape the subsequent action plans developed by the elders and staff, are included in appendices.

Action Plans (Elder/Staff Developed)

Following the Thinking Forward meetings, the elders and pastoral staff developed a series of action plans to help the church implement the DNA of the Spirit. The first action plan was very simple. It was the identification of a “scriptural map” for the congregation (later renamed “scriptural compass”) and a set of core values that the elders believed necessary to enable the church to be obedient to that scriptural map. (The scriptural map was described in detail in

Chapter Two.) This set of core values was presented to and dialogued with the congregation's leadership and then formally approved by the congregation at its annual meeting of November 2002. It was these core values that were then used as the foundation for all subsequent action plan design, or whose "shared" nature was tested by the Reflection Team in its two survey instruments (Appendix 4: Core Values of the Church of God of Landisville).

The elders and pastoral staff then designed and implemented a series of action plans intended to strengthen the congregation's understanding of our spiritual DNA and competency in living by this DNA. These plans are described in detail in the appendices. They focused primarily on embedding core values and designing structure that supported the accomplishment of the church's mission (Appendices 5-9).

(1) Embedding Core Values Through Teaching

This plan was partially begun in September 2002. The senior pastor initiated the first three preaching series while the rest of the plan was being finalized. It included four preaching series that would dominate the first nine months of 2003. It started with a series on outreach using Matthew 5:12-16 as its focus. The primary purpose was to introduce the congregation to the basic "bridge concept" that was the model being used to describe the strategy of becoming a truly outreaching church. (The "bridge concept" was described in Chapter Two). It was also intended to place at the forefront the specific core value, "evangelism that calls persons into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ." This was followed by an eight-part series teaching the biblical rationale for the remaining core

values. To reinforce the need for our evangelistic enterprise, a series was included during Lent about the centrality of the Cross to human salvation, reaffirming the fundamental claim made by Jesus to His exclusivity in that process. Later this series of sermons would be foundational to teaching the church about The Great Confession and The Great Identification (see Chapter Two). The necessity of being a genuine countercultural community that would authentically present Christ as individuals crossed the bridge into the larger community of the surrounding culture formed the rationale for an extended series of twelve messages that concluded in October 2003. Later this series would be foundational to teaching the church about The Great Communion and The Great Commission.

In addition to organizing the teaching from the pulpit, this action plan committed the congregation to the creation of a specific class in the congregation's Life Development Institute that focused on the theological foundations and practical applications of developing a servant lifestyle. This class, called *Class 402, Discovering a Servant Lifestyle*, was offered in the summer of 2003. The plan also called for the regular offering of the course *Class 401, Becoming a Contagious Christian* that was already a part of the Life Development Institute and which fifteen persons had already completed in the summer of 2002. This was offered again both in the winter and the late summer of 2004.

(2) Structure for Emerging Mission.

This was an action plan offered to the congregation at its November 2002 congregational meeting. It primarily attempted to expand and restructure the

leadership of the church with the goal of better equipping that leadership for an outreaching mission, rather than maintenance of the status quo. It worked first from the premise that all membership matters should be placed under the umbrella of the elders who had traditionally handled only pastoral/congregational care and church discipline. It sought to free the “outreach” ministry of the church from its unequal (and therefore often unattended) programming yoke with the commission charged with worship. This was achieved by the creation of two new ministry commissions: Outreach and Evangelism and Worship and Fellowship. The former would be related to moving the church out *into* the community. The latter would focus on the care and nurture of those persons already *within* the church. A third component emphasized expanding the elected leadership base to provide a stronger management team for each of the now five commissions that would result. Furthermore, it began the move to assign specific staff to each commission rather than define the senior pastor (at that point the solo pastor) as the de facto resourcer of all commissions. As will be seen, this action plan raised the visibility of the outreach mission of the church and equipped it to move quickly and effectively into action. This also helped break the maintenance mode that often a traditional church finds itself descending into.

(3) Structural Principles for a Growing Church

This was an action plan offered to the congregation in the fall of 2003. It was the next step that emerged as we saw the challenge and potential of the structural action plan that had begun operating at the commencement of 2003. Its primary intent was to involve as many persons from the congregation as possible in the

commissions that oversaw and implemented the program ministries. It sought to redesign the structure to allow those commissions to function from a gifts-based orientation rather than the traditional structure centered around elected church officers being assigned to a commission. It encouraged the commissions to begin operating as ministry management teams rather than simply “doers” of the ministry, further pushing the actual implementation of ministry into the hands of ministry teams and individuals with the gifts and passions for those specific assignments. It formalized the role of the elders as the strategic planning entity of the congregation, a direction in which the congregation had been moving informally under the prompting of the Holy Spirit in the every day actualization of the mission. This plan was fully implemented with commencement of the church’s annual reorganization in January 2004.

(4) Small Group Strategy

In the summer of 2003 specific teaching had been done on the nature of biblical community. Looking for a way to build on the positive early response to that teaching, the elders and senior pastor designed a strategy to be more intentional about developing small groups as the foundational units in the congregation. Small groups were seen as the means to provide a context for accountability, support, learning the Word together, and mobilizing persons for ministry, particularly evangelistic ministry. It was felt at the time that some common ground in terms of discipleship skills needed to be developed beyond that of shared core values. It was further felt that a more intentional methodology of mentoring small group leaders and creating new small groups was needed for

the church at that point in its life experience. This plan essentially never got off the ground in the form of its original program design. As we will see in Chapter Five, the Spirit used a more indigenous methodology to begin actualizing the well-intended vision of this strategy.

(5) Associate Pastor

A fifth plan was implemented out of the crisis of a rapidly growing church and a senior pastor bordering on burn-out. It also grew out of the Spirit's identification of a potential person who was at a life point where he was feeling led to become a part of a new ministering community. The elders had identified the need, not for another specialist on the pastoral staff, but one who would multiply the ministry normally done by a senior pastor in a traditional church. They also had identified the need of securing a pastor with management gifts who could help equip the church for the ministry possibilities that would attend the completion of the Multipurpose Ministry Center.¹ Finally, they identified the need to provide a pastor whose particular role would be giving traditional pastoral care to the older and increasingly higher maintenance portion of the congregation. This plan was implemented through the church organizational process for adding staff, approved in October 2003 by the congregation, and then implemented with the installation of an associate pastor in January 2004.

Action Plans (Outreach and Evangelism)

The Commission on Outreach and Evangelism was created by congregational action at its November 2002 annual meeting. Persons were assigned to this

commission through the normal structure. The commission took the added step of inviting various persons with gifts and passions in these areas to join its team. Beginning in January 2003, the commission undertook an intentional period of study, prayer, and reflection to create an underlying philosophy of ministry for outreach and evangelism. This philosophy of ministry was examined for consistency or congruence with the formal core values of the church. Completed and formally approved in March 2003, an overall action plan for the commission was adopted in May 2004. Implementation of several aspects was immediate. Just as the core values were the foundation for the elders' action plans, the philosophy of outreach and evangelism was the foundation upon which this commission built its action plans. The following action plans were enacted during the research phase of this project. (For a more detailed description of most of the following action plans, see appendices 10-14).

(1) Partnerships with the Community

This was a section of the overall 2003-2004 commission action plan that involved three aspects: *(a) the continuation of a bi-monthly partnership with the Lancaster County Council of Churches to staff a feeding station for the homeless at Christ Lutheran Church within the inner city.* To insure this was done in a quality manner, the church formally discontinued participation in a second feeding station at Crispus Attucks Community Center to concentrate its efforts on the more effective delivery system of the Council of Churches program. *(b) Initiating a partnership with Milagro House (Spanish for miracle).* This was a home for single mothers started by the vision of a Christian divorcee who was a

recovering alcoholic. The program provided quality housing, communal child care, parenting education, and financial support to single mothers and their children during a period of time when the mother was engaged in education to develop permanent job skills. This action plan called both for bringing the leader to share her vision with the congregation, and initiating a regular system of “offerings” of needed materials for this program using methods that involved particularly the children of our church. It also involved encouraging individual families to volunteer on site. *(c) Initiating a partnership with Love, INC (Love In the Name of Christ)*. Love, INC, affiliated with World Vision International, was working to create area networks of churches (largely by townships) to provide practical assistance to the immediate community. This involved creating a resource bank of persons and services to assist the poor, the elderly, and others in need with every day help like transportation, meals, and similar issues. It also involved providing resources for families with financial problems. It involved an intercessory prayer ministry for the immediate community. Again, the key leader was invited to address the congregation. This was followed by the commission enlisting persons to be involved in the resource bank coordinated by Love, INC. The commission also provided leadership for the intercessory prayer ministry. An in house liaison was appointed to coordinate our involvement in these efforts.

Additional smaller action plans grew out of this initial thrust-such as initiating a small group Bible study at Faith Friendship Villa, a home for learning disabled adults in the neighboring community of Mountville; partnering with the Military Mothers chapter for the area to provide care packages to military personnel who

were deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq. An ongoing ministry of providing food baskets and Christmas presents for needy children within the Hempfield School District was renewed in partnership with the Hempfield Women's Club and the high school basketball team. An initial exploration was made to add a second feeding team (again in cooperation with the Lancaster County Council of Churches) in East Petersburg, a town within the township located three miles from the church.

(2) Developing a Servant Lifestyle Class

The commission initiated an action plan under the staff work of the senior pastor to add a component to the existing discipleship training program (Life Development Institute) that would focus on equipping persons with gifts and passions related to outreach. Part of this plan anticipated the creation of a Servant Evangelism Team growing from the regular offering of this course. This plan was deployed in June 2003.

(3) Senior Citizen Center Team

As a result of the 2002 Thinking Forward Meetings, one of the plans that had emerged on the hearts of the congregation's members was opening a senior citizen center in the new Multipurpose Ministry Center. A team was created to develop plans for this program ministry to be deployed after the completion of the ministry center. The team began developing its own action plan during the summer of 2003 with the mandate to create a ministry to the community that would involve participants, leaders, and resources from the entire community.

This action plan was later called The Christian FLOW Center. FLOW stood for its four-fold purpose of fellowship, learning, outreach, and worship for senior citizens.² This plan resulted in the opening of the center in April 2004.

(4) Youth Center Team

This was another piece of the outreach vision identified by the congregation in those 2002 Thinking Forward Meetings. It was an actually an action plan that predated the arrival of this senior pastor and this research project. Because of internal youth ministry issues, this team was not organized until the employment of a new pastor for family life and youth in January 2004. This team also developed an action plan of its own with the same community identity and involvement mandate as the FLOW Center. The result of this action plan was the Agape Center for youth that opened in November 2004, just as the research phase of this project was ending.

The Commission gave specific attention to action plans that directly addressed the evangelism component of their mission. A number of small plans arose which are listed in the appendices. The major plans were as follows:

(5) Tsaille VBS Mission Team

This action plan was in the works as the commission was forming and was adopted as part of the strategy for outreach. It initially involved taking fifteen persons under the leadership of the senior pastor to conduct a Vacation Bible School program for a sister Navajo congregation located on that tribe's reservation in Arizona. Its intention was to build on the inherited enthusiasm of a

2002 work team that had gone to Haiti³, but also to add two dimensions: doing a distinctly spiritual ministry and to involve families (especially young people) in a cross-cultural experience. The response resulted in the creation of a team of thirty-five persons who carried out this action plan in July 2003.

(6) Becoming a Contagious Christian

Already a part of the Life Development Institute intended to equip persons with evangelism gifts and passions, *Class 401-Becoming a Contagious Christian*. The commission determined to continue offering this class and increase its frequency. To complement this, an Easter Outreach was implemented in April 2003 which involved the distribution in the immediate community of a Max Lucado book that emphasized the meaning of the Cross of Jesus Christ. This was followed the next year (Lent 2004) with the distribution of a booklet coinciding with the release of the movie *The Passion of the Christ*. The latter strategy included offering two exploration meetings open to the community to discuss the movie and the meaning of the biblical accounts of the Passion. A further piece was a small action plan scheduled to be implemented in 2004 to create a small support group called Bridge-Builders to continue evangelism education, support, and mobilization.

(7) Brazil Team

An action plan was established to place a mission work team in Brazil in the year 2004. This involved the sending of two members of the commission on a

fact-finding trip with the denomination's mission executive to explore how the congregation might be involved in the future.

(8) Effective Fathering Seminar

An action plan was later adopted to provide support, leadership, and involvement in bringing Ken Canfield from the National Institute for Fathering to the greater Lancaster area. This was a very simple action plan that was authorized in November 2003, funded by a special Christmas offering, and staffed by the senior pastor (who served on the steering committee) and the pastor for family life and youth. Later, involvement was expanded to include a specific staff contribution from the church's music director. It carried a follow-up component of two church members being trained in a small group ministry for support and evangelism designed by the National Institute for Fathering called Dads of Destiny.

(9) Preaching on Becoming a Contagious Christian

The initial survey (completed in August 2003) revealed the need to do some practical teaching on relational evangelism to the congregation at large. With input from the commission, a four-part sermon series was designed and implemented during early March 2004.

(10) Hospitality Team and Newcomers Ministry

Recognizing that the rapid growth of the church was creating new opportunities for evangelism through redemptive relationships, an action plan was designed to help the church be more intentional with the use of its gifts of

hospitality and evangelism as it related to persons who “came across the bridge *into*” the church after encountering the church at work in the larger community. The basic tools envisioned were programs equipping persons to work in this area, providing welcoming gifts to persons exploring the church, and creating effective follow-up communication with these newcomers. This plan was approved and partially implemented in the spring of 2004.

Survey Instruments and Focus Groups

The Reflection Team first met in March of 2003. It immediately set about the design of the needed survey instruments for this project. This began with a study of the core values themselves to insure that the team clearly understood them and their potential value to the church’s effectiveness in ministry. Next the team worked on both the design of a survey process and the design of the survey instrument itself.

The instrument was developed under the leadership of a team member who engaged professionally in organizational core values research. He encouraged the team to take the various core values of the church and to write sample questions that would help understand the degree of importance of that value to individual respondents. The team looked briefly at some of the questions used by Christian Swarz in his Natural Church Development research, but discarded those specific questions and designed an instrument more appropriate to their specific research context. After considerable discussion and rewriting, a survey instrument of ninety-seven questions was developed by the team. As can be seen from the summaries, each question was written to provide data regarding one of the

specific core values being measured. To gather additional data, two open-ended questions were offered in hopes that this data might ultimately aid in interpretation of the raw data (Appendix 15: Core Values Survey Instrument).

As to process, the team chose an anonymous instrument made available to all actively participating teenagers and adults of the church at a fixed point in time. The element of formal church membership was discarded because in Landisville's congregational culture, membership is only used for formal decision-making and qualification for core leadership authority. Participation was considered the stronger identifying factor as to who makes up the particular body of Christ known as the Church of God of Landisville.

After considering a variety of factors to insure involvement, it was decided to survey the entire research pool in August of 2003. Persons would receive a letter from the elders asking them to assist the church's ministry by completing the survey. The surveys were distributed through the church's mailbox system on the opening day, and a week later any unclaimed surveys were sent through the postal system to each potential respondent. Stamped envelopes addressed to the church and returned to the church's administrative assistant were the mode of collection.

Great effort was taken to insure that the congregation's responses were given without concern for specific identification by the chief researcher, the senior pastor. The team respected the reality that a survey closely identified with a senior pastor increased the likelihood that answers would be given to "satisfy" or "please" the pastor. The returned surveys were then turned over to a single team member; who with the aid of an organization that does such core values research

as its business, compiled the data and made it available to the Reflection Team in summary form (Appendix 16: Summary of Statistical Surveys).

Following the initial survey, the team identified several issues that needed further clarification. Questions were written and a standard format for such focus groups was adopted. A focus group created by a blind sample from the congregation was set up for late fall 2003. Two team members (with the senior pastor absent) conducted this focus group. A summary of its findings was then presented to the Reflection Team for its evaluation.

The entire survey process was repeated in August 2004, including the conducting of a focus group in November 2004. The distribution and collection method did not change from the previous survey. After some discussion, the team determined to retain the same items except for the editing of one item that had appeared unclear to the respondents in the first survey. Like the first survey, meetings were held to review and evaluate the data and identify the issues for the second round of focus groups. The focus groups were again assembled and conducted. This time the focus groups were led by another member of the Reflection Team and the senior pastor.⁴ The findings were then reviewed by the entire Reflection Team a week later. This marked the formal end of the survey research portion of this Project.

It should be noted that the 2003 survey was distributed to 150 potential respondents and responses were received from 115 persons. The 2004 survey was distributed to 125 persons, of whom seventy-one responded. No attempt was made to track the respondents specifically. The pool was defined the same way

both years, but by the ebb and flow of congregational life (deaths, moves, church changes) was slightly varied.

Research Journals

The Holy Spirit Journal was a tool offered to members of the congregation to submit their stories and observations of what God was doing in their lives and in the life of the church as they participated in the various action plans. The concept was introduced by written descriptions in both the Sunday worship folders and the church's monthly newsletter. This was the general description/invitation:

In order to have a clear picture of what the Holy Spirit is doing in the church and in our lives, we are creating a "Holy Spirit Journal." You are invited and encouraged to offer comments, stories, and/or reflections that will be placed in this loose-leaf binder. The idea was initiated originally to assist Pastor Steve in his Doctor of Ministry study of how the Holy Spirit is helping Landisville become an outreach-focused church with a commitment to minister to our community; but we have decided that it serves a far deeper purpose of building unity and communication within the Body as to what God is doing in its various part. If you're not into writing, give one of the elders a call and tell him or her. We'll see it gets written down. Or stop in the office and Patty will lend you a micro-recorder to get it down on tape. A page or a paragraph, all will be a benefit. You can be anonymous if you prefer. See Pastor Steve for more details.

The journal's purpose and methodology was further reinforced by invitations from the pulpit during worship times and by small group leaders. The concept was expanded to include the submission of comments via e-mail sent to the church office or to the Senior Pastor.

Although the source of some useful data, the Holy Spirit Journal as a research tool never really took off. Most persons preferred to work in anonymity. The culture of the congregation allowed time in the worship context for persons to share their stories and observations, to reflect on what God was doing in their

lives. This worship element was called “Sharing Our Joys and Concerns.” Having provided their data through this avenue, the congregation rarely took the initiative (even when prompted by the assistance of a scribe if needed) to use the Holy Spirit Journal. Data that normally would have come from this avenue was instead collected anecdotally and shared verbally in meetings of both the elders and the Reflection Team. Such debriefing had to serve as a supplement to the data actually submitted to that particular journal (Appendix 17: Samples from Holy Spirit Journal).

The Pastoral Journal was kept on a regular basis by the senior pastor. Attempts were made to record not only his personal observations, but comments and reports made by various individuals (both leaders and general members) about what was occurring in the life of the church. Special attention was given to the occasions when persons spoke directly of what they perceived as the Holy Spirit’s (or God’s) leading and empowerment in an event or issue. In the vocabulary of the congregation, these were often described as “Oh! Wows!” or “God-sightings” by the individuals. This particular journal was then submitted to various elders at the end of the research phase (in January 2005) and they were asked to comment on the veracity of the observations, or add observations of their own. These elders were chosen for this responsibility because some of the observations were of a nature that necessitated a certain amount of confidentiality. In this particular congregational culture (Church of God of Landisville), the maintenance of confidentiality by this group of persons (the Elders) is both assumed and mandated. (This commentary is found in Appendix 18: Summary of Elders’

Commentary on Pastoral Journal). Two elders were assigned to each of the three years of the Journal. They were selected because in each case they had played a central leadership role during that time, and each felt competent to make both an assessment of the accuracy of the Journal and to identify the key data. Four of these six were at that point *currently* functioning as elders of the congregation. One was on sabbatical from the elders but active in church leadership. One was no longer serving in congregational leadership, but was a member of the Reflection Team.

Building Bridges of Grace and Truth

Because this research heavily invested in action plans to activate Jesus' DNA in the church, an additional research method was introduced after the project began. Following the reading of the first draft of Chapter Two, the researcher's advisory committee at Winebrenner Seminary suggested that the chapter on theological foundations be given to small groups in the church to study and reflect upon. This became an action plan in and of itself. This writer wrote a revised draft of the chapter clarifying initial questions raised by the committee, and then wrote a "popular" version of that chapter to be used as a study guide. One was an intergenerational Bible study of men (fifteen in number) led by the senior pastor and two members of the Reflection Team. The other was an intergenerational woman's Sunday School class led by a member of the Reflection Team and at times, one of the elders. The "learnings" from these thirteen-week studies provided basically anecdotal data to our research. The study, however, lead to the elders (and the church) adopting an additional core

value: kingdom-focused. The summary of these findings is reported in Chapter Six.

Summary and Conclusion

The diversity and number of research methodologies produced a great deal of data. It actually makes one think of the apostle John's conclusion to his gospel remarking on the data reported on the ministry of the Lord. "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book" (John 20:30).

Action plan research is essentially qualitative in nature as opposed to quantitative. As such, much of the most useful data which we will report in Chapter Five seemed to be found in anecdotal form in the minutes and notes of focus groups, the Reflection Team, commission work sessions, Elders' meetings; and the information recorded in the Pastoral Journal and subsequent commentary by the elders who reviewed the accuracy of that particular journal. Yet as we hope can be seen from this "living data," there is much to be reported upon and learned from the life experience of this organism called The Church of God of Landisville as it sought to live out its Spirit-granted DNA in its transformational journey to become an outward focused church with an evangelistic mission.

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1. The Multipurpose Ministry Center was an expansion of the church's facility that was initiated in 2003 and completed in 2004 to support the church's vision to better support its outreach mission particularly to youth and senior adults. This is described in somewhat greater detail in the subsection on "Action Plans (Outreach and Evangelism) later in this chapter.
 2. The name FLOW came from a similar ministry of the Ginghamburg United Methodist Church at Tipp City, Ohio and pastored by Michael Slaughter. The chief researcher visited this congregation three times during the stage that this project was formulating.
 3. This Haiti team could probably be credited with connecting the church to an outreaching vision that included cross-cultural mission experiences. Interestingly, the Church of God of Landisville had been one

of the original sending churches of missionaries that pioneered the denomination's first effort in India in 1898. That mission in Uluberia near Calcutta continues to this day. After the Haiti trip persons began talking about how "missions had been part of the church's early DNA."

4. The previous concern of skewing the data was no longer considered important because of the baseline of the 2003 survey instrument and the congregation's apparent ease at talking about the church with the senior pastor. The other Reflection Team member was a professional fund-raiser who regularly worked with focus groups, as well.

CHAPTER FIVE
ANALYSIS OF DATA

Getting a Handle on the Data

Eighteen months of detailed study through surveys and focus groups, and over two years of intentional data gathering through small group studies, reflection team meetings, informal dialogues with members and leaders provide a mountain of data. Added to this is data derived from the design of action plans, the process of implementing and experiencing those plans, as well as the evaluating and fine-tuning that produces reams of minutes and hours of dialogue stored anecdotally in journals and persons' memories. As such in the limitations of these pages, we are unable to report and analyze all of the data accumulated by this action-plan research in the organic faith community that is the congregation of the Church of God of Landisville.

The data as we report it will fall into three main categories: data from action plan development, data from survey instruments, data from anecdotal journals. The action plan data is sub-divided into material found through the action plans generated by the Elders and staff, and data derived from action plans developed by the Commission on Outreach and Evangelism. The survey instrument data will be reported under the categories of the 2003 and the 2004 survey instruments. Finally, the data from the journals will be come solely from the Pastoral Journal

and its attendant review by the elders of the church. As we noted in Chapter Four, the Holy Spirit Journal never provided any great wealth of data and almost nothing that is not reported elsewhere. Therefore, for the purposes of brevity, we will exclude this data from this chapter.

Data derived from the “Building Bridges of Truth and Grace” study is almost entirely in the form of conclusions and recommendations. It will, accordingly, be reported only in Chapter Six.

What we have attempted to do here is sift through the data and report that which we understand to be significant, and which we believe will contribute to our understanding of the basic research question. We will attempt to restrict ourselves to reporting this data and leave the analysis appropriately to Chapter Six.

Although the senior pastor, being the chief researcher, had the broadest and most in-depth access to the totality of the data, we need to note that the “sifting process” for this data has passed through countless hands. Many of those persons have been a part of the gathering, the reporting, and the reflecting upon this data as we come to the findings in Chapter Six. Therefore, it has been a highly communal exercise. We hope it is an adequate failsafe to insure both the accuracy of the data reported and the claim that it is the data needed to make an appropriate analysis of the research problem.

Let us restate the problem. “Assuming that the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit has generated a new heart, how can a traditional and inward-focused church

activate this new spiritual DNA of outreach and evangelism? How do you fan into flame this new gift of the Holy Spirit of God?"

Data from Action Plan Development

Given the number of action plans to be analyzed we will present summary paragraphs of the data derived from those plans. Before doing that, however, there is a piece of data to be reported that is gleaned from all of these action plans. It has to do with the church's philosophy of ministry. As was reported in previous chapters, the Church of God of Landisville initially did the work of identifying both a specific mission for this particular congregation and core values which reflected its spiritual DNA. Each of these plans could be directly tied to one of the three subsets of that mission (e.g., being a safe place for people in need) and was designed to reflect one or more of the stated core values (e.g., the authority of the Word of God; all people matter to God; servanthood that is sacrificial). Although not every action plan was successful, most contributed in some direct way to the mission and several were taken in a more fruitful direction by the Holy Spirit.

An example of this is the Small Group Strategy (Appendix 8: Small Group Strategy). Two problems emerged in the implementation of this strategy. One was that the basic core element of equipping was tied too tightly to the role of the senior pastor and personnel matters in particular pushed the formal equipping to the side. The second was that the timing was clearly not right to implement this plan. Completing the construction of the facility (the Multipurpose Ministry Center described in the end notes to Chapter Four), resolving some issues of

emerging spiritual warfare, and restructuring for more effective mission were far more critical issues to the congregation's life in the fall of 2003. But with the vision for more small groups firmly in place and the emergence of new persons for leadership who could be mentored by now three pastors (when that change occurred in January 2004), a small group strategy was empowered by the Holy Spirit that accomplished the goals of developing community, prayer life, serious Bible study, creating accountability-without the necessity of the more rigid program anticipated in the original strategy. Within the first six months of 2004 two more small groups were initiated for women, an intergenerational small group was created for adults, a small group was created out of a specific ministry interest (Grateful Gardeners), a new Sunday School class was created for young adults (New Wineskins), and an additional Experiencing God group was being organized. This also resulted in nine new persons assuming leadership in these small groups and two of the groups adopting a distinctively team approach to its leadership.

Elders/Staff Generated Action Plans

(1) Embedding Core Values Through Teaching

Feedback regarding these sermon series came primarily through conversations between staff or elders and individual church members. It also was generated through the individual research of the Reflection Team members and the focus groups that helped in understanding the survey instruments. The content of the very first series on the bridge concept and outreach found itself repeatedly

mentioned in the next two years in personal testimony and in expressing the practical aspects of the mission of the congregation. Each of the sermon series proved to be timely and highly effective. A very high number of our congregation quickly became conversant with the mission statement and would often reference their small personal involvement or that of the small group with what they were contributing to going across the bridge or welcoming people who arrived. “Serving the community as the Spirit leads” and “a safe place” particularly became a part of the language of the general church member as we again heard those phrases expressed in the conversations of the congregation and described as the rationale for specific action steps (e.g., such as those persons who began to work at Faith Friendship Villa).

The sermon series on core values helped persons grasp and begin to share those values. The data from the very first survey in August 2003 supported this particularly in identifying the importance of the authority of the Word, prayer, sacrificial servanthood, worship, and evangelistic involvement. One of our focus groups would also later attribute this sermon series to the belief that the church was led by the Holy Spirit (that was also reflected in the data of the August 2003 survey.)

The sermon series on authentic community led to a number of our small groups reaffirming the importance of relationships rooted and grounded in the Word. The concept of the church as an organism seemed to have entered the language of the church during the time of this sermon exploration. Serious attempts to practice biblical reconciliation and the creation of the first large group

(over forty persons) uniting in forty days of prayer for a person seeking to break free from a history of satanic ritual abuse accompanied the explorations of this sermon series.

(2) Structure for Emerging Mission

Data here is to be found primarily in the Pastoral Journal and the minutes of the elders. It also comes from the reports and minutes of two commissions: Worship and Fellowship and Outreach and Evangelism.

A more visible and generally accepted role of the elders to provide hands on leadership for the spiritual welfare of the congregation was the first result. Persons began seeking more and more the assistance from the elders for matters of prayer and healing, conflict resolution, and participation in care-giving for the church.

The creation of two new commissions provided for an immediate emphasis. Next came highly visible results in the areas of outreach and evangelism. In short order the church was deeply involved in the ministries of Milagro House and Love, INC. Given encouragement and focus, the church began to act immediately on implementing intentional involvement in outreach ministries. The new Commission on Worship and Fellowship continued the direction of improving the quality of the church's worship ministries. By the fall of 2003, the commission was actively exploring the addition of a third worship service (Saturday Night Spirit). Two of the commissions, Christian Education and Worship and Fellowship, also took advantage of the opportunity to add personnel. The pool of involved workers began to grow. Persons also began to offer their services in the

area of their gifts with the knowledge they would not be burdened with additional meetings involved in the governance of the church. In the years 2003 and 2004 there resulted an explosion of new ministries being overseen by the commissions as this atmosphere of “sharing responsibility” was affirmed (e.g., house-painting teams, a new outreach to Faith Friendship Villa, the Shower Singers musical group).

The growth of indigenous ministries (i.e., those not specifically programmed by a commission or generated by the existing ministry teams) did identify the need for creating a “structure” for mentoring such Spirit-generated ministries to insure their success, to connect them intentionally to the church’s mission, and to insure that these ministries did not compete with and undermine other necessary existing ministries. This resulted in the adoption in January 2004 of an additional action plan/policy regarding mentoring such ministries (Appendix 20: Policy for Indigenous Ministries).

(3) Structural Principles for a Growing Church

Data reported here comes primarily from the minutes of the Commission on Property Management and the Administrative Council. It also comes from the reports and minutes of the elders, and sections of the Pastoral Journal.

This plan allowed the creation of two commissions, out of what would have been a super-commission, Stewardship and Property Management. A very small Commission on Finance was able to oversee the church’s financial management. An expanded (in size) Commission on Property was able to give its full attention

to the ministry challenges created by the opening of our new Multipurpose Ministry Center.

During the previous year (2003) we had learned the importance of having a true manager to oversee a commission's work, and so this new structure allowed for the selection of a finance chairperson with the appropriate gifts and passions that would have been otherwise unavailable to the commission for leadership. Now having enough commissions and sufficient personnel to have more manageable missions, commissions set about the business of establishing policies that promoted the missions and nurturing ministry teams under their care to achieve those missions.

One resulting policy was the decision to devote the new facility primarily to outreach ministries and those that served the community rather than letting the space be consumed by "in house" groups that largely served only the congregation. A second outcome reported was that the Administrative Council (which occupied the time of twenty-two persons who also served on commissions) found it less necessary to meet and moved towards quarterly meetings devoted largely to overseeing the general mission of the church. In this situation, the commissions were given more autonomy to carry out their portion of the mission without multiple layers of permission-giving. The Council (with the counsel of elders) concerned itself with the assignment of responsibility for emerging ministries and promoting the cooperation rather than the competition between ministry teams.

In this new structure, the elders took on even greater responsibility for strategic planning for the overall ministry of the church. The ideas they generated were then channeled them via the appropriate elder back to the appropriate commission. When the commissions would then develop ministries, the elders took on an advocacy role with the larger church for what these ministry teams were doing. In this setting, the elders were able give even greater attention to prayer and to congregational care, reinforcing the sense of unity and spiritual growth of the church while commissions attended to the nuts and bolts of daily programming.

The two new centers, Christian FLOW and Agape, which were in the action plans of the Commission on Outreach and Evangelism, were able to thrive in this more mission-focused and permission-giving atmosphere. As those ministries in particular began to seek volunteers, there seemed to be a general atmosphere of “involvement of the many.” The church witnessed a phenomenal response in staff recruitment and sense of total church ownership over these ministries. For example, the AGAPE Center was able to recruit thirty-five adult volunteers for its program of ministry. Increasingly, people were reporting that they felt personal responsibility in specific areas of ministry.

(4) Small Group Strategy

We have basically reported the data from this action plan in the introductory section to this chapter. Two pieces of information should be added here. From the reports of our small group coordinator we noted that small groups seemed to be valued primarily for their support and nurture. We saw an increase in the

intergenerational nature of adult small groups. Groups resisted over-structuring. The bulk of our groups chose some intentional form of Bible study and regular practice of intercessory prayer as the basic elements of their group life. Most small groups started with a mentor or teacher, but many quickly evolved to a more team-oriented approach to leadership responsibility. Most of our small groups met regularly without any pastoral staff (or staff outside the group) initiative. We saw the appearance of “monthly” small groups (e.g., Women of the Word) as an entry-point frequently chosen by people who had not previously been a part of small groups.

(5) Associate Pastor

The data reported here come from the minutes of the elders and the Administrative Council. It also comes from Pastoral Journals. It was also reported frequently in the conversations of our small groups and even in the focus groups of 2004.

Early in the process, there were some persons concerned about the church’s finances that suggested that the associate pastor’s role be combined with the existing second pastoral staff position (Pastor for Family Life and Youth.) Others questioned whether or not a business manager was more needed than another pastor. Unspoken (at least not spoken very loudly) was the expectation that now the senior pastor would not have to work so many hours and perhaps be more productive in the hours he did have. *Spoken* was the question of whether persons would accept the associate pastor as a substitute in roles traditionally filled by the senior pastor.

The hiring of the associate pastor, in many persons' estimation, was one of the evidences of the Holy Spirit's leadership. The church secured a mature, second-career person who was retiring from twenty plus years teaching and serving as the head of the business department of a nearby high school. He was a licensed pastor of the Eastern Region Conference pursuing a pastoral studies certification and had been mentored well in his home church while serving as an elder. He had a heart for people and a special ease with the older, more traditional members of the church. Raised as a boy in the Landisville Church, he was literally reconnecting with persons from his childhood. His visitation skills, his empathetic spirit, and his heart for prayer were immediately evidenced. Having time to do "old-fashioned" pastoral care with what is often a high maintenance part of the congregation endeared him quickly. Given his business and teaching experience, he was an able administrator and good mentor. He communicated well and sensitively. The only problem we encountered, which needed to be corrected early, was to avoid "doing" rather than "equipping." This segment of the church most likely would step back and watch unless he intentionally encouraged them to take primary responsibility. Once able to do that, the Senior Center Team, which was his particular outreach responsibility, blossomed with persons exhibiting high levels of creativity, passion, and ownership of the ministry.

After a month on the job (the same month our new pastor for family life and youth was also starting), the senior pastor was given a three week leave of absence to write Chapter Two of this project. This afforded a four Sunday

sequence for the two staff pastors to occupy the pulpit, and for these “associates” to function in their areas of ministry without the overt direction of a senior pastor. After the initial stage of nervousness, people frequently commented on their obvious competence in the pulpit. Early on they each began working with small groups and ministry teams that they helped bring into existence. We observed that this process had created “congregations” which related to each of these “associates” as their primary and preferred pastor.

A side note here regarding the other “associate,” the pastor for family life and youth. This pastor had spent his previous career as a physical education teacher and “at risk counselor.” He was a 48-year old husband and father. On his very first day on the job he was called into a counseling session with two parents trying to handle a tough situation with a teen. The family initially called the senior pastor, who for the previous two and a half years had served as the only pastoral counseling resource; but in the course of the conversation indicated that perhaps they should call the new family pastor since this was his area of expertise. At this time in the church there were a number of couples, families, and individual teens who needed spiritual direction and counseling. A great deal of the family pastor’s time was initially invested in this role, delaying some of the programming roles (like initiating the Youth Center outreach plan); but the pastoral care and again, the strong work ethic established this associate’s credibility strongly in the first two months. Both “associates” also were clearly committed to the mission of the church, functioning as team players, and being accountable to the senior pastor.

Action Plans – Outreach and Evangelism

An examination particularly of the reports and minutes of the Commission on Outreach and Evangelism track the bulk of the data from these action plans. These minutes report that the strongest year for these action plans was the initial year (2003). A high level of interest and involvement was exhibited for these action plans-especially for the partnerships with Milagro House, Love, INC, the LCCC Feeding Station, and the Tsailé VBS Team. The momentum for all of these partnerships seemed to wane a bit in the first 9-10 months of 2004 and is just now resuming as 2004 and the research project itself is concluding. In 2004 most of the visible energy and momentum revolved around one action plan, the Christian FLOW Center. The Commission on Outreach and Evangelism actually experienced the odd dynamic of alternating interest first in outreach, then evangelism, then outreach again. The high motivation of the first year was hard to sustain. It was as if, having sprinted through many projects in 2003, the outreach ministry required a bit of a breather.

(1 Partnerships with the Community)

The minutes of the Commission on Outreach and Evangelism, the frequency of stories told in congregational worship, focus groups responding to both the 2003 and 2004 surveys, and the Pastoral Journal helped us identify the data reported here.

The bi-monthly feeding station at Christ Lutheran seemed the strongest and most fruitful action plan. A core team was built, growing to involve as many as forty-five different persons of all ages, who would cook, serve, and minister to

the homeless families. In our “joys” expressed in worship, stories of this experience were frequently noted and many persons were repeat participants in the course of the past two years. Milagro House led to a powerful “Oh! Wow!” experience. Two weeks after the visit by Milagro’s director to the Sunday worship gatherings, a diaper collection was conducted. The goal was to fill the altar with diapers. At offering time, the children brought them to the collection point and laid them on the altar. The end result was a “burying” on the altar literally three times with disposable diapers. The affection for and sense of commitment to the Milagro ministry was instantaneous. At least two families began working as volunteers that next week. Two teddy bear collections and another diaper collection kept this connection alive as a practical way to involve multiple generations in a significant outreach.

The Love, INC partnership resulted in approximately forty persons signing up for the resource bank, and the appointment of an in house contact person. The church also provided core leadership for the prayer ministry and offered to help build a cooperative children’s ministry with the partner churches in the summer of 2004.

In early 2004, Love, INC negotiated a “moving team” for two new elementary schools in the school district. Given the church’s obvious commitment to this kind of community ministry, we were asked to provide the key leaders for this effort. A retired state police officer with ties to the school and the pastor for family life were recruited for this task. However, the school got “cold feet” on this whole idea and opted to move themselves. The politics of this failed effort,

along with the quickly dwindling involvement of the other churches in the prayer ministry put the efforts of this partnership on the back burner. The church continues to value this particular partnership as it is frequently mentioned in meetings and small groups, and one elder and one pastor have been made available to assist in leadership should the momentum return in the other churches. Nonetheless, a number of our church members continue to work through the resource bank to provide support to needy and elderly neighbors.

This is where the church saw the “indigenous” factor spoken of above come into play. The diaper and teddy bear drives came from the suggestions of our persons who had gone “on site” to work at Milagro House. A commission member, who was also the choir accompanist, enlisted the choir to sing during Christmas at Faith Friendship Villa. While there another choir member struck up a friendship with some men who were spiritually seeking and a bi-weekly Bible study emerged. At the conclusion of this research, the need for a women’s study group was identified, so this same member recruited a relatively new teacher (who is also an addiction counselor and female), to meet with the women at Faith. A painting project for one of our church families and a second painting project for a single mom in the area were spawned by this atmosphere of outreach. The youth group, looking at the community, found a retirement center for seniors and initiated a Thanksgiving Dinner for the residents there.

(2) Servant Lifestyle Class

Eight persons participated in this class. It actually was only able to do two acts of servant evangelism, but each of the participants in the class went on to involve

themselves in the significant ministries that were emerging, particularly the Christian FLOW Center. A servant evangelism team doing random acts of kindness never materialized. The group assisted with the clean-up for one of the church's widows, and assisted in the repainting of a house for one of the shut-ins, but nothing emerged as a new program ministry.

(3)The Christian FLOW Center

A highly committed ministry team of senior adults with a passion for ministering to other senior adults emerged. Despite some thought that there would be a weekly or bi-weekly need, the center found that once a month of dependable quality was both sufficient and more effective. A basic program was designed that began with coffee fellowship, then a speaker or program in an area of interest to seniors, a brief devotional to emphasize the Christian identity of the center, followed by a high-quality "home cooked meal." (God had already provided from the congregation two gifted cooks-one a gourmet cook well-known in the community and the other the former head cook for the local high school, who well understood the feeding of large groups). The meal was followed by another two hours of informal activity which involved the resources of persons from the community and other churches.

The group currently averages about eighty. The local township recreation association, which had failed in its own attempts at creating permanent senior activities, has now listed the FLOW Center as its sanctioned work among seniors. Although advertising continues to be done, word of mouth from satisfied customers has worked best. Many of those persons now volunteer to help with

serving and with the informal activities. At least seventy-five per cent of the persons serviced by the Center are from outside the Church of God. A particular partnership has grown up with Landisville Apartments, the same group our teens ministered to at Thanksgiving. Not only do they recruit participants for the center's program, but they have invited our associate pastor (who does a one-hour optional Bible study on the center's day at the church) to come the other weeks to their location to offer a Bible study (which numbers about ten at this time). Another byproduct was that an un-churched manicurist living in the community, who had been visited many times by some of the church's evangelistically oriented people, began providing free nail care at the Center for those ladies who patronized the center.

Finding a need that the community had recognized and intentionally downplaying our particular church's "ownership" of the ministry, prompted others to help provide financial resources with no strings attached. A local restaurant did an initial fundraiser before the center was opened. This inspired a customer of theirs, a local plumbing contractor, to contribute financially. In addition, those seniors attending FLOW provided a donation for the meal that basically covers the entire program costs of the center. This created one more avenue of "one time" or "short term" service for busy persons in the congregation who wanted to be a part of the servant outreach ministry of the church. The center now has at least three churches in the community that also direct their persons to be involved in the Christian FLOW Center rather than try to duplicate a similar outreach on their own.

(4) The Agape Center.

The action plan for this center was in its formative stages during the period of this research project. (The center formally opened November 2004 after the research project was completed). There is, however, some data to report. A clear vision for impacting the nearby schools (the church is across the street from the high school campus) as a good neighbor was communicated from the outset. In addition, the vision was expressed as “it is for the kids, to give them a safe place.” Given the congregation’s medium size and a yet limited pool of persons who saw themselves as youth leaders, plans were made that emphasized building relationships rather than creating programs. Plans were made for a drop-in center for two afternoons weekly. Volunteers were recruited and simple but clear training was offered. An incredible number, 35 adults, entirely from within the church itself, volunteered to staff the drop-in center on a rotating schedule. Many of these persons were “first-timers” in terms of involvement in one of the church’s formal ministries and others “came out of retirement.”

The church identified a willingness to partner with Christian groups who shared the same vision for ministering to the kids of the community and the schools. We listened carefully to what people in the schools, particularly student leaders and teachers, were telling us. An inviting model of a youth center equipped with recreational equipment, electronics, computers, food and fellowship opportunities was drawn up by an outreach team working with the pastor for family life and youth. The needs for equipping were shared freely with the congregation and the community. A member of the church, with a heart for

youth and experience as a youth director, was appointed director of the Agape Center.

Before the doors were opened church members donated furniture, a Game Cube ®, computers, kitchen equipment, a pool table, and sports equipment. The Commission on Christian Education authorized the purchase of a big-screen television and DVD/video players. A local service club that met in the church was approached and it a \$2,000 donation for new computers was made. The local Rotary was given an invitation to hear the vision, and has subsequently offered to fund and build the “coffee house” section of the Center.

The church’s leadership credited the Holy Spirit for being at work in three other ways. A high school science teacher was conducting a Bible study in his home that was being attended by thirty kids. He needed a place to start a second Bible study. He was invited to set up shop in the Agape Center. A team was created to provide discussion leaders and another to feed the kids. A high school Bible club, meeting at a nearby restaurant, asked if they could move to the Center. A team was created to cook and serve a monthly breakfast. A high school freshman committed suicide. The Agape Center director attended the funeral with several teenagers, and invited them to one of the church’s homes afterwards. The grief work identified in this home gathering led to opening the Center to a group of young people who wanted to hold a memorial service, focused more on hope, which the church service had failed to do. A planning crew of twenty kids was organized. Ultimately one hundred students and teachers came to this service within a few weeks of the Center’s opening. The “visibility” provided to the

Center by these acts of welcoming exposed many kids both to a quality facility and caring people waiting to serve them.

(5) The Tsaille Mission Team

Thirty-five persons (ranging from age six to eighty-something) joined the team. After meeting with a sister church at Chambersburg, who had conducted the previous year's VBS, we decided to add a feeding ministry to our efforts. We also realized we needed staff for 125 kids instead of the anticipated 75. These changes—increasing staff, adding to the ministry, and expanding the number of students—bumped our budget from around \$12,000 to over \$20,000. With the exception of curriculum materials (funded by our mission endowment fund), the team members raised all but \$1,000 of the costs. The school averaged over 125 children per day, in part because we rented additional vehicles and transported students. Almost 200 children were ultimately enrolled in the school with eighteen first-time decisions for Christ being made (a major step in a cross-cultural setting).

A lingering problem over the failure of the team to cover all of its costs is a small piece of spiritual warfare we must still address. (Not even visionary churches are free from some of those “small battles”). It should be noted that this team represented over fifteen percent of the active congregation at the time. Almost half were teenagers, but the bulk of the team included many of the church's core adult leaders. To a person, this cross-cultural mission was reported to be a life-changing experience.

(6) Evangelism Action Plans

Most of the data regarding these plans is anecdotal and covered under the section entitled “Data from the Journals.”

(7) Hospitality Plan.

This plan was largely unrealized. God did staff His core team from four of our newest members and they began working immediately. Visitors reported this new team to be enthusiastic and attractive ambassadors of the church.

Data from the Survey Instruments

Data from surveys was highly informative. As noted in Chapter Four, out of 150 potential respondents in our 2003 survey, 110 persons returned their materials. In 2004, we had seventy-one responses out of a potential pool of one hundred twenty-five persons.¹ In this data-gathering, the team was aided by an outside consultant who processed the survey forms and provided the statistical summaries found in Appendix 18: Summary of Statistical Surveys—August 2003 and August 2004. For the 2004 survey, the consultant also highlighted what were considered statistically significant changes from the 2003 survey.²

In the case of each survey, we asked focus groups to help flesh out the data. The data added by focus groups, although at times bordering on findings, is reported here for the sake of clarity.

August 2003 Survey

In the initial survey, the Reflection Team used a “slice” of the congregation in its analysis by attempting to look at two target groups in particular: 18-25 year

olds representing the future direction of the church, and 26–45 year olds representing both the emerging and leading edge of leadership in the church. The team wanted to see what was true about their commitment to these shared values. The statistical data reported represents the “range” of responses given by these two particular target groups. Persons 46–55 represented the core of our “seasoned” leadership, but their numbers generally tracked pretty closely with the average respondent in the survey. In each case the response is reported combining the response categories—agree and strongly agree.

(1) Worship

The range of target group agreement was 92–96% with statement 28, “Our church is a great place to worship.” It should be noted that this included both of the church’s worship offerings that were available in 2003.³ According to our focus groups, this could be attributed directly to the participatory nature of both of our worship services, the allowances for options in style, and the improvement in the quality of the traditional worship service.

Our focus groups further helped us understand that at that point in our history, worship was the great motivational vehicle for ministry. Here is where they expected to hear the great stories of vision in action in the church. Here is where they hoped to connect with the power of Christ and to be re-energized for ministry beyond the walls. Worship was becoming the place of the “Oh! Wows!” of the Lord that lifted them above the focus on their daily personal struggles.

Worship was where they encountered leadership and others who believed that trusting the Holy Spirit’s leadership was the only way to operate, and were

encouraged in their own risk-taking in ministry. They also believed that multiple worship styles maximized the valuing of all people and created diverse doorways into the church. Our analysis of this additional data reinforced the importance of striving for excellence in worship. It also confirmed that there would be no “going back” to previous or blended styles of worship.

(2) Authority of the Word

Only 42-54% in the main targeted groups agreed that “Our church teaches basic understandings of the scriptures as a priority in our Sunday Schools programs and an even lower 33% believed this to be true of the curriculum in our youth group.⁴ This issue had also been identified by our Commission on Christian Education, noting that no “scope and sequence” plan was in operation for our Sunday school and youth ministry curriculums. We also noted that many adult classes were focusing heavily on topical and book studies.

Related to this was the data reporting that only about half of the church were participating in classes and and/or small groups that teach a deepening understanding of the Word. Only about 25% of the 18-25 year olds reported this. Interestingly, approximately 65% of our 26-45 year olds reported this. The team noted that still a majority of our congregation was not participating in either Sunday School or small groups, except that portion of the church representing the emerging and primary leadership.

A regression was reported from the youngest to the oldest group (from 85% down to 46%) in their agreement with the statement “Our church holds its people

accountable to the Word of God.” We found a strong sense among our parents (25-45 and 46+) that they parent in accordance with the scriptures (77%).

Despite the responses about intentionality in the formal teaching settings, 96-100% of our target groups agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “Our church bases its rule of faith specifically upon the Word of God,” 93-100% felt the church’s vision was consistent with the Word, and 81% of all respondents agreed that the church’s decision-making was based on a commitment to the authority of the Word.

(3) Spiritual Growth and Prayer

The sections on prayer and spiritual growth were strongest in the 26-45 year old bracket which we noted formed at the time the pre-eminent participating group in our small group ministry. Ninety-six percent indicated “I demonstrate my deepening walk with Christ through personal prayer” and 85% that they were “excited about my spiritual growth journey.” Eighty-nine percent indicated that they prayed regularly for spiritual insights in their lives” and 52% indicated participation in a group that helped them assess their spiritual growth. (This was at least 15% higher than any group surveyed). Focus groups helped us clarify that small groups which worked on intercessory prayer, sharing mutual stories of life’s struggles, and sought to study the Bible for its practical applications in our daily life were what was both needed and desired by our people.

(4) All People Matter to God and Spiritual Gifts

We felt we needed further data on the question “Our church has a diversity of styles of ministry.” The target group was 20-25% lower than even the average person in the church in the affirmation of this statement as agree or strongly agree. The average response of the total respondents was 75% agreeing or strongly agreeing. The 18-25 and 26-45 year olds only reported 50-59% agreement. Focus groups never provided us a good handle on this data, which seemed contradictory in the face of the reality of multiple options for worship.

(5) Evangelism

Evangelism was the lowest section across the congregation of giving agree or strongly agree responses, with the identification of a very low understanding of a person’s personal role in evangelism (28%). The targeted groups actually reported lower responses than the total group to every question regarding practical involvement in the evangelistic enterprise except praying for participation in programs of outreach, the pre-evangelism dimension (46-55% compared with 48% overall.) The highest response (74-75%), however, appeared in our targeted age groups to the statement “I am able to explain to people how they can become a Christian.” Here we noted that persons over 46 were the least likely to be able to explain to persons how to become a Christian (60%) even though they were the most likely to regularly invite someone to become a Christian (28%).

Here the focus groups offered a powerful insight that ultimately aided our action planning. Persons indicated that by and large, although they believed

evangelism to be a core value and one that applied to all Christians (not just those with the gifts), the average church member was disconnected from the evangelistic ministry of the church for one of two reasons-fear of rejection or a lack of understanding of how to share their faith. “We are teaching this material in *Becoming a Contagious Christian* but the average church member isn’t going to take that class” (Notes from Focus Group, November 2003).

(6) Sacrificial Servanthood

The sacrificial servanthood numbers reported a spiritual maturity in the church, but we felt clarification of question 50 regarding the involvement in community ministries and organizations by individuals was needed. Were people seeing their involvement in outreach beyond the church done in Jesus’ name, but through organizations not accountable to the church, as somehow not being valued? This question was explored further through dialogue in some of our small groups. The primary response was that people were doing community ministry, but sometimes felt they were not doing enough if they were not involved in the church’s outreach ministries.

Focus groups also gave us some further data relative to this core value. The people of the church were attracted to the practical love of God in action. Persons, even busy persons and those who did not yet see themselves as particularly mature in Christ, wanted to be involved in something significant. They did not want to invest their time merely in activities. They were not interested in building a spiritual resume. They just wanted to live out the Second Great Commandment (“Love your neighbor ...”). They wanted to express love in practical ways that

genuinely helped people. They gained a sense of satisfaction from this and believed they were being obedient. We frequently heard quoted in some form St. Francis of Assisi's challenge, "Preach the gospel at all times. Sometimes even use words."

(7) Spiritual Gifts

We celebrated the strong response to "I believe God, through the Holy Spirit, has given me one or more spiritual gifts (87%). The number regarding matching people with their gifts (placing them in ministries consistent with their spiritual gifts) drew only 50-56% affirmative responses in even the targeted groups. But on the more encouraging side, 94% answered that the church is blessed by God when we use our spiritual gifts. We noted that 100% of the 26-45 year olds and 89% of the 46+ group believed they had spiritual gifts.

(8) Leadership of the Holy Spirit

Within our two target groups 93-100% believed our church was led by the Holy Spirit and the 89-100% believed the church to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Recognizing this to be a crucial issue to the faithfulness and fruitfulness of the church, we further explored this item. Why was this statement true? "Because we hear it preached in the pulpit every Sunday and see it modeled (by the pastor)," summed up the response (Notes from Focus Group, September 2003). It was also noted that as the general leadership made the claim to be submissive to the Spirit's leadership, the members of the congregation expected outcomes to reflect those values of the spiritual DNA. As the Spirit was given credit for what

was being accomplished, the congregation was becoming more and more open to let the Holy Spirit lead, instead of seeing leadership as a political process. It was seen as a process born out of prayer, faithfulness to mission, and consistent with the core values that were Jesus' spiritual DNA.

August 2004 Survey

The second survey instrument essentially used the same questions from the first, and responses from the first survey were compared with the second. We did not concern ourselves with target groups, but the overall responses by the congregation as a whole. The data generated by the August 2004 survey can be summarized in the following categories: the spiritual DNA of the church, worship, the authority of the Word of God, evangelism, all people matter to God, sacrificial servanthood, spiritual formation, spiritual gifts, the unity of the church. We sifted the data along these categories particularly to be able to respond to the four questions (theological understandings, competencies, programs, and leadership) that form the answers to the basic research question of the Holy Spirit's leading a church towards outreach. We were particularly looking for changes in the data from 2003 to 2004, hoping that they might ultimately be of help in understanding what action plans were bearing fruit. (Note: Because we could observe changes from one survey to the next, we listened in focus groups to reports and observations to identify what was behind some of the responses. As such, these findings also began to head in the direction of conclusions).

(1) The Spiritual DNA of the Church

We saw an overall sharpening or deepening of these shared core values. In many areas we have saw significant movement from agree to strongly agree or from disagree to neutral to various questions. In other words, the movement seemed to be in a maturing direction. Focus groups attributed this to a greater understanding of those values through the teaching ministry of the church. Also, the intentionality of connecting behaviors as a church to those values had given persons more confidence in the importance of those shared values. The participants in the *Building Bridges of Truth and Grace* had started making the connection of the importance of those values in creating a counter-cultural community of witness in the emerging postmodern world. (We will discuss this more in the conclusions section of this chapter). The participants in our focus groups and small groups reported that there was now a collective sense in the congregation that the Holy Spirit had been at work to grant us a new or a renewed spiritual DNA. This terminology had now entered into the language of the church beyond leadership.

(2) Worship

An initial problem appeared that slightly less persons reported the church to be a great place to worship (item 28) than in 2003; but that could be explained in part because the bulk of the change appeared in the “don’t know/no answer” responses. Focus groups removed any doubt that this had slipped. If anything, the addition of a third option for worship (Saturday Night Spirit), and the reality that this service had provided a doorway for unchurched people, and had been the

source of a large percentage of our new converts in 2004; simply multiplied the significance of the data on worship from the 2003 survey. Item 46 noted that more persons were reporting that they were able to offer their praises to God in our worship.

(3) The Authority of the Word of God.

Compared with the 2003 data, an increased sense of the authority of the Bible as God's Word, particularly in the understanding of it as our rule of faith and practice (item 6) and the submission of our leadership to that authority (item 16), were reported. Following the 2003 survey, significant efforts were made in communicating the biblical foundations of the church's vision, particularly in our preaching and our small group settings. Now 99% of our respondents believed our vision was consistent with the Word (item 2) and the communication of the Word as central to our task (item 7). People reported that this was being communicated by our small groups. Seventy percent agreed or strongly agreed that this was occurring there, compared with 50% one year ago (item 41). An additional dimension that showed progress was that 90% of our people agreed that the church as a body makes decisions from a commitment to the Word compared with 81% a year ago (item 12).

Our focus groups reinforced this data, commenting that the pastoral commitment to biblical preaching and the shift of many of our small groups to using the Bible as their primary source in studies had elevated the Word in the church's life. One person noted that the emphasis on persons bringing and using their Bibles in worship, including the pastor's humorous offer to "steal the Bible

in the pew if you don't have one of your own" (Notes of Focus Group, November 2004) had created a winsome and inviting approach to the Bible.⁵ The commitment of the Christian Education Commission to put Bibles into the hands of all third graders and study Bibles into the hands of all teenagers was noted as significant.

(4) Prayer and Evangelism

Serious attempts had been made throughout the year in evangelism and prayer, especially to have persons praying for the lost and praying for those who had made commitments to Jesus Christ. In the second survey, prayer was reported as a support of our evangelistic ministry (item 21), 81% agreeing/strongly agreeing in 2004 versus 75% a year before. Prayer in the everyday life of the average church member reported our biggest increases with a jump of 20% in the strongly agree category that "I feel I can ask God for anything in prayer" (item 77). Changes had been seen on the evangelism front as "understanding my role ..." (item 56) had increased from 28% to 38% and being able to explain how to become a Christian (item 90) increased from 64% to 75%.

Our focus groups reported that more persons seemed to have grasped the concept that they are part of an "evangelistic chain" (i.e., the whole church at work bringing someone to Christ⁶). More persons were seeing the necessity of sharing their faith and encouraging people to be a part of their church where the faith is clearly and honestly explained. A simple tool of lighting a candle for each new convert and placing it on the altar for one year to remind people to pray for those persons had raised the evangelistic consciousness of persons, and caused

them to pray more for the lost. The sermon series earlier in the year on how to share your faith was another reason given. The growing numbers of baptisms were another reminder of the redemptive work of Christ through the Church of God of Landisville.⁷

They also noted that prayer now seemed to be “everywhere” in small groups, church business meetings, classes, and worship. Not perfunctory prayer, but genuine and intercessory prayer. It was noted that more persons in our normally reflective traditional service who had been reticent about voicing praises and concerns were now doing so, and use of the altar (sometimes the filling of the altar) for purposes of prayer during worship was a more frequent and an inspiring development.

(5) All People Matter to God.

This carried a number of significant changes from 2003 to 2004: diversity of people (item 3), diversity of ministry styles (item 13) and “I build others up” (item 31). Item 18 “opportunities beyond superficial relationships” saw a similar movement as item 28 mentioned above. Half moved to strongly agree, half moved to neutral or no answer. This appeared to be a difficult question. Focus groups generally commented on the atmosphere of acceptance of different people being exhibited in the church, and the role of small groups in providing a place to belong.

(6) Sacrificial Servanthood.

This item we used to measure our outreaching efforts. Our church serves our community needs (item 4) moved from 75% to 95%. There was a marked growth, especially towards “strongly agree” in our servant’s strategy (item 36). The Feeding Teams, the Christian FLOW Center, and the Agape Center were generally given the primary credit for this by focus groups and the Reflection Team.

(7) Spiritual Formation

Spiritual formation was reported as strengthening. Excitement about one’s spiritual journey (item 60) jumped 18% in the strongly agree category alone. A similar growth was found in persons volunteering in church leadership roles (item 38). Small groups were again given much credit for this development.

(8) Spiritual Gifts

The lack of movement, or even negative movement in systematic process regarding spiritual gifts (item 14), indicated that church still had some significant work to do. Although the understanding of the importance of spiritual gifts had grown (item 23) with now 99% of our persons strongly agreeing, the same observations about this issue and what to learn from it in the 2003 Survey findings were repeated. Since we had not made any major efforts in this area since the 2003 survey, these results were not surprising.⁸

(9) The Unity of the Church.

The unity of the church was noted first by the significant lack of “disagree” or “strongly disagree” responses to any of the questions and by the report of personal work to resolve conflict issues (item 52), 12% more now “strongly agree.” Speaking well of the church’s leaders (item 97) had risen from 82% to 91% in the positive responses.

The focus groups attributed this unity to three things (a) ministry satisfaction engendered by progressing of construction, paying off, and mobilizing the ministries of our Multipurpose Ministry Center, (b) the congregation’s response to the equipping efforts of our now enlarged pastoral team, and (c) leadership which sought to unleash people for ministry and kept the vision clearly communicated.

Data from Anecdotal Journals

A Perspective on the Journals

One of our final entries in the Pastoral Diary is dated July 28, 2004. It contains this observation about the body life of the Church of God of Landisville:

I serve an amazing church. So many people at work for today’s beginning to the Fine Arts Camp and tomorrow’s celebration services for Mike Darrenkamp. At the same time people continue to visit Yvonne at Zion United (Nursing Home) as she nears her final days. In fact, the nursing home has commented on the level of support she is getting. That work will get heavier with a third plus shift at 9:00 tonight when many will be in the church to shift the building’s focus from VBS to funeral. Val Albright said last night, “I guess it’s wonderful to have a church that is so busy.” Yes, when busy it is in useful, people-serving, God-honoring ministry.

Maggie is starting to amaze us with the strength and faith she is exhibiting. She wants people to be reminded that Mike is with Jesus and that there should be gladness. She has helped pick music for his service and it is “joy”

music. Her two requests for specials are “I’ve Just Seen Jesus” and “How Great Thou Art”. The song she wanted the congregation to sing is “Shine Jesus, Shine.” Last night she showed up at Kingdom Prayers with Lisa and asked us to pray for Kim and Diane, her unchurched, next-door neighbors, especially husband Kim who had suffered the trauma of finding Mike’s body Sunday. It is truly, truly incredible, Lord, what you have done in Maggie’s life in the last year. You are truly a great God, a mighty God of healing and grace.⁹

The anecdotal journals deepened our understanding of the data from surveys and their focus groups. Those journals also reported even more information than can be gleaned from the quantitative material. The Pastoral Journal, in particular, helped “fill in the blanks” in the data from commission and elders minutes. The Pastoral Journal was over 250 pages in length and reviewed by six elders. The Holy Spirit Journal did not produce significant new data, and portions of that journal’s observations also were to be found in the Pastoral Journal. Therefore, for the purposes of brevity we used the Pastoral Journal as our data source. Indicative of the data to be gleaned from the Pastoral Journal were these items highlighted by the elders in their review. They primarily had to do with events or decisions that were made by church and its leadership during the period of the research project. Therefore, our data will be reported as Events and Decisions.

Events Reported in the Pastoral Journals

During the period of 2002-2004 there were several events that appeared to have been important to this research project and its ultimate findings.

(1) The “Oh! Wows!”

The anecdotal journals and the notes of our elders’ meetings reported almost weekly some individual church member or leader whose experience of God had been deepened and whose expectation of God’s working had been multiplied.

(2) Milagro House—June 2003

Few memories are as vivid as the Sunday in June 2003 when we watched the children carry to the altar the diapers that were collected for Milagro House. The altar had already been covered once at the 8:30 service. Now as the altar was filled a second time, two worship leaders began constructing another pile “lego-like” to surround the altar the third time. From that day persons began to look forward to new opportunities to exhibit God’s love in a practical way, to initiate other ways, and to celebrate what the Spirit was prompting us to do as individuals and a church.

(3) The Holy Spirit Taught Us No is Indispensable, Yet to Leave No One Behind if Possible

As more and more persons owned the mission and accepted leadership responsibility, more ministries occurred even without the presence or prompting of persons like the senior pastor. The church family retreat had long operated that way with the senior pastor only “guest appearing” as a speaker. Commissions carried on their business without ministry staff members organizing those ministries, and with pastors at the same time out doing “pastoral” ministry while the other business of the church was being carried out by the commissions.

This issue found itself identified in the attitude toward persons whose relationship to the church changed as time progressed or the mission grew. One example was a key musician who wanted to chart a course in ministry that the Commission on Worship felt to be inappropriate to the two existing services. Rather than let this person's dissatisfaction undermine those existing services, leadership lovingly confronted this person. At the same time, when this person began exploring other churches, leadership was supportive of the necessity of the search instead of trying to whip the person into conformity. When it was obvious that this person's love for Landisville Church was strong and their vision for ministry more in obedience to the Lord, the person was encouraged along with several others to initiate a new program option that ultimately became the foundation for our third worship service.

(4) God Paid the Bills

The year was 2003. The facility we needed cost \$930,000. The church was reintroducing into its budget the funding of a second pastor. A major mission trip to Tsaila was on the horizon. Yet we set about asking our membership to commit to the financial support of this new facility and the vision it represented. God had placed one of the denomination's most gifted fund-raisers in our congregation and he organized the effort. A solicitation team was recruited by the senior pastor and council president that was composed primarily of the younger church members who would benefit most from this new resource for ministry. All generations listened carefully to the Lord and were obedient to the vision. In barely eight weeks we subscribed \$937,000 for this effort. By the time

construction was completed in December 2003, over \$800,000 had already been paid. Persons throughout the church, many familiar with other fundraising efforts, recognized this as a “God thing.” In 2004, as the church was now paying the mortgage, we increased our operating budget by close to 30% (in part by adding a third pastor). Giving actually rose more than 15% to the budget, while we were paying the mortgage as well. A general fund surplus was largely erased in 2004; but the sense that we had been obedient to God and were trying to carry out His mission led the church to step further out in faith in its 2005 budget, not pulling back from ministry. No panic, no retreat; just a faith that as long as we are faithful God will provide the financial resources.¹⁰

(5) The Church Experienced the Benefits of Team Leadership.

Numerous entries point to team leadership experiences that were impacting the church. A review of the data indicates that during much of 2003 the Senior Pastor was working in excess of 60 hours weekly, and weeks at a time without a day off. During this time, the church was navigating major changes that necessitated his vision-casting ministry. The church was engaging in a fundamental educating towards the shared values of the church, and a particular emphasis on teaching the nature of biblical community. The church was mobilizing 35 of its members (more than 20% of the active congregation) for their first cross-cultural mission experience. At the same time the church was moving towards a significant new ministry of trauma care for those troubled persons being attracted to this “safe place” and groundwork was being laid for ministry to a victim of Satanic Ritual Abuse that would ultimately involve over

forty members. The church was in the construction and fundraising phases of a \$950,000 Multipurpose Ministry Center with all the attendant day-to-day problems to address. And the church was experiencing significant spiritual warfare in the area of its youth ministry which involved a conflict that led ultimately to the departure of our pastor for youth and family. The senior pastor had to provide the major staff support in all of these areas and was dangerously near burn-out those critical twelve months.

This work, however, was fruitful because others “shared” that leadership. Five very competent lay persons provided the day-to-day leadership for the facility construction. A core of other leaders managed the details of the capital fundraising effort, drawing upon the senior pastor only for a few key visits. Two elders and six other gifted persons in Christian education and music handled the bulk of the preparations to get the mission team into the field. The elders partnered extremely closely to deal with the spiritual warfare and personnel concerns tied to the youth ministry problem. The senior pastor was replaced in several teaching and programming roles by lay persons to free him to have more time particularly for preaching.

The addition in January 2004 of two pastoral staff members on the same day was particularly advantageous. The new facility opened at the same time. The associate pastor assumed the facilities management leadership. He also set to work on making good the promise of quality pastoral care for our sick and shut-ins. He became the point man in building the team that would create our new senior center ministry, The Christian FLOW Center which opened within four

months. The pastor for family life and youth, who was a trained counselor, immediately took on at least half of the counseling load which at that time focused particularly on youth and family problems. He set about healing the wounds in our youth ministry and restaffing. He became the point man on the realization of the original dream of a youth drop-in center, ultimately called the Agape Center. He recruited a qualified lay director for the center and helped train 35 adult volunteers (many of them engaging in their first ministry) to staff the center's two days of programming when it opened in November 2004.

(6) Spiritual Warfare was a Constant Challenge to the Focus and Energy of the Leadership

Starting about Easter 2003 we entered a period of great disunity involving our youth ministry. Well into December, the elders and senior pastor invested major time and meetings to working through this problem, which really was a group of problems. Throughout the entirety of this project, especially as the church took on a more visible and vigorous role of outreach to the community, a number of our key church families faced major job disruption, critical illnesses, family instability, and deaths that constantly required this leadership to be in prayer for protection for these persons and the church, and for wisdom and power to help deal with these persistent difficulties. The elders themselves faced personal problems, particularly with health issues or family members in spiritual or emotional distress. Two key worship teams developed troubling relational problems. As the end of 2003 arrived, the church began a period during which some of our oldest saints and several persons were dying. Grief work was a

persistent concern and remains so. In these stresses, questions of faith, selfish behaviors, and relational problems arose. We recognized that Satan was at work accusing, tempting, and frustrating people to take their eyes off the vision, and to withdraw at times from the help of an accountable, encouraging community. Except for one area, this spiritual warfare did not undermine the unity of the church or slow its momentum in ministry. However, an incredible amount of leadership energy and time was expended behind the scenes in prayer, loving confrontation, counsel and encouragement by the elders and the pastoral staff. The recurring refrain was best expressed by our pastor for family life and youth when one of these issues seemed to hit the elders themselves strongly, "We must be on the right track for Satan to respond so forcefully." (Pastoral Diary Entry, May 5, 2004).

(7) The Tsaile VBS Team

Starting early in 2003, the Commission on Outreach and Evangelism began a plan to place families on a cross-cultural mission field. The location was our Tsaile AZ Navajo congregation and the occasion was a Vacation Bible School. The response to this enlistment almost doubled the anticipated 15-20 team members. Thirty-five persons ranging from age eight to eighty-plus expressed a desire to join the team. This team also contributed to the kingdom focus of the church by the inclusion of three persons from our sister church in Rohrerstown, who assumed key leadership roles. This was a fairly balanced intergenerational team. Besides providing a life-changing experience (by the testimony of the team members themselves), the result was that almost 20% of the active participants in

the congregation had a cross-cultural mission experience. This further whetted the appetite of others for such an experience. It ultimately led to the adoption of Tsaile as a sister congregation and a commitment to further cross-cultural mission experiences including a planned return to Tsaile in 2006.

(8) Great Things were accomplished When People Committed to a Great God and His Vision.

The data reported particularly with the action plans of the Commission on Outreach and Evangelism are rehearsed again in the journals. One particular item, relating to the Seminar for Effective Fathers, should be noted. The senior pastor answered a call to a meeting about the formation of this event in Lancaster. Sensing a leading to join the steering committee, he knew that major dollars needed to be raised. Unwilling to push the church too hard as this was the end of 2003 and sizeable financial commitments had been made especially because of the addition of staff and the increased operations of the church, he simply asked that the annual Christmas offering go to this event. He then shared the vision of bringing this free event to 1200 Lancaster fathers three months later. He paid no more attention to the offering until he went to a meeting in late January. Prior to this meeting he was told by the church's bookkeeper that approximately \$1,000 had been given by the generosity of the church (two other fund-raising offerings had been taken during this same season—for Milagro House and our Christmas outreach to needy families). He was told that this contribution would make our medium-sized church one of the "logo" sponsors of the event. We had funded the attendance of close to eighty fathers. When the

actual check was processed, the amount turned out to be \$1500 and the church was now underwriting outreach to almost 125 fathers. The conference's leadership then asked the church's worship teams to provide the worship leadership for the main event on Saturday, as the other major sponsoring church (one of the local mega-churches) was unavailable to do so. The two worship teams had not previously worked together. In fact, there had been some spirit of competition among them. Called together to represent the church to the larger community, these two team blended wonderfully into a cohesive and gifted unit that was affirmed by many of the Seminar's participants as a major help to their experience. The Church of God of Landisville received a visibility quite unexpected. The way God worked simply increased the church's sense that they were serving a great God and that they had better prepared to be faithful to His plans To whom much is given, much is required.

(9) People in Movement

Particularly during the late spring and summer of 2004, we saw key persons who had been essential to the early part of our spiritual journey being called elsewhere. One such family were key players in the church's educational, children's, women's and men's ministries:

Just got back from A Few Good Men. I went because I didn't know that Joe was going to be there to teach. He was, but it turned out that the Lord wanted me to be there for prayer time to support Joe. Tonight he announced that this summer they will be moving back to Indiana. Fortna has offered him a new job. Joe and Jeanette say their family back there needs some ministry, and this will allow them to do so. As he unfolded his thought process, it is clearly the Lord's leading. It's just a bittersweet direction for many of us. Greg is a bit bummed because we will lose both the Jordans and the Andersons this summer, the latter to a new ministry at Penbrook. Ten

people in two families, four excellent adult servants of Jesus Christ. It is the nature of ministry in the 21st century. People are highly mobile, jobs are transitional. I continue to believe and pray that God will provide new parts to make up for what this particular church must now share with the larger kingdom of God. Joe, Jeanette, Wayne, Debbie will be missed—but the Lord provides. (Pastoral Diary Entry, Tuesday, May 18, 2004)

... A huge joy yesterday was the word that Laurie Brown, Martel Maguire, and Amy Baughman have teamed up to become the new nursery leadership team to replace Jeanette Jordan. That organic principle is at work. God granted new branches to the vine to replace those He had pruned to plant elsewhere. (Pastoral Diary Entry, Wednesday, July 14, 2004)

Significant Decisions Made in the Church

(1) The Decision to Hire an Associate Pastor.

We reached a point when it was clear that the church had grown to the point that it required a *third* pastoral staff member. In this case an associate pastor to extend the ministries provided by the senior pastor. The elders came to this determination in May 2003. Discussions, both informal and formal were held with key persons. When the idea was formally discussed in the Commission on Stewardship and Property, one member resisted saying the church needed a business manager. The other four members of that commission, however, felt strongly that there were persons with business skills in the church who could be deployed. This congregation had always valued quality pastoral care. The upward growth in size and downward in age dictated the necessity of more pastoral leadership to provide, model, and equip in this area. Because we were experiencing a crisis over a youth pastor, at the same time that we were about to start paying on the mortgage on our new Multipurpose Ministry Center, there

arose among the older part of the congregation a fear that we were being fiscally irresponsible. Although not widespread, the opinion was there in the open.

The elders and the senior pastor believed that the associate pastor's role was crucial to maintaining the integrity of quality pastoral care to older members who are increasingly marginalized in a young congregation. The senior pastor was sent to speak to the members of the oldest two Sunday School classes about the vision for this pastoral role, emphasizing the faith being expressed among the essentially younger leadership that God would provide financially. The Spirit prepared hearts for that meeting. The result was agreement with that vision and a decision to respect the faith expressed by those younger leaders. When the formal vote came two weeks later in a special congregational meeting to create this new position, the vote exceeded 85% in favor of this direction. This unity was made even stronger when the ultimate candidate, a son of the church who was entering ministry as a second career, entered the job his impact was so immediate and so positive that within a short time, many persons who had been "late adopters" were publicly affirming the wisdom of this direction.

(2) The Decision to Expand and Deepen the Prayer Ministry.

Although attendance at our intercessory prayer meetings did not grow, the lists for prayer did. The nature of the prayers changed. We stopped focusing primarily on prayers for ailing bodies and individuals' hard times, and began praying for kingdom issues. We began praying for the fruitfulness of the Church, for individual church leaders, for sister churches, and for others laboring for the Kingdom elsewhere. We began to pray "Kingdom Prayers" and that dimension

also began to enter into the prayer requests made during public worship services—prayers about Iraq, disasters around the world, tragedies and issues impacting our community. We began to pray for the protection of the church and its leaders.

The elders, in particular, began seeing the leadership of these prayer meetings as one of their primary leadership roles. Although the elders had always participated in the weekly prayer gathering of the church and led in the pastor's absence, the roles were reversed. The elders took the responsibility of seeing that these intercessory meetings occurred and even led when the senior pastor was present.

Three significant developments marked by the elders exemplified this. The gathering of a prayer team to pray 24/7 for a victim of satanic ritual abuse led to an ongoing dialogue and individual prayer partnerships as we recognized that the prayer warriors themselves and the persons assisting this victim were coming under assault as well. Through prayer several of us were prompted to teach one another the importance of praying on the whole armor God (Eph. 6).¹¹

The second was the emergence in the summer of 2004 of a vision initiated by two lay women to organize a weekly prayer group to pray for the three pastors and the elders of the church. This grew from an understanding that the church's ministries had grown so quickly and so large that the previous prayer base was insufficient to support this expansion. More prayer roots needed to be sunk into the soil of faith by gifted and impassioned persons within the congregation. Leaders needed to be transparent about what needed praying for.

The third was that the expanded pastoral staff took time away together to pray for the church and its ministry. This had been part of the Senior Pastor's regular pattern of ministry. It was then taught to the others and affirmed by the elders in August 2004. One outcome was for the pastors to ask the elders to set aside a day away for prayer for one another and for the church.¹²

(3) The Decision to take a Larger Team to Tsaile

We saw this when 35 persons stepped up to take on a mission assignment in Tsaile AZ. Despite the difficulties of changing plans, multiplying costs, and the challenge of an expanding mission (we were going to add feeding those children to our basic Bible school assignment), persons were coalescing around a vision to impact lives that ended up serving nearly 200 different children and adult on the mission field. When they returned and told the tales of their mission and their own changed lives, God seemed awaken in still more people a desire to get into the action.

(4) The Decision to Construct the Multipurpose Ministry Center

Another of the chief examples of this was the issue of the Multipurpose Ministry Center. Old explorations had left the church and its leadership with a sense that they were "locked in and limited" by their existing facility and location. Yet strong voices expressed attachment to an historic and beautiful (although sometimes shabbily kept) facility. The first solution had been to try to buy and remodel the church next door whose congregation was dwindling. When that fell through, the leadership determined that God wanted something new. We

now we began to explore aggressively and prayerfully what could be done on “footprint” of the existing facility. The Multipurpose Ministry Center, with its upstairs gymnasium¹³, expanded kitchen, and full basement intended to house a youth center was the result. To preserve flexibility for the future and anticipating that God had more in store, an elevator was added that had an access to a yet unconstructed second floor over the existing Christian education wing.

(5) The Decision to Seek a Mature Youth Pastor

The spiritual warfare experienced in 2003 over youth ministry ultimately led to the release of a youth pastor at the end of one year of ministry. This necessitated the search for a new person. At that time, with the encouragement of the elders, the decision was made to find a candidate who would give attention to the family ministries of the church as well as youth ministry. This had been a part of the previous staff person’s job description but nothing had actually occurred in family ministry and little in children’s ministry. The elders proposed that the church seek a candidate whose age and experience would command the confidence of families, particularly parents. A search committee was created, and early on the committee accepted this wisdom in its deliberations.

At that time one of the elders, who had previously served in the position of family life director, had resumed the following of his call to ministry. He was even being considered by a sister congregation to assume this position in their ministry. Having identified his heart and commitment to the mission of the Landisville congregation, the search committee determined that he would be the best candidate. His involvement in the church leadership for several years, his

training as a high school teacher with a specialty in at risk counseling, and his commitment to the church's mission made him a known commodity with almost no learning curve needed. The elders and the Commission on Christian Education saw the timing of this person's availability as a working of the Spirit. We have already noted above the benefits the church realized by the arrival of this person on the church's pastoral staff.

A Concluding Word on the Data Analysis

We have by no means exhausted all of the data available from this research project. The data reported, however, provides ample foundation from which to determine significant findings, draw useful conclusions regarding the four questions that help us answer the ultimate research problem, and make recommendations for the church's seeking to learn from this experience. It is to this step we now move in Chapter Six.

1. The Reflection Team understood from previous experience that survey responses of over 50% are generally statistically significant. One of our team members, who works for a firm that does research into corporate core values indicated the response to the 2003 survey was equivalent "having a direct interview with the congregation."

2. This firm was Senn-Delaney Cultural Diagnostic & Measurement. Mr. Brian Reger, the firm's vice president did this basic statistical organization and communicated it through Michael Spangler, one of his employees who was also a member of our Reflection Team. The input from these "professionals" often

confirmed the observations by the Reflection Team itself and multiplied our confidence in the validity of the survey instruments and their findings.

3. This observation helped prompt our decision to attempt to strengthen this value by adding a third worship service, using a distinctly Christian rock style on Saturday nights. The answers to this item in the 2004 survey would reflect the inclusion of now three services.

4. Ironically, only 29% of the total sampling credited our youth ministry with this priority on scripture.

5. At the conclusion of the research, we had someone inventory the sanctuary. It was reported that approximately 35 pew Bibles had been stolen. Whether they all made it into homes is unclear, but they were now being used beyond worship.

6. This is a concept used by Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg in their training program *Becoming a Contagious Christian* (a program we use for training in evangelism). Like the “bridge” metaphor, this is another metaphor that seems to have made it into the consciousness and language of our people, and is reflected in their emerging view of their role in evangelism.

7. Our church practices believers’ baptism and baptism by immersion. A large baptistery sits in the front of the sanctuary. All baptismal services are part of our Sunday morning worship services. No special dates are set aside for baptism. We tend to baptize when the movement of the Spirit produces candidates. In 2004 we conducted seven baptismal services, the fewest candidates being one and the most being nine. In our very first baptism of the year of a young girl, the altar call at the end of the worship led to the confession of faith by a woman in her fifties who had witnessed that baptism.

8. Subsequently an action plan has been developed by the pastoral staff and the elders that will be implemented in the spring of 2005 that includes (a) creation of the position of Spiritual Gifts Counselor (b) a six-week sermon series on spiritual gifting and a long-deferred offering of the spiritual gifts component of our Life Development Institute.

9. This particular entry was tagged by one of the elders (Sam Ruggiero) charged with reviewing the data from the Pastoral Journal as one of the most significant descriptions of the Holy Spirit at work in our church in everyday life.

10. As this chapter is written, 2005 started with a 5% budget increase anticipating a 15% giving increase. Our first month of operation was no longer in a deficit posture and the mortgage is down to \$70,000. Staffs received excellent raises in affirmation of excellent work. Our general fund has not reclaimed any of the money that it surrendered in 2004 but the sense is that we will proceed forward as long as God pays those bills by stimulating the obedience of giving.

11. This prayer ministry became known as the 24/7 Team. It kept a low profile in the church out of respect for the confidentiality of the person it was interceding for. But prayer led team members into interventions and even training to help persons who had been traumatized by various sins – those intercessions and those ongoing ministries all center around empowering and protecting prayer.

12. This action step did not occur until January 2005 after the conclusion of this research project; but increasingly from early 2003 forward, a significant time of prayer became a major agenda item for each elders’ meeting.

13. Gymnatorium is the name of a structure that combines the function of gymnasium and auditorium. Our model for this facility came from the “gymnatorium” at Doubling Gap Center, our conference’s church camp and retreat center.

CHAPTER SIX
SUMMARY, FINDING, CONCLUSIONS,
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What does it mean to say that the church is led by the Holy Spirit? What would that church look like? What would it do? We have a clue to the answers to those general questions in the apostle Paul's wondrous benediction, "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus ..." (Ephesians 3:20-21a). Who among us would not pray for that to be the reality of the local church, especially those ministering in traditional churches whose flame seems to have been reduced to weak embers lying under a layer of ash from old fires that once burned brightly? What would we do if we sensed the Holy Spirit beginning to blow across those embers in an attempt to fan them into flame?

For a very long time, these questions had stirred the heart of this researcher. In the late months of 2001 and the opening ones of 2002, the people of the Church of God of Landisville began to sense a fresh wind of the Spirit blowing in their midst. The leadership of that congregation, of whom this researcher was the senior pastor, began to ask these questions with an earnest, practical urgency. Out of that exploration grew the seeds of this research project.

True to Paul's prophetic promise, we could not yet even imagine what the Holy Spirit would do in the life of a church that sought to be obedient to the gift of a new heart for ministry. Yet what we discovered transformed and empowered us as a church like nothing most of us had previously experienced. This chapter is our celebration of that "immeasurably more" we have become as a people.

Summary

This research project began formation in 2002. It was at its most intensive phase during the whole of 2003 and the first ten months of 2004. The project was conceived to answer this basic research question: "Assuming that the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit has generated a new heart, how can a traditional and inward-focused church activate this new spiritual DNA of outreach and evangelism? How do you fan into flame this new gift of the Holy Spirit of God?"

We identified four questions that we considered crucial to answering that basic research question: (1) What specific theological teachings are essential to accomplishing a transformation of values and behaviors to be an outreaching church led by the Holy Spirit? This is essentially a question on *intentionality*. (2) What competencies need to be developed to enable a church to actualize its passion or values for outreach and evangelism? This is essentially a *skills* question. (3) What do the strategies being implemented contribute to becoming an outreach focused evangelistic community? This questions centers on *programs*. (4) What role does leadership play and what kind of leadership is required to effect a fruitful partnership with the Spirit necessary to produce these outcomes in

the areas of the theological foundations, individual competencies, and community strategies? This, obviously, is the *leadership* question.

To study this question, we chose action plan research. Such research is more qualitative than quantitative in nature. It involves the development of plans that enable a church to test the ways in which these four smaller questions can be answered. It is a trial and error methodology that requires continuous reflection and evaluation by key leaders, and adjustments based on those intermediate learnings. These action plans were developed within the church's existing organizational structure. They leaned heavily upon plans developed by the elders and staff (who form the church's strategic planning team) and those of a newly created Commission on Outreach and Evangelism.

With the counsel of the church's elders, a D.Min. Context Committee was established, which was quickly redefined as the Reflection Team. (The composition of that team is described more fully in Chapter One). Together with the Senior Pastor (the chief researcher) they established a general framework for exploring the answers to this question that ultimately included a survey instrument. The survey instrument was used twice at one year intervals and included focus groups to clarify the data.

Action plan research is greatly enhanced by anecdotal records. A Pastoral Journal that was ultimately reviewed by the elders was the third primary research tool utilized to explore the basic research question and its four antecedent questions. (This methodology is described in detail in Chapter Four. The data accumulated is summarized in Chapter Five).

A great deal of time was spent on a theological examination of these issues. In a typical D.Min. project, the chief researcher is required to write a chapter on theological foundations. Particularly significant was the exploration of the four aspects of a church living Jesus' DNA suggested by Howard Snyder and Daniel Runyon. These are the Great Confession (i.e., Jesus is Lord), the Great Identification (the church as the body of Christ), the Great Commandment (learning how to live as a counter-cultural community of Christ's love), and the Great Commission (following an outreaching mission into the world). Coming at a formative time in this congregation's exploration of its new identity, the material from what is now Chapter Two became the groundwork by which the church explored its own spiritual DNA.

What we found was a clear and compelling mission as a congregation, that was truly guided by the Holy Spirit. We learned how to follow the leadership of that Holy Spirit. Through this project, despite our initial traditional nature, we became an outreach congregation with a heart for the community and a new perspective of kingdom focus that we believe insures our fruitfulness in the future. How we got there is the subject of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations which follow.

TABLE 1:
BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS AS RELATED
TO BASIC RESEARCH CATEGORIES

1. Intentionality – Theological Teachings
 - a. Shared values formed an understanding of the church and mission.
 - b. Shared values reinforced the self-identification.
 - c. The mission statement was an important tool.

- d. Teaching the nature of biblical community occurred.
 - e. Teaching reinforced the kingdom focus of the church.
 - f. The ministry of reconciliation was the ultimate focus of that teaching.
2. Competencies to be developed.
- a. People needed to be taught how to study and apply the Bible.
 - b. Prayer, particularly intercessory prayer needed to be taught.
 - c. People were taught to understand and equipped to use their gifts.
 - d. Evangelism was taught intentionally, particularly the concept of the evangelistic chain.
 - e. Stories were a useful form of encouragement and vision-casting.
 - f. Dealing with spiritual warfare emerged as a necessary competency.
 - g. How to be a “safe place” was an important competency modeled by small groups and the senior pastor.
3. Strategies to be implemented
- a. Introductory warning about programming growth.
 - b. Biblical community was systematically taught from the pulpit and in small groups.
 - c. Small groups were created to put biblical community into practice.
 - d. Outreach strategies that ultimately deployed the church out into the community.
 - e. Outreach strategies generally preceded evangelistic strategies.
 - f. A strategy for elevating corporate worship as a means of keeping the focus on God and the congregation unified in mission.
 - g. A strategy emerged to deal with indigenous (particularly Spirit-initiated and unprogrammed ministries).
4. What Kind of Leadership?
- a. People believed the Holy Spirit led the church and pastor-centeredness was diluted.
 - b. The leadership was committed to letting the Holy Spirit lead.
 - c. Leadership was committed from working from a mission consistent with the shared core values.
 - d. Every person in the church was seen as having a responsibility for the fruitfulness of the church’s mission.
 - e. Leadership embraced change and assumed risks necessary for a God-sized vision.
 - f. The Senior Pastor modeled and taught this leadership style.
-

Findings from the Data

Rather than focus on the data by the methodology through which it was produced, we believe it will be more helpful to report those findings by answering those four questions in pursuit of the basic research problem.

Intentionality: Theological Teachings

(1) Shared Core Values and Mission

The shared core values formed a broad understanding of the church's mission and the DNA that empowered that mission. These core values were not simply the values of the individual members of the congregation. They were biblical core values identified by the church's leadership and effectively communicated through the pulpit, in formal small groups, in ministry team meetings, and in one-on-one mentoring. These biblical core values appeared to impact a broad spectrum of the congregation in a relatively short period of time.

(2) Shared Values and Self-Identification

These shared core values were reinforced in the church's self-identification. Over and over persons were reminded of the Great Confession. Jesus Christ is the Lord of the Church and the Holy Spirit is his empowering manifestation. The church learned that it is an organism, not an organization in the traditional sense. They learned that organism has an identity, the body of Christ. It is expected to behave within the values which are consistent with Jesus Christ. The understanding of those values is tied to the Bible which is further confessed as the Word of God, the infallible authority for life and faith.

(3) Shared Values and the Mission Statement

The simplest tool of theological understanding was the mission statement: “The Church of God of Landisville, seeking to be the people of a great God; by serving the community where the Spirit leads, by being a safe place for people in need, and by sharing the love of God with all.” That mission statement was then tied regularly to the scriptural map of Matthew 9:35-38. The most frequently used symbol was that of the church as a bridge across which Christians passed into the larger community in order to do ministry and across which seekers could come to discover true biblical community.

(4) The Nature of Biblical Community

A clear and practical process of teaching the characteristics of biblical community had demonstrable results in behaviors and in the confession of shared core values. These teachings included transparency as persons in Christ, biblical confrontation, mutual accountability, sacrificial servanthood, encouragement, working together, hospitality, preferring one another out of love, the empowerment of prayer, and authentic worship. These teachings were used particularly in the processes of conflict management and decision-making. These teachings were foundational when the church ventured into the new ground of spiritual warfare.

(5) The Kingdom Focus of the Church

The Great Commandment that summarizes the theological understandings of authentic biblical community was further emphasized in teaching the church to

have a kingdom focus. The Church of God of Landisville was taught that it is not the only church nor even the most important congregation. This teaching was reinforced by ministry policies that led to the creation of ministries on site (e.g., the Agape Center) that served the larger community and cooperation with existing ministries (e.g., Love, INC.) that focused on fruitfulness for God.

(6) The Ministry of Reconciliation

The church's Great Commission look emphasized serving sacrificially through outreach leading to the ultimate goal of reconciling people to God. It was steadily taught that this ministry of reconciliation was the ultimate focus of the church.

We have already noted the issue of kingdom focus. Reconciling was about getting people into the kingdom, connecting to the vine of Christ, and helping persons become new creations. It did not focus on church growth or formal identification with the Church of God of Landisville.

Competencies to be Developed

(1) Teaching How to Study and Apply the Bible

We found that persons in our culture need to be invited and then taught how to study the Bible and apply its teachings to daily living. Persons were missing a genuine encounter with the God of the Bible because they did not encounter the Bible itself. The simple step of having our small groups and adult Sunday School classes make the Bible itself their primary curricular source helped reverse this situation. Persons also developed a greater commitment to understanding the Bible and valuing its application to their daily lives through the pastoral staff's

commitment to practical biblical preaching that sought to address real human need. (The emphasis here on biblical).

Our first survey in 2003 reminded us of something critical. Persons do not necessarily possess a solid biblical foundation. Particularly critical was the realization that there was no dependable scope and sequence for curriculum for children and youth. That weakness needed to be addressed for it immediately undermined the action plan to embed those biblical core values into the congregation.

(2) Teaching Intercessory Prayer

Prayer was a skill to which many aspired. People, in fact, needed to pray. Prayer was often identified with the “Oh! Wow!” moments in worship and small groups. In the Church of God of Landisville, prayer was caught as well as taught. Its value was repeatedly affirmed through prayers in worship (including the sometimes cumbersome, but highly participatory element of sharing joys and concerns), the creation of prayer groups with specific missions (e.g., Healing Prayers, Kingdom Prayers, Leadership Prayers), called prayer meetings for special situations (e.g., the outbreak of war in Iraq), assembling with other groups for prayer (e.g., the Love, INC. prayer meetings), and emphasizing the incorporation of a time of intercessory prayer into the ministry of small group and ministry team meetings.

(3) Teaching People to Understand Their Gifts

People genuinely desired to do the work of Jesus. They wanted to serve him. Often they expressed frustration because they did not understand their call and gifts, did not understand the connection of their gifts and the ministries of the church, and did not feel equipped to do the work of Jesus. A well thought out and redundant process of discovering a person's spiritual gifts, equipping them and connecting them with those ministries that utilized their gifts was lacking in the church. This lack was a source of frustration to the willing and an excuse to the reluctant. Persons with a passion for a particular ministry almost always bear fruit when they were mentored and unleashed. The inauguration of a Toddler's Gym program for preschoolers was one such example. Initiated by a parent who spoke to the Pastor for Family Life and Youth about a dream, she was then mentored to plan and implement this new ministry.

This lack also impeded the church in accomplishing its mission. First of all, a church needs willing workers and needs to know who they are. We supplied each commission with a list of persons and their gifts of which we were aware, but commissions tended to draw from the pool instead of enhancing the pool. Or commissions continued to function, more as workers than managers or leaders, by simply burning themselves out doing the work while others stood by watching, often wondering what they could do.

(4) The Evangelistic Chain

When our people saw God working in their lives and their church, when they saw new people coming to Jesus out of the efforts of a few equipped (and

sometimes gifted) persons, they became motivated to share their own faith. When they learned more about being part of the evangelistic chain instead of seeing evangelism as a solitary ministry, persons expressed a greater desire to be a part of that process. Persons believed they *should* share their faith but did not see clearly how they *could*. There appeared to be a greater desire than merely being hospitable as a people or welcoming as a church. This process was initially impeded by a lack of redundant ways of equipping persons in becoming what we called “contagious Christians.” An actual training class existed, an eight-week course called, *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, which was offered at least annually; but it was not enough to reach the broader segment of the congregation. By early 2004, however, strategic preaching of those concepts (contained in the course) did start redressing this deficiency. This also appeared to motivate persons to become more committed to redefining their existing relationships with non-Christians as *redemptive relationships*, with a goal greater than mere friendship.

(5) Stories and Their Usefulness

People were highly impacted by the stories of other persons, particularly other lay persons. Elders’ reports and the Pastoral Journal contained many references of persons who were motivated either in their faith walk, or to take on a new ministry, or to trust God with life situations, or to confess their own spiritual hunger by the stories of others told within the church. Persons reported that worship became more meaningful and engaging as stories added a highly personal and readily empathetic dimension to corporate worship. Stories became

a tool for developing transparency and authenticity in small groups. Stories became a first step for several persons enabling them to tell a pre-Christian “His” story (i.e., the gospel).

(6) Spiritual Warfare

As the church grew in effectiveness, it entered the front lines of spiritual warfare. It was not enough having intercessors praying “cover” for the church. Individuals faced spiritual warfare. This development led to our teaching people how to “pray on” the whole armor of God and to connect persons to groups that would partner with them in prayer. It also led the pastoral staff to speak and teach more openly about spiritual warfare with an emphasis on empowering people to resist Satan and those spiritual forces that undermine our walk with God.

(7) Safe Places

People highly valued the hospitality and friendship of the church. We learned that this value had to do with the sense that the Church of God of Landisville was a safe place. Many confessed a toxicity in their lives, sometimes embedded by a negative experience with a previous church community. Persons seemed to crave healthy and edifying relationships. Persons felt they needed “space” to recover even before they began to learn a more healthy way to live.

Small groups were often given credit for this. Interestingly, the vision and the modeling of the pastoral staff (initially the senior pastor) was given a great deal of credit for this atmosphere of safety. This quote, from Holy Spirit Journal, is an

observation by an elder who had served under both the previous Senior Pastor and the present one.

Thanks for the great chat tonight. I had some other thoughts on the way home and I wanted to share them as some additional encouragement to you. Your leadership has produced a new culture in our church. There has been a change from "passionate about progress" to "passionate about loving others". A "word picture" may help you see what I am "driving" at. Imagine driving home from the grocery store with a load of groceries in the back seat. As you are driving, you hear the sacks start to shift and you know that some of the sacks are spilling out onto the floor. You have two choices: stop and secure the groceries, or wait until you get home to sort out the mess.

You have taught us that it is better to stop and get the groceries in order, so that the bread doesn't inadvertently get squashed, or the eggs get unintentionally cracked, than to rush to our destination and then try to pick up the mess. In our hurry, we might find that our groceries are ruined, and the trip was for nothing. (I have never been able to figure out how to put a cracked egg back together, or to un-squash bread...)

I believe God stopped our car. You have helped us to see why. And, in the process, taught us to care more about the groceries than getting "there" quickly.

Have a great vacation! –joe (sic)

Strategies to be Implemented

A Warning About Programming Growth

Growth was not programmed at the Church of God of Landisville. In fact, some persons found themselves swimming against the flow when they became enamored with programmatic solutions. One battle that emerged was over music. One worship staffer became convinced that we could get more persons into our 10:45 worship gathering if we simply used a specific brand of Christian rock music. This position was rejected in part because many persons were already being drawn to that worship service in its existing style. It was also rejected because the emphasis seemed more on entertainment than authenticity, more on

getting a crowd more than life transformation and spiritual maturation. There was a sense that this program strategy was out of step with what the Spirit was already doing in the church. To a church that had begun to see itself as a supernatural organism, this particular strategy seemed to be based on alien assumptions more at home in a larger church organization with different goals.

Having said this, we still pursued strategies (programs) that we believed were consistent with our organic nature. These programs were about values not methods, obedience to the Spirit not commitment to a style.

(2) Teaching Biblical Community

We systematically taught about the nature and characteristics of a biblical community. The arrival of new persons into the church, the presence of so many younger persons (biologically), and the presence of so many persons new to the faith dictated such a strategy. We found this required a strong partnership of pulpit and classroom. The pulpit proved to be the primary place for implementing this strategy, but a strong connection was maintained with classroom teachers and small group leaders to assist them in communicating these characteristics. We found that people, when they were exposed to authentic biblical community, readily chose that form of community over the cultural counterfeits.

(3) Practicing Community Through Small Groups

We added several small groups during the period of this project. Our goal was to create places where organic biblical community could be experienced on a daily basis. Those and our existing groups were encouraged to make a significant

commitment to studying the Bible itself and not merely a study book, with an emphasis on the application of the Word. They were also encouraged to provide a regular period of intercessory prayer as a part of each gathering. They were challenged to accept primary responsibility for providing pastoral care to one another rather than looking to the pastoral staff to be those primary caregivers. At the same time, all of these groups were exposed to systematic teaching on biblical community (summer and fall 2003) from the pulpit. Repeatedly the data came back that these small groups were the place where people experienced the sense of practical, oneness with Christ. We observed a lack of disunity in the church as well as an increased level of caregiving to the members (and others beyond these groups). Both church leadership and the Reflection Team noted that through these small groups we were developing both a common understanding and growing shared value of biblical community in the Church of God of Landisville.

(4) Outreach Strategies

A traditional church now committed to outreach needed strategies to achieve this goal. The strategies that seemed to have the greatest response in terms of involvement and transformation were those that brought the outreach into the church and sent it back out again. One of our most successful outreach ministries has been a partnership with Milagro House, a home for single mothers in inner city Lancaster. Mother's Day 2002, the director, Rene Valentine was invited to speak at both services sharing her personal testimony and the vision for this ministry which supports single moms while they are trained in a marketable skill which will enable them to become self-supporting. This was immediately

followed by a diaper drive that invited all persons to bring disposable diapers on a Sunday to be placed on the altar of the church. This led to individual church members presenting themselves at Milagro House for service. (This experience is described in greater detail in Chapter Five under data from action plans and data from anecdotal journals.)

This kind of strategy also seemed to motivate greater involvement in ministries done in teams out in the community. Our people were particularly attracted to a feeding station operated in cooperation with the Lancaster County Council of Churches. This station regularly fed one hundred to one hundred fifty homeless persons at Christ Lutheran Church in the inner city of Lancaster. The meal was prepared in our church kitchen, was then delivered by a crew who would reheat it at the other church's kitchen and serve it to the clients of their feeding station, while also interacting with them. A regular sign up to donate food (and to prepare and/or deliver it) became a part of our church's routine. Each time new persons would provide the food and/or deliver their food into the city to serve it.

(5) Outreach Strategies Leading to Evangelistic Strategies

Persons were particularly attracted to strategies that focused on demonstrating the love of Christ by meeting some basic human need. It was out of this pool of participants, however, that we began finding these persons who would accept more interactive and evangelistic enterprises like working with the Agape Center. This outreach strategy gave the church a higher visibility in the community and

outsiders began to report the identification of our church with ministries that served the larger community.

(6) Elevating Corporate Worship

Corporate worship holds three potential values to a church engaged in an outreaching mission. (1) It is the one place where the largest portion of the congregation can systematically encounter the Risen Christ in a recognizable way. (2) It is the one place where the senior pastor, as vision-caster and teacher of the core values, can have the broadest impact on planting both the vision and the values into the hearts and minds of the congregation as a whole. (3) In a church of ministry teams, small groups, and individual callings; it is the one place that people are reminded that they are a part of a larger community, diverse in its gifts and passions, but united under the Lordship of Christ and committed to a common mission.¹

Our experience with multiple worship services created multiple congregations with different personalities, preferences, and passions. (Note: Small groups can have the same effect on a church with a single worship option). Those worship services were designed to give all persons a genuine encounter with our one Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, actively use the liturgy to build fellowship with other believers through their participation in worship; and expose them to the shared values and the shared mission of the larger congregation. We did not find multiple worship services to be a barrier to the involvement of any person from a specific congregation in any of the ministries of the church including ministry teams and small groups. Persons from the multiple congregations could be found,

for example, in our outreach teams like the Feeding Team and the Tsaile Navajo VBS Team. Persons from multiple congregations regularly participated in small groups like A Few Good Men and Kingdom Prayers.

What we discovered was that participants in all three services found themselves in a comfortable and personally meaningful atmosphere to offer their praises to God. They reported, in fact, that the provision of multiple styles in our corporate worship offerings made them sense that they were all a part of the larger congregation. Having not been excluded by the church offering only a style alien to their worship values, persons from all three congregations were able to claim the common mission that the church was seeking to follow.

Corporate worship gatherings were created that elevated the Triune God, exposed persons to the Word of God, affirmed the shared values of the church, and encouraged a greater sense of participation by respecting and utilizing a diversity of styles of worship. We also strived to see that all services were of equal quality and equally supported by the pastoral staff and church leadership. Having identified with God by making their offering of worship, people appeared highly motivated to go out and serve a common ministry of outreach and servanthood. We did not encounter the alienation of persons from one worship service towards those of another. We did hear increasingly the desire to find ways to get to “know” the persons who participated in the other worship gatherings. We did hear expressed a high level of satisfaction expressed with the worship experiences themselves as sources of power for Christian discipleship.

(7) Cultivating New, Indigenous Ministry

Periods of explosive growth and a philosophy that encouraged persons to create new mission-consistent ministries led to an overload on the resources God had brought to the church, and risked diluting even strong pre-existing ministries. There appeared to be fear over the possible competition between our two outreach centers for the use of the Multipurpose Ministry Center. New ministry teams raised their own funds at start-up, and then sometimes competed with the stewardship planning of established ministries. Existing ministries finding new needs occasionally freelanced in securing financial support and ministry tools, and ended up asking commissions to incorporate them into their budgets. Sometimes having secured the funds independently, they bypassed those in the church structure with overall responsibility and simply implemented those ministries. Seeds of competition were being sown that could lead to a spirit of disunity. In response, we adopted a policy for indigenous ministries (Appendix 20) that reaffirmed the process of accountability. To insure that both new and existing ministries were working towards the overall mission of the church, a simple measurement for ministry effectiveness was developed. In 2004 we began periodically subjecting our ministries, programs, and even structures, both new and existing, to this measurement. This particular strategy focused on prayer, mission, excellence, and sacrificial servanthood. (Because this finding is also a way of describing one of our conclusions, it is explained in detail below in the section on Conclusions).

The existence of this policy and its implementation seemed to restore the clarity and the balance in our over-all ministry. Almost no competitive or unilateral developments in ministry were being reported by the end of this project.

What Kind of Leadership?

An examination of the data in its various forms affirms several findings.

(1) People Saw the Holy Spirit Leading

People believed the Holy Spirit led the church. In our earliest survey over 92% of the congregation agreed and strongly agreed with this statement. This was despite the fact that our church, like many traditional churches, tends to identify the pastor as the center of the church. As the project continued, persons began focusing on the leadership carried out by various ministry teams and their leaders. The pastor-centeredness was diluted by this development. The image of the pastor as center was also detached more from its traditional moorings as the pastoral team was first expanded to include the elders literally and practically in pastoral care roles, and then by the addition of pastors. Individual persons began to release the idea that their value to the church was measured by an individual pastor's attention to their personal needs. This seemed to arise from the interchangeability of gifted leaders to carry out pastoral needs at various life crisis times in individual families. For example, persons found elders to be able prayer warriors for the sick. The family life and youth pastor was able to assume the growing counseling load with younger families and met with success in helping them.

With a multiplicity of human leaders, persons began to attribute the ultimate fruitfulness of the church with the Holy Spirit's working.

(2) Leadership was Committed to Spirit Leadership

The leadership was committed to letting the Holy Spirit lead. This was observed by the elders' insistence that decisions be bathed in prayer. It was also observed by the high visibility of the elders in prayer gatherings. It was recognized in the insistence of the church's leadership (pastors, elders, council members) to work from a mission that was commonly understood as inspired by the Holy Spirit, and to work to see that all major decisions were consensus decisions. Examples of the latter were the prayer, dialogue, and patience that went into a 98% "yes" vote to construct the Multipurpose Ministry Center and a more than 85 % "yes" vote to hire an associate pastor.

A major factor was the work of the 2002 Thinking Forward Meetings. The commitment to listening to the heart of the congregation and to resist implementing a program of ministry from the top down were reported as a major factor in convincing the congregation that the leaders were committed to letting the Holy Spirit lead. One more finding was the positive lesson that was given through the elders' persistent support of structural changes that would involve more persons in the significant decision-making and responsibilities of the church.

(3) Leadership Worked from a Mission Consistent With the Core Values

Having created an intentional plan to embed the core values, the elders regularly conducted evaluations as to whether those values were being exhibited and strengthened. They particularly endeavored to show through the scriptural compass of Matthew 9:35-38 how the vision and mission were consistent with God's Word. They spoke frequently about the shared core values and sought to express recommendations for program or policy change as ways to implement or promote those core values. For example, the creation of a Healing Prayers service in addition to the Kingdom Prayers service was an attempt to exhibit the core values of prayer and that all people matter to God. The addition of a core value emphasizing kingdom focus grew from a recognition that this was part of the mission in which the Holy Spirit was leading but there was no core value to support it.

(4) People Assumed Responsibility

The church began to see that every person had a part in helping the church be faithful and fruitful to God. More persons became involved in ministry and more persons identified the God-given mission of the church as their rationale for serving. In these changing times, we saw more creativity unleashed as people felt free to find ministry (e.g., the Grateful Gardeners). As more people became involved we witnessed more grace exhibited. When one person had to step down from the chair of a major commission because of impending burn-out, persons not only supported this decision by finding a replacement, but sought to minister to the aftereffects of the near burn-out in the life of the resigning chairperson.

(5) Leadership Embraced Change and Took Risks

The leadership increasingly embraced change and took the risks necessary to achieve more God-sized vision. The elders and pastoral staff were generally the initiators of structural change that allowed for more persons to participate in the leadership of the church. The elders and senior pastor could be found frequently lending their authority to the challenge to expand the staff (e.g., the hiring of an associate pastor) and to the encouragement of Worship and Fellowship to implement a Saturday night worship gathering.

(6) The Senior Pastor Modeled Spirit Leadership

The model of the senior pastor as seeking to be Spirit-led rather than operating from a personal agenda was reported by commission leaders and ministry team personnel. Contrast was reported of previous pastoral leaders who had sought to impose a vision from the top down, or who promoted a vision that was not yet owned by more than a small core of persons within the leadership core. The attitude of faith towards the future, the willingness to take risks that advanced the mission, the counsel to seek direction through prayer, the willingness to wait on the Lord's timing, and the insistence that the values and mission of the church be grounded in scripture were all seen as evidence that the senior pastor was modeling Spirit leadership.

Conclusions from the Findings

This is where we will attempt to specifically answer the four questions identified at the top of the chapter. They are the questions of teaching, skills,

TABLE 2:
BRIEF SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AS RELATED
TO FOUR BASIC RESEARCH CATEGORIES

1. Intentionality-Theological Teachings
 - a. The authority of the Word of God is critical in developing the commitment to a biblical mission.
 - b. A proper understanding of prayer is equally needed to inform and empower the church's decision-making.
 - c. The characteristics of biblical community must be taught and embraced by the church.
 - d. The ministry of reconciliation is essential to the focus on the Great Commission.
 - e. Kingdom focus is a nonnegotiable.

2. Competencies to be Developed
 - a. Teaching people to read, study, and apply the Bible to all dimensions of their lives should be the continuous work of the congregation.
 - b. People need to pray and to be taught to pray.
 - c. Help people discover and unleash their spiritual gifts.
 - d. People need to be taught to participate in the evangelistic chain.
 - e. Teach people to value and tell their stories.
 - f. Equip people for spiritual warfare.
 - g. Being a safe place is an art to be cultivated.

3. Strategies to be Implemented
 - a. A strategy of systematically teaching the nature and characteristics of biblical community.
 - b. A strategy of developing small groups where organic biblical community can be experienced on a daily basis.
 - c. Bring outreach into the church and send it out again.
 - d. Value in once and done outreach efforts.
 - e. A strategy of elevating corporate worship as an element of bringing unity, maturity, and fruitfulness to the church.
 - f. A strategy for cultivating new ministries to practices good stewardship of the gifts of the Spirit.
 - g. Strategies must focus on mission fruitfulness and target audiences not on methodologies.

4. What Kind of Leadership?
 - a. Leaders must be committed to letting the Holy Spirit lead.
 - b. Leadership must be committed to operating from its Spirit-given mission in a manner that reinforces the shared biblical values of the church.
 - c. Understand that the Holy Spirit speaks to the entire body, not just the leadership.

- d. Leadership and leadership structures must operate from a commitment to creativity and exhibit a spirit of grace.
 - e. Design a system that supports the organic nature of ministry.
 - f. The urge to control needs to be released and replaced with an accountability to mission.
 - g. Leadership must address problems prayerfully, promptly, and positively.
 - h. The Senior Pastor must take the point on vision and model faithfulness to the leadership of the Spirit.
 - i. Do You Need Three Pastors?
-

programs, and leadership. We believe here one will find the answer to the basic research question: “Assuming that the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit has generated a new heart, how can a traditional and inward-focused church activate this new spiritual DNA of outreach and evangelism? How do you fan into flame this new gift of the Holy Spirit of God?”

Intentionality: Theological Teachings

(1) The Authority of the Word is Critical

This cannot be emphasized strongly enough. The congregation’s ministry must be rooted in biblical values through a clear understanding of both the Great Confession and the Great Identification or it will not follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit. It is the intentional and common commitment of its members to being the Body of Christ, bearing witness to the Lordship of Christ, that keeps the focus on being a church that seeks God’s will rather than operating out of the preferences (or prejudices) of the membership. It is the focus on our larger identity as the Body that persistently presses a church to operate by faith and not merely by sight.

The vision must not, dare not, simply be in the minds of the leadership. It must be owned by the congregation. Teaching the truth of the Bible's authority and the fruit of its application must be done intentionally, continually (in all seasons), and redundantly (in the pulpit, in small groups, in ministry team meetings, in one-on-one mentoring). Our experience was that the very first place in which to teach this was in the preparation for membership class.² We told people that it was like pre-marriage counseling. You check to see that there is a common set of expectations and values before you stand before God and make the covenant to become one flesh. Likewise, a Sunday School ministry with a well-designed scope and sequence for its curriculum as its foundation was needed to help equip our children for a thorough knowledge of the whole counsel of God so that they, too, could learn to live under its authority.

(2) An Understanding of Prayer is Equally Needed to Inform and Empower the Church's Planning and Decision-making

When prayer was the source of decision-making, a commitment to consensus emerged that actually strengthened the unity of the Body. We found that inviting our prayer groups to pray for issues or decisions being discussed by staff or commission/ministry teams tends to multiply prayer's effectiveness and at times brings counsel from one of those prayer warriors that helps form an ultimate decision. It also reinforced the overall impression in the church that we were being led as a church by the Holy Spirit. It did, in fact, help us stay in submission to the Spirit. (We will comment more about this below in the section on "competencies").

(3) The Characteristics of a Biblical Community Must be Taught and Embraced by the Church

Recognize that the counter-cultural nature of the church in the 21st century is a necessity. Understand, however, that few persons truly comprehend what it means to be a biblical community apart from the support of the values, structures and institutions of the prevailing culture.³ We had to teach this concept of community systematically and redundantly. It also had to be modeled by its application in the way the congregation related to one another and the way people were treated within the congregation. This required practices that recognized and affirmed diversity but did not cater to nor promote the rugged individualism of the prevailing culture. Transparency as persons in Christ, biblical confrontation, mutual accountability, sacrificial servanthood, encouragement, working together, hospitality, preferring one another out of love, authentic worship were but a few of the characteristics of biblical community that had to be taught because they are not valued or taught by the prevailing culture or even our own church families.⁴ The church had to step up to the plate to teach the reasons for such a community by identifying its foundations in the Word and modeling first through its leaders how to put this into practice. Here Paul's challenge in Philippians 4:9 was a good reminder. "Whatever you learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."

(4) The Ministry of Reconciliation is Essential to the Focus on the Great Commission

Without this emphasis on reconciling people to God, a church can easily be reduced to a community service organization. It may in the short term contribute

to a better quality of physical and emotional life, but Christians understand that “If for in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men” (1 Cor. 15:19). We are still dead in our sin. Without the emphasis on reconciling people to God, the church will perhaps fulfill only the Great Commandment but not the Great Commission. Christianity is ultimately not about an organization or religious practices, it is about relationship, with the Living God.

We concluded that people would weary in well-doing if all they were involved in was doing good. Changed lives, lives that are able to join the church in its Great Commission, gave people a greater sense of significance in their labors. Changed lives also reproduced the community that is “about (its) Father’s business” (Luke 6:49, KJV). As well-intentioned and sacrificial as servanthood may be, if we fail to lay up the true treasures in heaven (Matt. 6:20) of persons reconciled to God, we will not contribute the ultimate work of the Church which is the work of the Cross. In a very practical sense, we also concluded that the next generation would have a diminished witness should the Lord delay His *parousia*, if we were not reproducing and multiplying the witnesses of the Good News.

(5) Kingdom Focus is a Non-Negotiable.

The larger culture has already figured out that we are a global community. Revelation 5:9-10 speaks of heaven as the ultimate global family. Competition within the Body dilutes and destroys the witness because it is an expression of disunity that is antithetical to life in the Spirit. Looking first to our own interests is a clear contradiction to Jesus’ words “But I am among you as the one who

serves” (Luke 22:7) and Paul’s echoing of those words in Philippians 2:4, “Each of you should look not only to his own interests, but to the interests of others.” When postmodern seekers get around to reading Jesus’ words for themselves, they will see that churches without a kingdom mentality are a counterfeit. They are not the genuine article. These seekers will look elsewhere for “the faith once delivered unto the saints.”

During the early stages of this project we saw a significant influx of persons from a congregation in a community of another denomination. We repeatedly prayed for the healing of the division in that church. We did not turn away persons from that congregation who felt they needed to join our ministry, but we counseled them to go slowly and to seek reconciliation with those who had offended them. The elders dispatched the senior pastor to discuss this development directly with the pastor of the other congregation. We moved more deliberately towards cooperation in community ministry efforts with this other congregation for we recognized that if that sister ministry was suffering, the ministry of the Kingdom of God in Landisville was suffering.

In a very practical sense we saw it as a poor use of resources, as well as a poor witness, to define the Church by the identity of Church of God of Landisville. Duplicating programs that God had gifted other churches would keep us from being faithful to our unique gifting as a congregation as we siphoned off time, energy, and persons in good things, but not the better things to which God had called our specific congregation.

We would note that a case can be made for the essential nature of all the core values we have identified at Church of God of Landisville to be affirmed in our theological understanding, but the following five emerged as the front-runners, the irreducible minimum in helping to shape and implement the shared vision of the church as an outreaching, evangelistic community.

Competencies to be Developed

We began to understand that people need to work from a biblical foundation to be both congruent with Christ and unified in what they do. Most of the conclusions regarding competencies centered on the strengthening of that foundation.

(1) Teaching People to Read, Study, and Apply the Bible to All Dimensions of Their Lives Should be the Continuous Work of the Congregation

This conclusion begins with the leadership of the church being biblically competent. Our elders, for example, held high visibility as participants in Bible studies and Sunday school classes. Looking at the data and understanding the spiritual youthfulness of the congregation,⁵ the elders asked the Senior Pastor to reinstate formal elder training to deepen their biblical competence, particularly for the purposes of providing spiritual direction (Minutes of the Elders, January 8, 2005). They also threw their support behind the implementation of a subsequent plan of reading through the Bible called “365 Days of Scripture” (Minutes of the Elders, November 1, 2004).⁶

(2) People Need to Pray

We reiterated that prayer is perhaps not so much taught, as caught. We affirmed the value of prayer by making it a winsome, consistent portion of all that the church does. The Church of God of Landisville repeatedly affirmed this through prayers in worship, the creation of prayer groups with specific missions, called prayer meetings for special situations, assembling with other faith groups for prayer, and emphasizing the incorporation of a time of intercessory prayer into the ministry of all our small groups and ministry team meetings. With the addition of a new facility, the identification of the need for a place for weekday prayers led to the assignment of a prayer room that sits right in the middle of the daily traffic flow. This gave visibility to the frequency of prayer gatherings in the midst of other church activities and reinforced the idea that prayer is not done merely in the sacred precincts of a sanctuary in the formality of a worship service. It also placed the prayer warriors where they could literally hear the sounds of the ministry as they offered up their intercessions on behalf of the ministry to the Lord.

(3) Help People Discover and Unleash Their Spiritual Gifts

This also bears repeating. People want to do the work of Jesus. They want to serve Him. To do this they must understand their call and their gifts, be affirmed in their passions, and be allowed to work out of that call through the use of their gifts in following their God-given passions.

Only as the project was concluding did there emerge a serious commitment to equipping. We recognized by our own handicap that equipping is essential. A

well thought out and redundant process of discovering persons' spiritual gifts, equipping them, and connecting with the ministries that use those gifts needed to be among our highest priorities. The data from our own experience bore witness to this. We offered a class on spiritual gifts discovery (we called this Class 301, *Discovering Our Spiritual Gifts*) but only a limited number of persons were willing to invest the time necessary. Unless that class was offered with great frequency, persons had a tendency to wait until the next convenient time instead of acting upon the conviction to get to work. An instrument of gifts discovery was useful (we used the Modified Houts); but again, unless there was a way to connect the dots between a spiritual gift and a specific ministry, the accompanying vagueness also discouraged persons from engaging in the task. Simply supplying commissions with a list of persons and their gifts was too passive for mobilizing persons for ministry. Commissions tended to draw from the existing pool instead of enhancing that pool. There was no natural way to tap a person whose gift did not fit one of the already prescribed boxes of a commission's existing ministries. For example, the ministry at Faith Friendship Villa for mentally handicapped adults initiated by one of our members was not the outgrowth of any plan once it was inaugurated but easily fit into the mission of the church.

We concluded that a spiritual gifts counselor(s) appeared to be a solution. This person would dialogue with the church leadership about the gifts required to meet ministry needs, future plans or dreams. This would be highly visible and this person would be available to the church for everything from simple questions to a

formal process of discovering one's gift(s) and connecting with a ministry. This is not a good pastoral role because the busyness of pastors (especially if they are a solo pastor) and the constant shift towards pressing issues leaves little time for the intentional, thoughtful dialogue and matching of persons with their gifts. It does not allow the timely follow-up of persons who have been connected with mentors (Appendix 19: Thoughts on a Spiritual Gifts Counselor).

(4) People Need to be Taught to Participate in the Evangelistic Chain

The findings identified on pages 9-10 describe our conclusion as well. We came to understand that when individual members can see that they have a contribution to make to reaching the lost through the exercise of their gifts and operating in their sphere of relational influence, the primacy of making more and better disciples becomes a natural and highly fruitful dimension of their lives. Collectively it insured as a congregation our faithfulness to that primary task. It was during the time of this particular teaching on *Becoming a Contagious Christian* and the immediate months that followed, that we witnessed the new birth of eighteen and the baptism of 21 persons under the influence of the members of the Church of God of Landisville (Church of God of Landisville Vital Statistics, 2004).

(5) Teach People the Value of Their Stories

This requires teaching them how to tell their stories, and giving them as often as possible an opportunity to do so. We found that stories are important. As we noted in the findings section of this chapter, stories in worship better assisted

persons in participating in the liturgy (the work of the people) and added a highly personal and often readily empathetic dimension to worship. Stories also became a tool for developing transparency and authenticity in small groups. Stories become the first step in enabling a person to tell a pre-Christian “His” story (i.e., the gospel).

Here is a word to the pastor. Jesus spoke in parables (stories). The didactic, propositional expository preaching that many were taught and practice belongs more to the modern age than the postmodern one. Stories make God more approachable and personal. Stories that reveal God’s heart and character through the experiences recounted by the storyteller feed the spiritual hunger of those seeking a personal relationship with God. We found that our highest impact and most remembered sermons almost always were communicated by stories that gave an incarnational dimension to the precepts and principles of the Word. Preaching with stories often requires longer sermons, but we found that most worshipers stopped being clock-watchers when the sermons had a story-telling nature.

(6) Dealing with Spiritual Warfare is New Territory to an Inward-Focused Church but for which an Outward-Focused Church Must be Equipped

As noted in the findings section, as our church grew in effectiveness and impact, it entered the front lines of spiritual warfare. Spiritual warfare involved both an increase in personal relational struggles and greater difficulty dealing with the every day challenges of life, and thus an increase in those challenges in the lives of individual church members and church leaders. It also involved a

great awareness that Satan had a stake in slowing the church's momentum, dividing its members, and taking its eyes off the mission.

To address this we found that we needed to teach people to pray for more than the health and happiness of family members. We need to pray more for the ministry of the church and its leadership, and for the empowerment and the wisdom in carrying out those ministries. We needed to pray more for kingdom issues, and to directly pray for the spiritual armor needed individually and collectively to engage in this spiritual warfare. We found that we had to hone our conflict management and resolution skills, to confront problems early and biblically. We needed to reaffirm speaking the truth in love.

(7) Being a safe place is an art to be cultivated

Our church is blessed with the gift of hospitality. We are also blessed with persons who have been through the traumas of life and find their help in Jesus Christ. However, even those persons had to learn how to have healthy and edifying relationships, and how to remove the toxicity from their relationships. We came to realize that competencies needed to be developed. These included: learning how to practice the "one another" passages of scripture, learning biblical conflict resolution, learning nonjudgmental listening, learning to speak the truth in love (biblical confrontation), learning about how traumas affect person's lives and how they can assist in healing those traumas, and learning to practice forgiveness and grace.

Small groups needed to be taught how to incorporate the above competencies in their group life. a particularly important added dimension was for small

groups to learn and practice the tools of keeping confidences, practical encouragement, and constructive accountability. Where this occurred, those small groups became living “cells” of the church.

We also had to introduce some of leaders into the realm of ministering to victims of trauma. This became a major competency for pastoral care in the atmosphere of spiritual warfare that was described in the previous sub-section. Faithful churches that are committed to being safe places for people in need attract high numbers of persons traumatized by both their sins and the circumstances of a fallen world. Ministry to such persons required not only persons gifted in the areas of discernment, encouragement, service, and mercy, but also required persons who understand the value of prayer and community in bringing health to those coming into the circle of their care. We also had to learn how to engage in this ministry in a low-profile manner so as to avoid the sensationalism and emotionalism that undermine the confidentiality, trust-building, and time required of true emotional and spiritual healing in trauma victims.⁷

Strategies to be Implemented

The church really is an organism. One cannot simply program its growth. One must work to help it understand its identity and to promote its health. In this sense, the dynamic nature of all strategies must be acknowledged. Affirmation of this can be seen in two comments from our Reflection Team as it looked at both the survey data and the experience of the congregation during the period studied affirmed this. “Don’t put God in a box. Don’t be too agenda oriented or

personally focused,” and “Don’t declare victory. Always be learning” (Notes from D.Min. Reflection Team, November 11, 2005). With this overall counsel in mind, we must identify some strategies that need to be an intentional and ongoing part of the church’s ministry.

(1) A Strategy of Systematic Teaching about the Nature and Characteristics of a Biblical Community

The description for this is found in our earlier section on theological foundations. Here we would note the continuous birthing cycle of a church. Even a church that is not evangelizing brings new persons into its body. New persons are like new cells added to the Body. If new cells are not taught these fundamental principles, they will be alien cells ultimately altering the character of the congregation. Likewise, persons are exposed to the teaching at different points and “plug out” of the teaching for various life-event or spiritual journey reasons. Lessons can be missed. Systematic repetition of this fundamental understanding, along with opportunities to practice it, is more likely to insure that a church will become and remain the biblical community to which they are called. The pulpit was the primary place for implanting this strategy, but the church also had to be creative in exploring other means to reinforce this strategy.

(2) A Strategy of Developing Small Groups Where Organic Biblical Community is Experienced

Over and over, the data told us that small groups are a key component to the sense of belonging and the valuing of the church. These are the places where the most significant engagement with the biblical concepts of community are

accomplished. Much of the anecdotal data about spiritual transformation comes from stories about small groups and core participants in those groups.

We noted back in the introduction to the Actions Plans from Elders/Pastors in Chapter Four the limitations to this strategy. A piece of data we did not report fits better in the conclusions section of this chapter. Small groups, be they ministry teams, study groups, or support and accountability groups are organisms. If the church leadership approaches them from a strictly organizational viewpoint (i.e., a uniform plan using a common methodology), they will probably encounter a reality that is not easily managed. We found that groups operate best out of an approach that helps them develop a Christlike personality in response to the God-given passions of the group members, rather than manipulating them to behave like all the other groups. Small groups are absolutely essential to the health and fruitfulness of a church. As we have noted, anecdotally and survey-wise, they are perhaps the most important element in an individual church member's sense of spiritual well-being and commitment to being part of the ministry. But small groups resist over-structuring. They have their own double helixes or clusters of the spiritual DNA that make them unique and diverse.

We found that the only common element to be concerned with was a way of mentoring the group (and this primarily through its leaders) to share the overall vision and core values of the church. Intentionality towards mentoring for the mission and values of the congregation was all the Holy Spirit needed to make these groups a faithful and fruitful part of the larger body.

(3) Bring Outreach Into the Church and Send It Out Again

This is a particularly useful strategy in legitimizing the need for persons to “cross the bridge” into the community; and as we have noted in other places, generates interest for doing ministry within the larger community instead of confining it within the walls of a church. This involves introducing an outreach ministry by an event or activity within the church that easily enables persons to participate (e.g., the Milagro House diaper drive) and then provides avenues to allow people to follow that outreach ministry back to its base of operations.

(4) Value Once and Done Outreach Efforts

One of the things we learned from the overall process of action planning is that there is a place and a value for outreach efforts that are once and done in nature. Given the busyness of peoples’ lives, and particularly the fluidity of schedules for adults with families, persons are initially reluctant to commit to an activity that requires a major investment of time or implies a long term commitment. Opportunities like our painting projects, deliveries of gifts to visitors, purchasing Christmas gifts for needy families, or assisting with the setting up or tearing down for the Christian FLOW Center were excellent entry points for persons exploring their outreach values. It led to a deeper involvement for many persons after one or two of these singular outreach experiences.

(5) A Strategy for Elevating Corporate Worship

Corporate worship is an indispensable element of bringing unity, maturity, and fruitfulness to the church. People go forth from our three services celebrating a

God that is greater than any individual. They go from our three services with another connection to a fellow believer in Christ, as they go out to live and work in the larger community. They go from our three worship services to serve on Feeding Teams, in youth centers, on missionary endeavors, and into Bible studies, small groups, and prayer groups that are open and accessible to all three congregations because of the shared values and shared vision proclaimed as part of our corporate worship experiences.

Proponents of what is called Emerging Worship have noted that the elevation of corporate worship is foundational to mission effectiveness. Dan Kimball writes in *Emerging Worship: Creating Worship Gatherings for New Generations* that churches often think of the worship gathering as the definition of the church. As such, the worship gathering becomes the starting point, the foundation for all of the church's other efforts. Elevating corporate worship builds first on the foundation of the mission which Jesus Christ has given us as the church. The worship service is not the mission nor does it define the mission. The mission of the church is to make disciples and the worship service is shaped by that mission. Ultimately, worship services build unity as persons encounter the Living God and are exposed to His call to discipleship. It is in corporate worship that they collectively encounter those values. Gathering in worship is not what defines the church. The mission defines the church (2004, 32-34).

A word here about liturgy. Liturgy means *the work of the people in worship*. Sadly, it has come to be identified with stultifying form and dead ritual. All churches and all worship styles have a liturgy whether it is formalized in written

format or a memorized creed or a distinctive ritual. Corporate worship, especially if it is to take advantage of the three keys (acknowledgment of God's greatness, connection to the Body, motivation for mission) noted above, needs to have Spirit-led worship leadership that designs a liturgy to teach people the meaning of and how to worship. Without the intentionality of a design rooted and grounded in the biblical values of worship, worship becomes all about taste, style, and emotional impact. People focus on "was I fed?" or "was I motivated?" instead of "did I see Jesus?" They do not discover the fullness of the Triune God at work in the community. Biblical worship values are not the equivalent of traditional worship tools. They are not even limited to the language of the Bible translation used in your church. In fact, they must not be permitted to become equated with those things. Biblical worship values require embedding acts of worship (in many styles and in evolving form) that enable the worshiper to offer praises and thanksgiving to God, to confess their sins and find the forgiveness of God, to pray for guidance and intercession, to encounter the Word of God (and its eternal truth), to use their gifts in service to God, to retell the history of God at work in and through His people, to commit their lives to let God work in and through them, and to encourage one another through the *koinonia* one can find in worship. Outreaching churches start by teaching their people to first, and continually, reach up to God.

(7) A Strategy for Cultivating New Ministries that Practices Good Stewardship of the Gifts Given by the Spirit

This is where we draw your attention to the evaluative questions we developed in response to the emergence of those indigenous ministries that were not programmed or anticipated by ministry commissions. These questions point us to the basic elements needed in such a strategy.

1. Does it (the new ministry) grow from prayer? Prayer forms the foundation of our ministry by keeping us in touch with God's will and seeking His empowerment, protection, and guidance for the work He has given us to do.

2. Is it "on mission?" God has given us a clear mission to which we have attempted to be faithful. That we have been faithful is evidenced in part by the fruit of the mission. We must resist the temptation to step off mission or to invest ourselves in things that do not directly and effectively contribute to accomplishing the mission God has given us. Doing immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine does not mean doing everything that can be done. It means being obedient to step out boldly and with faith, and taking the risks God calls us to and not being side-tracked with lesser things.

3. Is it contributing to excellence? This is the Lord's work we do. We must be sure that we invest the resources of peoples' time and spiritual gifts, the financial resources, the prayer focus and leadership priorities to do the things God has given us to do, and do them well! We have added lots of ministries, which must be continually evaluated and strengthened. We need to take care not to add things that siphon off the strength of our strengths and primary calling from the Lord. It

is given to any church not to do everything, but to “major” in those portions of the work of the Kingdom that God has gifted it to do well.

4. Does it require us to give intentionally and sacrificially? This is both a financial and a discipleship issue. We do not want to step back from our God-given ministries because of a casual attitude about a ministry or its support. We have reached the point in our church’s life when a casual attitude towards our discipleship, and a casual attitude towards the spiritual discipline of giving will undermine our fruitfulness, weaken our obedience, and prompt human, not God’s attitudes, about conducting the Lord’s business.

(7) Find New Wineskins but Incorporate the Old Wine into Them

This addresses your philosophy of program development. Although programming in obedience to an emerging mission requires a strategic releasing of some older, but no longer effective programs (old wineskins), attention must be given to the persons who were both served by and served through those ministries. Do not discard the old wine. Help persons from previous ministries find a valued place, if possible, in the emerging ministry. When done with grace and creativity, this often results in a rebirth of commitment and a renewed vision by these persons.

Keep the weight of program development on new wineskins, but do not simply replace the old with the new. Change simply for change’s sake is a reckless strategy that unnecessarily alienates persons and sometimes pushes them out of the Body. Some old wineskins can be renewed. The ability to renew the old wineskins often buys support and legitimacy for the new. Perhaps the most

significant way that we accomplished this was by retaining and revitalizing our Traditional Worship Service. Although attendance at this service was about 35% of our total on a given Sunday and a decided preference existed in those age 55 and under for our Contemporary Service, we sought a new music director whose gifts enhanced particularly the quality of traditional music and who revived a choir whose emphasis was true choral music. We were clearly aided by the Holy Spirit who provided from the church's membership at least a dozen gifted vocalists who provide a choir whose quality is well beyond that of churches of our size. The pastoral staff also worked to build a creative liturgy that encouraged persons to authentically participate in worship. We resisted the urge to blend styles that often frustrates more contemporary minded persons and angers more traditional worshipers. The result was that the Church of God of Landisville did not experience the worship wars that so often plague other congregations. The addition of an even more contemporary service on Saturday night was greeted with prayerful encouragement. During this same period of time the average of our worshipping congregation was 35 years old. This commitment to multiple styles of worship contributed to the older portions of the congregation still feeling highly valued despite the "youth movement" in the church. This growing vision, of both personal ministry by our older members and a belief that planting seeds for the future were a positive task, led strong financial support to the construction of our Multipurpose Ministry Center, the creation of our incredibly successful Christian FLOW Center for senior citizens and other tools aimed at bringing the gospel to the next generation.

(8) Strategies Must Focus on Fruitfulness and Audiences

The focus must be on the mission and the audience, not the methodology. Outreach events that place persons' attention on the community and move persons across the bridge into the community reinforce the most important audience. Even as we conclude this project, we continue to evaluate the initial strategy by which we implemented a Saturday night service. Initially planned as an outreach worship, we had never clarified the target. Basically, the methodology of Christian rock music (i.e., style) was the defining factor, not mission or target. We are already sensing that our methodology is aimed at aging baby boomers rather than emerging generations. Some fundamental changes will have to occur in our methodology if we are to carry out the mission of sharing the love of Christ with persons with a more postmodern identity.

What Kind of Leadership?

Some of our most important conclusions are identified here. If this is the only section of this project with which we honestly grapple, it will be well worth the labors of the entire study.

(1) Leaders Must Be Committed to Letting the Holy Spirit Lead

This cannot be overstated. It is essential to have human leadership who believe, teach, and model that the Holy Spirit is the true leader of the church. Our earliest survey found that over 92% believed the church to be led by the Holy Spirit. As we noted earlier, a focus group asked to expand on this answer, responded, "Because we are told almost every week in the pulpit that the Holy

Spirit is the leader, and that is modeled every week by the pastor.” Traditional churches tend to be very pastor-centered. *The model or influence of the pastor (or in our case, the Senior Pastor) is inseparable from the church’s ability to act upon this value.* This will be limited, however, if the core church leadership does not affirm and support the senior pastor by personally owning this value. This observation leads to our next recommendation.

(2) Leaders Must Reinforce the Shared Core Values of the Church

The core values were adopted through the regular governing process of the church and not simply preached from the pulpit. Before this project the core values were communicated through presentations at congregational gatherings allowing dialogue and understanding by the general membership. The kingdom focus core value was reinforced by the Property Commission in its establishment of a policy whereby 75% of the use of the Multipurpose Ministry Center was reserved for outreach and community purposes. The core value of prayer was reinforced when the elders assumed visible leadership of the church’s main prayer services. We found that the church overall responded positively and supportively to decisions and programs that were intentionally rooted, communicated, and promoted by identification with the shared core values of the church.

(3) Understand the Holy Spirit Speaks to the Whole Body, Not Just the Leaders

The entire congregation must be encouraged to be maturing in the faith and listening to the Spirit. So much of what we did in terms of identifying initial

mission priorities, developing staff and structure, and committing to core values was a product of those 2002 Thinking Forward Meetings and the leadership meetings that followed. The original question, “What do you see God doing in your life and the life of this church that we need to be obedient to and building upon?” was addressed. The challenge to our *people* to seek the mind of God helped us *identify* the common vision God had given the congregation and helped us *legitimize* the necessary action steps initiated by the leadership. This shared vision was so powerful that the political consensus required to put it into action was almost automatic at each key decision-point in the life of the congregation. This is an “Oh! Wow!” experience that we intentionally convey to new persons when we rehearse the past history of the church. It is so unlike the “top-down” leadership style that persons experience in other churches (including our own at one time), and is so distinct from the politicizing approach to congregational decision making, that it takes some getting used to. It is also so freeing and affirming that persons generally embrace it enthusiastically.

(4) Leadership and Leadership Structures Must Operate from a Commitment to Creativity and Exhibit a Spirit of Grace

Pastoral leadership takes the “point” in casting vision. Lay leadership works to unleash as many persons as possible for ministry by allowing them to operate out of their gifts, and follow their passions for ministry; and keep them accountable to staying “on mission.”

This attitude in our leadership, expressed by cultivating a “can do” atmosphere, was achieved by encouraging practical acts of kindness, blessing

those indigenous efforts that grew from persons' listening to the Holy Spirit's promptings as well as commission-generated ministries. Many of these ministries impacted persons outside the church (e.g., painting the house of a struggling single mom). An interesting by-product was that because this was highly effective in motivating persons to take a personal risk of faith in being "doers of the Word" and contributed to the image that we were cultivating a church that cares about its surrounding community.

(5) Design a System That Supports the Organic Nature of Ministry

Designing a system that supports the ministry, rather than confining the ministry to fit the system, is another leadership issue. Early on we discovered that our three-commission structure was inadequate to allow both focus on the particularly outreaching dimensions of our ministry, and to respond promptly to the opportunities God was creating for us. This led to the early action plan to create a Commission on Outreach and Evangelism separated from a Commission on Worship and Outreach. Ironically, we grew larger administratively to grow more effective. However, at the same time we "flattened" the organization by allowing those charged with carrying out the ministry to have the authority to make those major decisions and to take control of an adequate portion of the budget to carry out that ministry.

(6) The Urge to Control Needs to be Released and Replaced with an Accountability to Mission

The urge to control by structure needed to be released and replaced with an accountability to mission. It required the trusting of various ministry commissions

to attend to their part of the mission without the micromanagement of the Council or the time consuming process of getting permission from that Council. It also required shifting to gifts-based leadership for those ministry commissions, and rather than investing all of its energies in doing a ministry, insuring that each commission had leadership that understood the importance of managing a ministry first. Where the electoral system of the church sometimes left us with an imbalance in the gifts and a dearth of leadership-minded persons on some commissions, this led to allowing our commissions to choose gift-based constituents and to recruit chairpersons with competent management skills.

The unity of the Holy Spirit was strengthened by a structure that made the elders the strategic planners of the church and by placing them according to *their* gifts and passions on ministry commissions. The elders (and pastors) then carried the responsibility to intentionally do their work out of prayer and seeking the mind of the Spirit, by both sharing that vision and repeatedly asking the larger accountability questions within each commission.

(7) Leadership Must Address Problems Prayerfully, Promptly, and Positively

This is particularly the case when there are “people problems.” Paul reminds us in Philippians 4:2-3 that personal problems undermine the unity and mission of the church. We found this to be especially true when they involve strategic persons in ministry. These problems consume incredible amounts of energy, divide the body, and get the church “off mission” for extended periods of time. Our prime example was in the area of youth ministry. Our failure to address those issues promptly pushed us so far into the cycle of conflict that initially positive

solutions could not be achieved. The result was that long after the “players” had been changed, the fall-out delayed our ability to begin implementing a vision for youth ministry that originally was our primary focus and motivation as a congregation.

(8) The Senior Pastor Must Take the Point

We have noted above that a traditional church is often a pastor-centered church. Persons tend to identify the church and its mission with the pastor. Positionally, this means he or she is the primary communicator and initial legitimizer (particularly theologically) of the vision and values God desires the congregation to possess. This does not mean, and must not mean, that the senior pastor dominates or runs the show. Nor does it mean that he or she has to be in the central loop of every item of the church’s ministry. It does mean, however, that the Senior Pastor must lead by taking the point in helping the congregation go where the Spirit is leading. He or she must be among the early adopters of the vision and the values. He or she must be the primary model for what that means in ministry. Contemporary literature speaks of this role as vision-caster.⁸

In our own context, the senior pastor had to model the leadership of the Holy Spirit by being a person diligent in prayer and faithful to the Word. He had to take the lead in helping the congregation exegete the culture. He had to encourage the leadership and the general membership to involve themselves individually in seeking God’s will for the church. The Senior Pastor sought to be a model listener, particularly in the stages when the vision was being clarified through the initial Thinking Forward Meetings.

Team ministry (including team pastoral ministry) was a direction in which the Holy Spirit was leading the Church of God of Landisville. The Senior Pastor led this process by holding the church accountable to seek leadership committed to the common vision and encouraging persons to work from their areas of giftedness and passion. Over and over he asked the questions, “What do *you* believe *God* wants us to do?” Even when the Senior Pastor was the initiator of an idea or a direction, careful attention was given first to building a consensus among the leadership core and as much as possible in the general membership, before significant resources were committed to that idea or direction.⁹

This leadership was exemplified in the addition of two more pastors to the church staff. The Senior Pastor encouraged the employment of spiritually mature and gifted persons and assisted with their training in the ministry style of the church. Prior to the arrival of each of these associate pastors, the senior pastor had carried areas of ministry that were now in their portfolio. As early as possible, he withdrew from those areas to allow each associate to develop those ministries in a way more consistent with their personal ministry style. He also encouraged both the associate pastors and the church to see them as the persons primarily responsible for their areas of ministry, visibly avoiding micromanagement of their work. We affectionately called this “The John the Baptist” principle (“I must decrease so he can increase”).

In a traditional church, the pulpit is often the primary source of legitimizing the authority of a staff pastor in the mind of the congregation. The Senior Pastor intentionally began sharing that pulpit (although it remained his primary

responsibility) so that the congregation could learn the character, maturity, and vision of these staff pastors.

Regarding team pastoral ministry, the findings from the data led to some important additional conclusions:

1. A mature team committed to a common vision and working in the area of their strengths does much to build confidence in the overall ministry and momentum of the church.
2. When the associate pastors are self-disciplined self-starters possessing a strong work ethic, the oversight of their ministry is not a time-consuming task of the senior pastor. It significantly extends the pastoral and equipping ministry of the church.
3. The same permission-giving, grace-filled management that brings out faithfulness and fruitfulness in volunteers does so in staff pastors, as well.
4. By the associate pastors' own accounts, the commitment to patient modeling, the resistance to micro-management, and the willingness to share the pulpit by the Senior Pastor helped legitimize both their value and true partnership with the elders and the Senior Pastor in following the Holy Spirit's ultimate leadership of the church.

(9) Evaluate your ministries frequently

Learn from your mistakes, change what does not work. The key here is not so much an instrument as candor. A disciplined adherence to the mission and a commitment to always asking the question, "Can this ministry be more fruitful?" are perhaps the bottom line of this conclusion. An excellent case in point was the

discovery that we had forced a chairperson into a leadership role for which he was neither suited nor willing. We replaced this chairperson by some creative and careful pastoral attention. Out of that we also redesigned our structure to allow for the selection of chairpersons based on leadership gifts as well as ministry expertise that stepped outside the traditional election system.

(10) Do You Need Three Pastors?

Given the experience of this particular congregation, a logical question is, “Do you need three pastors?” The answer is “no”. If the church size, resources, and vision permit this, then it is an excellent direction. It ensures that more than one person is taking the point in key areas of ministry fulltime, and giving proper attention to vision-casting and equipping. In reality, however, if a church has core lay leaders who can give significant amounts of time to the roles that are assigned to our pastoral staff, it does not require three *pastoral offices*. It does not have to have three *credentialed professionals*. Those lay leaders must, however, be committed to investing the time in being trained and in taking the point in their significant areas of ministry. They must be committed to being true equippers.

In a traditional church (and probably a nontraditional one), a pastor is equated with pastoral care. The strength of three *pastors* is that they understand *pastoral care*, particularly of the leaders and workers in their areas of respective ministry, to be of primary responsibility. It was not one to be delegated away, although it could and should be shared. This means that attention must consistently be given to the health of the organism as well as the results of the ministry. It means that

the unity of the team is strengthened because attention is given to relationships as a source of authority and accountability.

It should be noted, however, that the two associate pastors in our situation were promoted from within instead of hired from without. The associate pastor had been a son of the congregation and that relationship helped legitimize his additional hiring. The pastor for family life and youth was an elder of the congregation before assuming his pastoral position. Both pastors were a product of the church's vision and shared its core values before being given their pastoral offices. Although neither was initially a career pastor but second career persons whose formal training was in public education and were trained "pastorally" on the job following a call, in each case were in the church initially as a lay leader before becoming a pastoral leader.

A Word About the Conclusions

We started out with four questions intended to address our overall research problem. They were the questions of teachings, skills, programs, and leadership. We believe that those answers provided in the above section collectively answer the basic research question: "Assuming that the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit has generated a new heart, how can a traditional and inward-focused church activate this new spiritual DNA of outreach and evangelism? How do you fan into flame this new gift of the Holy Spirit of God?" Before moving on to the final sub-section of this chapter regarding recommendations, we should include the conclusions that came from our study groups that specifically engaged the material in Chapter Two (Biblical and Theological Foundations) during the

project. They add a very helpful overall set of general conclusions to the problem-specific conclusions described above.

General Conclusions from Building Bridges of Truth and Grace

Participants in these study groups (described in Chapter Four) particularly wrestled with the theological issues found in Chapter Two. Notes and feedback from those discussions add these particular conclusions that should be reported.

(1) *Postmodern is where we are headed.* Like Brian McClaren (2001, x-xi), the participants felt it may be too early to call this a new age. It is, however, a time of transition. One of the biggest challenges facing the church is to see this not as simply a period of culture war, but as a time when the church must, for its continuity and its faithfulness in mission, embrace the idea of being a countercultural community where persons “outside the faith” are presented with a genuine alternative to shallow community of both the modern and postmodern worlds.

(2) *A healthy and effective church must have biblical core values.* We confessed that at times, we ourselves, were too co-opted by the culture. Too much baggage had been added to the church because it was not always rooted in reflecting biblical values. Because those biblical values are rooted in Christ, if we will allow ourselves to be conformed to the image of Christ, we will be a healthy church and will bring health (and salvation).

(3) *The church must design ministry that connects with new generations shaped by this postmodern matrix.* This particularly requires churches to break out of the “baby boomer mentality.” Boomers, with their fascination with bigger,

with their tendency towards measuring inspiration by how entertaining and well-performed something is, with their comfort at being catered to by the culture, with their view of boredom as one of the church's greatest sins, do not always connect with the hunger for something deeply spiritual that is identified with the ancient, genuine article called faith that is the motivation for many postmodern seekers. Boomers are still captivated by success. The generations that follow do not expect to be so successful, but seek significance. The 80's and 90's mentality can be as much a dead-end as the 50's mentality of the Boomers' parents.

(4) New wine and old wine co-exist when both are valued and provided for.

The emerging church is new wine. It is a mistake to believe that the old wine is no longer important. The new wine has much to gain from the maturity of the old wine. Historic expressions of faith, a sense of the eternal, a belief in the miraculous that truly change lives are part of what has made the old wine, good wine. Even though the old wineskins (such as the ways of doing church, the language, the traditions rooted in culture rather than the Word) cannot hold the new wine, the new wineskins can hold the old wine. This will allow an enriching mixture if the old wine can find ways to express itself in the new wineskins. Are all old hymns bad? No, but the tempo may need to be changed. Are ancient creeds passé? No, but they will need to be communicated through multi-media? Is the Word of God no longer relevant? No, but it may have to be translated it into a new language. The church will have to learn to speak that language itself, if it does not do so already. The gospel now is not just read or heard, it is seen and heard and *experienced*.

(5) *The Holy Spirit moves the church to an attitude where all people matter to God.* Cliquishness and exclusion are the enemies of mission. Persons long to belong and want to know they are valued. New people are attracted to the church and thrive when the existing people treat them with love and respect.

(6) *The Holy Spirit consistently leads the church to a kingdom-focus and calls it to seize kingdom-opportunities.* Churches need to get over themselves. They need to stop competing. Churches need to stop celebrating being small and unchanging, and to value the risks that come with faith. Churches need to call people to something bigger than themselves and bigger than their church. We are the people of a great God, not a great church or a great people.

(7) *The church really is an organism.* Growth is not planned or programmed. A church grows by being faithful to its calling to be the Body of Christ and that Body bears fruit. Do not try to organize us and consume our time with meetings. Let us spend time connecting with the Lord in prayer, and following the promptings of the Spirit to do a practical ministry of love. Do not be afraid to change because change is a sign of life.

TABLE 3:
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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1. Brief introductory paragraph about missionaries
 2. Prayerfully develop a mission that is.....based on biblical core values.
 3. Help people to build their lives on the Word.
 4. Teach those core values continually and creatively.
 5. Dare to be an authentic counter-cultural community.
 6. Find a senior pastor who is committed to the leadership of the Holy Spirit and the concept of team ministries.
 7. Encourage members to be missionaries.
 8. Find new wineskins, but incorporate old wine into them.
 9. Develop an eldership.
 10. Do not be afraid to go where God is leading.
 11. Continue to create small groups as the essential cells where the spiritual DNA is passed along.
 12. Build an outreach and evangelistic ministry that is kingdom-focused.
 13. Find out what God is doing in the community and strategically invest yourself.
 14. Use worship as the foundation for ministry...it's the starting point.
 15. Staff for equipping and leadership development.
 16. Develop mentors for new believers.
 17. Nourish the gift of hospitality and the art of the safe place.
-

Recommendations

Reggie McNeal speaks of a New Reformation, in which God's people are released from the church as an institution. He challenges us to stop asking the question, "How do we turn members into ministers?" and concern ourselves instead with the question, "How do we turn members into missionaries?" (McNeal 2003, 43-48). He has identified what may be at the heart of any recommendations for a church that seeks to be genuinely led by the Holy Spirit into an outward focus, and committed to reconciling lost people to God.

These recommendations assume that the church understands that it is called to be a counter-cultural community confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and will measure

its fruitfulness in helping to develop maturing, fruitful, reproducing servants of Christ. These recommendations assume that the kingdom-focus of a church that confesses Jesus Christ as Lord in the postmodern matrix will be a mission organism. The recommendations that we offer are many of the action plans the Church of God of Landisville has embraced as it moves beyond the experience documented by this project to the future the Holy Spirit has specifically.

(1) Prayerfully Develop a Mission that is True to Biblical Core Values

As we began writing this section, our elders were coming to the end of a new round of Thinking Forward Meetings.¹⁰ Those meetings, which involved more than half of our adults and almost forty percent of our current families, celebrated three years of incredible fruitfulness in ministry. They also revealed an even stronger sense of unity than the data gathered during the life of the research project. As this leadership thought about focusing on the next season of our ministry, we once again found ourselves in a season of prayer and exploration of the Word.

A vision developed out of prayer is really the difference between being continuing Body of Christ, the living embodiment of the Risen Lord, a supernatural organism—or simply one more human institution, dedicated to doing good and working in its own strength. It is also the strongest assurance of the unity of that Body. For it means you are not asking persons to commit themselves to what the *majority* are *willing* to do, but holding the church to the faith-demanding, life-transforming, world-changing standard of what it is the *Lord* wants us to do. Note, we are not talking about prayer after the fact the

baptize *our* vision, but prayer that precedes and pervades the planning process to identify *God's* vision.

(2) Help People to Build Their Lives on the Word

Faithfulness and fruitfulness are born out of the crucible of prayer. The Holy Spirit leads the church in possessing values that are consistent with the values of Christ himself. Those values are revealed in God's Word, the Bible. People today are spiritually hungry but often biblically illiterate. As such, the church will always be in danger of mission drift without an intentional seeking of God's will and a concrete connection to His revealed Word. This is a "Da Vinci Code" world where people follow fascinating and iconoclastic trends. Without the proper tools of discernment and accountability to live in faithfulness to God's Word, people will find a cultural counterfeit instead of an authentic relationship with Jesus Christ. Proverbs 19:21 reminds us of an often forgotten reality: "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." This is why Paul instructs us with what might be the manifesto of this recommendation.

Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.
(Rom. 12:1-2).

(3) Teach People Those Core Values Continually and Creatively

At this point in the life of our congregation, almost every person can articulate the church's vision statement and mission. He or she can name many of the shared core values. These have become a part of their language and their

experience. By intentional and redundant teaching of those core values through the pulpit, the classroom, small groups, pastoral conversations, and publications. It also has been done creatively through ministry experiences that are clearly connected to those core values. Recently we conducted another diaper drive for Milagro House and the sermon on that ingathering day spoke again of “serving the community as the Spirit leads.” With the implementation of a new Power Point® system in the sanctuary, we are looking for ways to use graphic arts weekly to remind people of at least one core value. A new web site is in the works that will relate stories of the application of our core values.

We are to remember that we live in a world that has been shaped largely by television, with its constant exposure to new ideas (not necessarily wholesome or biblical ideas) and short attention spans. Continual teaching must always take into account the new situations in which these values must be lived. Creative teaching respects that learning is a process and that we are multisensory learners. The commitment to do both enables the church to remain faithful and fruitful over the long haul.

(4) Dare to be an Authentic Counter-Cultural Community

Modern or postmodern, people want the real thing. They hunger for an authentic relationship with God. We must not forget that ours is no longer a churched culture. McNeal comments, “This church culture has become confused with biblical Christianity, both inside the church and out.” He also notes that “A growing number of people are leaving the institutional church for a new reason.

They are not leaving because they have lost their faith. They are leaving the church to preserve their faith” (2003, 1,4)

Recognize that this is a good thing. The church has long needed a refiner’s fire to burn off the dross of its civil religion, its institutionalism, its empty ritual. Far too many churches are satisfied with religious activity instead of the supernatural empowerment of the Living God. They no longer allow God to lead. Too many churches no longer seek a faith that is true to the values of God’s Word. Those values lead to sacrifice and servanthood, instead of control and comfort.

People need God and they need community. They do not need the form of a community, and certainly not the counterfeit of a biblical community. They need the true God and they need transformational community. Lesslie Newbigin, the great mission commentator of the Twentieth Century, asserted that the greatest apologetic for the gospel is, and always has been, the community that actually lives by the gospel. The mission of the church has power only to accomplish its purposes for the world and for individuals as they “are rooted in and lead back to a believing community. Jesus...did not write a book but formed a community” (McClaren 2001, 184-185).

(3) Find a Senior Pastor Who is Committed to the Leadership of the Holy Spirit and Team Leadership

Bill Belichick is the head coach of the Super Bowl Champion New England Patriots. During his tenure the Patriots have won three Super Bowls. Even though he is head coach, Belichick does not call a play on the offense or the defense. Two assistant coaches, Charlie Weis, the Defensive Coordinator and Romeo

Crennel, the Offensive Coordinator, plan, coach, and call the plays for those two major units of this winning team. The Patriots, like many professional sports teams, have super stars, but they are noted for the interchangeability of those players as part of a winning *team*. *Team* is the fundamental core value that Belichick has identified, taught, and reinforced with every person who desires to be a part of the New England Patriots. As head coach, he has served as vision-caster. He has helped find players who share that vision, and he has identified and unleashed the gifted leaders who have helped the Patriots achieve the success to which all sports teams aspire. He has accomplished this consistently, without rancor, and with integrity.

The senior pastor must believe that he or she is the head coach, and he or she must believe in the incredible power of a team. He must see that a team is most effective where each part works according to its gifts, and is allowed to do its part. He must see that being the head coach does not mean he is the center of everything or that he needs to call all the plays.

Bill Belichick is not the *owner* of the Patriots. He is ultimately accountable and takes his orders from that person. He knows he must build and operate the team within the goals and expectations of the team owner.

The analogy breaks down a bit because the *owner of the Church*, the Triune God, is not detached. He does not sit in His “sky box” and sign checks. He has a specific game plan for the Church and specific values that He expects the Church to embody. He designed the “team” in such a way that at certain points in the game specific “players” take leadership as they carry out their role. He actively

“coaches” through the Holy Spirit. The senior pastor is not free to run the team as he or she chooses to so long as he brings the owner success. He or she needs to follow the direct leading of the Lord of the Church. The ultimate goal of the Church is to bring glory to God, therefore, a church that is going to be faithful and fruitful to God needs to have a senior pastor, the head coach, who is committed to letting God, the owner, lead the team. The senior pastor must use his position to teach the team the owner’s plan and to function at their maximum effectiveness as they carry out that plan.

(5) Encourage the Priesthood of All Believers

People want to serve. They want to serve within the realm of their gifts and passion and they want their service to make a difference. They see their service as a way of making friends for Jesus in the larger community. To empower this, the church must help persons understand that they have a calling from God, that they were created for a purpose. They must be assisted in discovering their gifts and being equipped to use those gifts. They must be taught and understand their part in the great evangelistic chain of reconciling people to God. They must be given meaningful opportunities for ministry and then unleashed to do those ministries. We have already noted the idea of spiritual gifts, mentors and leadership development, but it goes far beyond that.

In traditional churches the pastors are most often in the middle of everything; from worship to evangelism, from the classroom to the meeting room. Unleashing the priesthood of believers requires that lay persons be equipped and unleashed to do ministry in areas previously reserved for, or dominated by, the

clergy. We have learned not only to encourage lay persons to be worship leaders but are now teaching them to design worship. We have trained persons to share their faith and celebrate their fruitfulness in public settings. We are also training lay persons to function as the primary mentors of new believers. Pastors often start new groups in our setting, but we are encouraging lay persons to assume leadership as soon as possible. With the multiplication of worship gatherings, we are now mentoring gifted persons to serve as the preachers at some of those gatherings. Pastors plan ahead with commission chairpersons or ministry team leaders, but then are often elsewhere during the meeting or present only briefly. Ministries happen because lay leaders have assumed responsibility. If we find persons allowing a pastor to lead their meetings or groups instead of taking responsibility, the pastor takes to a less visible position. As much pastoral visitation is now done by the elders and other lay persons as the pastoral staff, people are seeing that they are still receiving quality pastoral care.

(6) Encourage Members to Be Missionaries

People want to give themselves to something greater than themselves. They seek lives of significance. They want to make a difference. Ultimately, when they are inspired by the Spirit of God, they will not be content to just be spectators. That certainly needs some encouragement on the part of the church. Over and over we had the experience that when we created an entry point for ministry which people could identify with, they would climb out of the pew and get into the action. Sometimes they surprised us. Our Agape Center for youth is one great example. We discovered that adults really wanted to do something practical to

assist the youth of the community. They were not comfortable about leading as they did not feel competent to give answers to the questions kids inevitably ask. We started by giving them opportunities to chaperone after-school programs, to play basketball with the kids, or to just listen. But once they were “in the game.” opportunities opened and they developed confidence to increase their responsibilities. Two of our former chaperones now lead the middle school youth group as a part of a team.

The other side of this is that too often the church has identified its ministry with what happens within the walls. The goal is to get people into church and turn them into people just like us. In this postmodern matrix, the church has had to first learn to go where the people are. This is generally *outside* the church. This goal has had to broaden beyond teaching Sunday School to the people who already came through the door and to comfort those who came to be a part of their small group. Our people had to grasp that theirs was a missionary endeavor. They would be going out to help people make a connection with God before they ever darkened the door of a church building (or if they ever came into the church facility). They needed to see that their primary job was out in the world, to *present* the person of Christ by being persons with the character of Christ. They needed to build those relationships that would be the first steps to a bridge leading to a relationship with Jesus Christ. They needed to see that many persons would not find Christ unless they themselves were prepared to accept the apostolic role of going to new places where non-Christians lived or plowing new

ground that spoke to the concerns of non-Christians. They needed to see that the Great Commission begins with the word “Go!”

(7) Find New Wineskins, But Incorporate Old Wine Into Them

As churches adapt to minister to changing times they are often guilty of unnecessarily leaving behind those persons whose identity and usefulness was closely tied to ministries that are losing effectiveness and relevance. This is often done by simply changing core ministries, such as worship, without any attempt to meet the needs of the persons who were stakeholders in the ministry’s original form. In the process enemies are made of the changes and useful persons are driven to the sidelines.

One basic principle is to work through the integrity of relationships to identify emerging vision. We found that in creating new small groups, we benefited by making them intergenerational groups. These groups were then encouraged to discover together a common vision for that small group. In these settings, older members (the old wine with their gifts, passions, and experiences) were encouraged to mentor the new (who sought new wineskins).

Another basic principle is to challenge the older part of the church to develop a new vision in which to pour their gifts. During our 2002 Thinking Forward Meetings there was much discussion of youth ministry and outreach to the young people of the community. Through these discussions, the presence of older persons in the community who also provided a mission constituency was noted. The church’s leadership quickly saw the value of tying its outreach vision to ministries that would service both constituencies and encourage the older

members of the church not to retire from their missionary endeavor, but to take the lead in creating it. (It should be noted here that the Holy Spirit helped prompt this by generating enthusiasm among some of our older members to be the core of a cross-cultural mission team to Haiti in 2002 as these vision discussions were occurring. The enthusiasm and value demonstrated by these missionaries communicated loudly and clearly that a new ministry did not require sidelining the “old wine”).

(8) The Development of an Eldership

By an eldership we mean a team of spiritually mature and gifted persons who share with the pastoral staff the responsibilities of spiritual oversight and care for the congregation. Our model for elders is for them to serve as lay pastors and to provide pastoral care to the congregation interchangeable with the professional pastoral staff. They work to design and implement the pastoral care ministry of the church, especially when we are breaking new ground with emerging needs. A second major role is for the elders to provide a prayer ministry and model it for the congregation. This involves visibility of the elders, who participate in public prayers of consecration of new members and new parents, and from their involvement in the monthly service called Healing Prayers, where persons are invited to come and meet with them for anointing and prayer for emotional, relational, physical, and spiritual healing. A third major role is the responsibility of being the church’s strategic planning team. They meet with the pastoral staff at least monthly to assess continuously the mission of the church and to give guidance in strengthening our faithfulness and fruitfulness as a congregation.

Those same elders are also distributed among our five ministry commissions to insure that our commissions are staying with the “big picture” of the congregation’s mission and working together as non-competing parts of the total ministry team of the church.

(9) Do Not Be Afraid to Go Where God is Leading

Cultivate leadership that does not fear change and that embraces the risks involved in claiming the enlarging territory of the Holy Spirit.¹¹ Do not be afraid do go where God is leading. The data analysis reported in Chapter Five gives ample reason for making this recommendation. We need not rehearse this again except to note that a church’s vision of what God is able to do in and through it multiplies quantitatively and qualitatively when the leadership is prepared to use its relational authority and challenge the Body to go where the momentum of the Spirit is leading. This leadership perspective, however, must grow out of the presence of God’s perfect love in the life of that leadership, and faith in God’s promises owned and expressed by the leaders personally. It cannot be a tool to manipulate, but must grow from a heart that has surrendered its fears to the perfect love of God.

(11) Continue to Create Small Groups as the Essential Cells Where the Spiritual DNA is Passed Along

As God has grown our church we have been constantly reminded that without small groups we quickly become impersonal, losing the intimacy and accountability needed to be a true biblical community. Multiple worship services, creative programs introducing people to one another, church directories, and well-

structured membership classes are tools that draw people towards one another and introduce a common vision for the community. Without small groups, we would not have the closeness and the attentiveness to help assimilate people into the core of the church.

Small groups means just that—small. Groups that grow beyond twelve to fifteen allow persons to hide or be overlooked. There is a persistent myth that people need to know *everyone* in order to have a healthy, unified church. Knowing a person's name is not the same as knowing a person's heart. People do not need to know everyone in the church, but they need to know and be known by someone who cares. Intimate relationships with persons maturing in Christ are what people need from the church. These relationships require consistent and intentional time together to achieve that goal. There is no substitute for small groups in a growing church.

Creating small groups is also an issue. After a time existing small groups, even those who practiced the goal of actively enlisting new persons, lose motivation and become closed to new persons. This generally occurs when the size of the group reaches 12-15 persons who are committed to being in a deeper relationship over a long period. Plus, after a group has a history (generally no less than a year), new persons believe they cannot fit in because they have not shared in that history. New persons seem more comfortable with joining new groups because they experience the relationships as they mature. During the period of our research we had some groups grow to as many as 20, but they generally leveled off at the smaller size.

We might note that having an existing group “mother” a new group by sharing a small core of participants and a leader is effective in passing along the spiritual DNA. Relational spaces are opened up in the existing group, new relational spaces are created by the new group, and yet both have the benefit of the church’s existing spiritual DNA. During our research one of our women’s groups, interestingly known as the BAD Girls (Bold and Daring Girls), discovered that as they had grown they had attracted two different need constituencies. One was a group of particularly younger women who primarily needed spiritual support. The other was a group of women who needed a deeper exploration of God’s Word to further their discipleship. This ultimately led to the creation of three smaller groups: one that worked with spiritual support, one that used a study methodology to welcome new women into the mix, and one that used a study methodology to deepen the discipleship of women who were assuming greater leadership within the church.

(12) Build an Outreach and Evangelistic Ministry That is Kingdom-Focused

God honors a kingdom-focus in ministry. When we created our two chief outreach ministries, the Christian FLOW Center for seniors and the Agape Center for youth, we intentionally kept the name Church of God of Landisville off those ministries. We invited persons from other churches to share in those ministries. We encouraged people impacted by those ministries to connect with God’s church somewhere even if they did not become a part of our particular congregation. We opened the Agape Center, for example, to Thirty Hour Famine

sponsored by a church in a neighboring community that had a sizeable part of its youth population in our school district.

In our evangelistic efforts, we tried continued this attitude of kingdom focus. Two of our earliest converts in the year 2004 were encouraged to connect with churches they had already developed an affinity with that we knew would be faithful in discipling them.

Because of this kingdom focus, there is no question that the ministry has been fruitful and has raised the value of the congregation in the surrounding community. We have also learned that when God provides the vision, He pays the bills. The Christian FLOW Center and Agape Center have received support well beyond our church's budget. The church's own finances, while greatly stretched by the first year of two additional pastors and significant outreach efforts, have continued to remain healthy as our own people have given faithfully to the vision. This kingdom vision and its results have impacted the congregation's willingness to dream big, step out in faith, and trust in God's provision.

(13) Find Out What God is Doing in the Community and Strategically Invest Yourself as a Church

Our people were already invested in Christian ministries throughout the community. This was primarily by their checkbooks and prayers. That level of support was an expression of the value of those ministries to our people. God had given many of our people a holy discontent with the competitiveness of ministries in general. Our leaders recognized that we could not create "in house" all of the ministries that reflected the God-given heart for outreach in our diverse

congregation. Nor did we believe we should create all those ministries. Instead, we limited our creation of outreach ministries to simply a youth center and a senior center that already possessed supporters who would own the ministry. We then we accepted that we could be of greater benefit to the kingdom if we encouraged the bulk of the congregation who were not invested in those two ministries to become a part of those already existing Christian ministries in the community that reflected our values and identity as a congregation.

Living in an upscale suburban setting, we had few truly poor and homeless people in our immediate location. Yet many of our people had a heart for the poor and a desire to be a part of a practical ministry. The Feeding Teams of Lancaster County Council of Churches already had the structure and relationships in place. We simply needed to join in. The outcome was that checkbooks and prayers were followed by persons actually stepping onto the mission field, and influencing others to leave their comfort zones and cross over into that mission field.

(14) Use Worship as the Foundation for Ministry—Its Starting Point

It has been said that worship is for an audience of One. This keeps the emphasis on worshipping the living God instead of seeing the worship experience as something intended primarily to meet our needs. Worship is giving an offering to the Lord, not simply receiving something from Him. The goal of the church is always to move people from receivers to givers, from being served to serving.

Also, too many churches see worship as the high point of their ministry, not as the starting point. Be mindful of investing so much of your resources (money, time, and personnel) in creating worship services so that little is left for ministry

beyond that hour and outside the church. At the same time, be careful of fostering the idea that if people have been to the worship *service* that they have fulfilled their responsibility to *serve*. Make sure the worship gatherings focus on confessing Jesus Christ as Lord, and inviting God to transform us into vessels of ministry who will continue to offer their worship to the Lord by engaging in His missionary activity to the world.

(15) Staff for Equipping and Leadership Development

Be they professional pastors or lay ministry staff, keep the emphasis on these persons as equippers. Their job is to model ministry so they are able to multiply those who share in that ministry. Staff members who cannot teach, cannot delegate, or cannot release simply create congregations that are dependent on their services. Leaders have to develop leaders. As this project was coming to a conclusion we noted an increased number of persons involved in ministry, but many of whom were involved as followers and foot soldiers. They were dependent upon a small core willing and equipped as leaders to see that the ministry happened. We began to see the first signs of burn-out in some of these leaders. We had pastoral staff members who were working 60 to 70-hour weeks. Ministry that does not staff for equipping, and particularly for leadership development, is always in danger of being a mile wide and an inch deep. When the ministry has too small a leadership foundation, growing ministries will collapse taking with them the hopes and the potential that God intended.

(16) Develop Mentors for New Believers

A church that is true to its mission to reconcile people to Christ will birth new believers. These new believers require mentors, persons capable and committed to investing their lives in nurturing this new believer into a fully maturing and fruit-bearing disciple of Jesus Christ. The diversity of age, life situation, and life experience of the new Christians we were discipling made a new member class impractical. The classroom setting reflected and promoted a more institutional understanding, rather than an organic or relational understanding of Christianity that matched our spiritual DNA. We found that partnering new believers with a more mature Christian, committed to discipling, helped them better discover what it meant to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. Regardless of the ministry setting, some process of mentoring new believers is essential.

(17) Nourish the Gift of Hospitality and the Art of the Safe Place

We have discussed this at length earlier in the chapter. We simply note it again because people need help connecting with Christ and His Church. Pray for the church to have this gift in strength among your members. So many persons have been traumatized by the sins of the world and the church has too often been identified with the abuse of persons in these past decades that a church must have an intentional strategy for being and presenting itself before the world as a *safe place*.

We strongly recommend the church accomplish this by learning how to be a biblical community that operates by biblical values. God's goal is for His children to have *shalom* (peace), a sense of wholeness and well-being that comes from

their relationship with Him. Living by His values is the only way to accomplish this. We also recommend that key persons be taught how to engage in ministries that encourage healing and trauma resolution through prayer and partnership. There will always be people sent by the Spirit into a congregation's midst who need more than community, who need intentional care. A safe place will be one that is equipped to do both.

Some Concluding Thoughts

As this project concluded, we asked the members of our Reflection Team, who had shared in this research journey with the Senior Pastor, to identify some "for the good of the church" observations. These were items that might step beyond the answers to the four questions above, but would contribute to the whole idea of "fanning into flame the gift of a new spiritual DNA." They are not listed in any priority order.

(1) *At all times the church needs to develop compassion and empathy.* It is a hard world out there. The people the church is trying to reach are often battered and exhausted by the lives they live. They already sense their imperfections. They want to know that the church cares about their lives. Part of this will be reflected not only in how we treat those the church is trying to reach, but how we treat those already part of the church.

(2) *Ask your people to ask God.* This is a particular admonition to leadership. Ask your people what God is saying to them. Some of the best ideas will be missed if leadership thinks it possesses all the knowledge it needs. Likewise, if

you act as if the mature, godly input of your people is unnecessary or of secondary value, you will fight an uphill battle in commitment.

(3) *Use the input from No. 2 and show the evidence.* Asking for the shared vision of your people is viewed as an exercise in manipulation or old-fashioned politics if you ignore that input. While the leadership process can be lengthy and complex, it is important to communicate clearly to the congregation the evidence that they have contributed to the shared mission. Such an approach also generates more persons taking seriously the daily calling to pray for the ministry of the church, and look for ways to be a part of the answer.

(4) *Don't declare victory, but always be learning.* A healthy Christian is a teachable one. Likewise, a healthy church is a teachable one. The momentum is lost when a church begins to focus on past accomplishments. Obedience is undermined when we begin to think a milestone in ministry is our destination.

(5) *Some results take longer than others. Don't weep over failures. Learn.* This is almost a self-evident extension of No. 4. It emphasizes the importance of a leadership spirit that is patient, positive, and constructive.

(6) *Costs more money.* Kingdom work cannot be done "on the cheap." An expanding mission, in particular, has hidden costs that cannot be anticipated. To see budgets as limits instead of statements of vision is to encourage the church to play it safe, or cut back, instead of being faithful to complete the work given in Christ.

(7) *Don't put God in a box. Don't be too agenda oriented or too personally focused.* Following God requires letting Him define the mission. Since Christ is

in the business of expanding the kingdom of God, we need a kingdom focus which will always stretch us and call us from our comfort zones.

(8) *With people these things are impossible, but with God all things are possible.* It is a fundamental teaching of the Word that when you believe in God for the seemingly impossible, you stop operating in your own wisdom and your own strength. A healthy church acknowledges its weaknesses, but it does not use its weakness to excuse not following where God is leading.

(9) *Limitations tend to be put on by us, not God.* This is a continuation of No. 8. If Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:20 is to be our prayer, then we need to keep the focus on God not ourselves. Perhaps this is a way of evaluating a ministry plan. If it doesn't require God in order to accomplish, then maybe it is not from God.

(10) *Do not underestimate the power of first impressions – may have one chance.* This is a reminder to the church to attend to matters of excellence. Sometimes the church is so forgiving of its own limitations or deficiencies that it communicates that the work of the Lord is not as important as we would assume. In addition, persons coming across the bridge "into" the church who are looking for meaning and significance are turned off by mediocrity.

(11) *Reflections teams are needed.* Groups of people dedicated to understanding the church, its mission field, and our commission from the Lord strengthen the church. They provide a tremendous resource of dependable data to those who must communicate the mission and those who must implement it. In our own situation, the presence of the Reflection Team and its involvement in the ministry development process of the church, is what allowed this D.Min. Project

to be more than a detached academic exercise or a project that simply benefited the competency of the senior pastor. It allowed the church itself to be the learning organism recommended above in item 4.

(12) *Change is inevitable. New programs cause change. Measure programs by their impact.* We have discussed this above in the leadership section. We might add the admonishment that programs must positively impact the “mission fruitfulness” of the church.

(13) *Let people work in their gifts and passions.* This is what makes servanthood a joy, and ultimately this is what makes a church its most fruitful. This is what makes members the ministers (or missionaries) instead of spectators.

What is the Jesus in You Going to Do?

This research project has not been a detached academic exercise or a highly personalized one to strengthen the competencies of the researcher. It has been a labor of love by a pastor and the congregation he serves. It has been a labor of love to strengthen our own congregation’s faithfulness and fruitfulness. It has been a labor of love for the larger church.

Recognizing that local churches are dynamic organisms with unique personalities and specific missions from the Lord, we do not suggest you simply run out and begin doing all the things listed in Chapter Six. We think they are great ideas, “God” ideas, or we would not have bothered to recommend them. But we think the starting point for any person using this data is to set their compass towards the true north, Who is Jesus Christ, and ask a question grounded in Paul’s words to the Church of God at Colossae. “To them (the saints) God has

chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

The question? Simply this. What is the Jesus in *you* going to do? If what we have learned helps you understand that answer, or find an appropriate strategy to live in obedience to that answer, then we will celebrate in advance what He is going to accomplish in and through you.

What is the Jesus in you going to do?

-
1. Some would argue that multiple worship or multiple styles dilute this key, however, any corporate gathering that involves individuals drawn from the multiple cells of the church to unite in their confession that Jesus Christ is Lord helps unite the total community that is the Body of Christ.
 2. This was called Class 101, *Discovering Church Membership*, and was the pre-requisite to formal church membership for new converts and persons transferring in from established Christian congregations (including those of our own denomination).
 3. This whole issue of the impact of the Church Culture at the end of the modern Age is explored in greater detail in Chapter Two
 4. For our setting, a highly useful popular tool was the book, *Everybody's Normal Until You Get to Know Them* by John Ortberg.
 5. The average age of the worshiping congregation at Landisville was 35 both in 2003 and 2004. There was a downward trend in this age, for at the beginning of 2005 it was 33.
 6. It should be noted that as this project is being put into its final, formal draft, the “365 Days of Scripture” has already proven a highly attractive and easily accessible tool for the general church person to strengthen their competency in biblical awareness and understanding.
 7. A useful tool for our congregation was *Living from the Heart God Gave You: The Essentials of Christian Living* by James Friesen and others.
 8. A particularly interesting tool we discovered after the conclusion of the project was Ron Mortoia's *Morph!: The Texture of Leadership for Tomorrow's Church*. Consult the appendix, “The First Strand of Leadership DNA” for material that would expand on this conclusion.
 9. An excellent description of this process is actually found in two leadership books from the realm of business. One is *Leadership Without Easy Answers* by Ronald Heifetz and the other is *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Leap ... and Others Don't* by Jim Collins. See the Works Consulted section for bibliographical information.
 10. Thinking Forward Meetings were again conducted in the winter and early spring of 2005. 102 adults from sixty-seven families participated in these meetings.
 11. “Enlarging our territory” is a concept taught in Bruce Wilkinson's *The Prayer of Jabez*. It involves asking God to expand our circle of influence and impact so that we can bring greater glory and honor to Him.

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APPENDIX 1
PASTORAL JOURNAL ENTRY
JULY 31, 2002

After four months of informal research and at least seven documented meetings with my elders, I have a strong sense of useful and significant project for my Doctor of Ministry program. The problem, specifically stated, is this: What specific strategies must a church and its leadership engage in to satisfactorily embed this new DNA? The DNA to which I am referring is that of an outreaching church with an evangelistic mission.

Formed in large part by our prayerful examining of our Thinking Forward research and informed by literature we had engaged (chiefly a cluster of scriptures and Robert Lewis' *The Church of Irresistible Influence*), this was the initial expression of our problem following the tremendous consensus that this should be our new mission as we are "thinking" (and moving) forward. At Joe Jordan's prompting we had eschewed traditional mission/goal statements for a scriptural map. This seemed right to us and consistent with the design of our Thinking Forward research. There we had followed Henry Blackaby's counsel from *Experiencing God* about discerning and doing the will of God. Figure out what it is God is doing, and then go and do it with Him. We had identified an emerging outreach passion expression in the compassion of community outreach (e.g., feeding teams at Crispus Attucks), vision for missions' significance (our first team to Haiti and plans for a team next year among the Navajos). Added to this was a strong sense of our unrealized potential for working with the schools, and the frequently expressed desire that we create both a youth center and a senior center for the community of Landisville. In fact, since September 2001 negotiations have been underway for the purchase of Grace Bible Church next door to house these latter activities and to project our campus closer to the Hempfield Schools' major campus.

The scriptural map that emerged was Matthew 9:35-38 with its emphasis on going and from the presence then in the community, proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom and carrying out acts of compassion. Borrowing from Lewis' work, we felt what was needed was a strategy of proving the truth with our lives (as they were lived out within the community) in order to proclaim the truth. We talked of building bridges to the community where we did the good works and over which people could pass into the church to experience a deeper encounter with God.

Nine core values were identified consistent with such an outreaching DNA. We felt, however, that we currently lack a consistent and intentional strategy for teaching these values in the existing church and moving the church out into the community to bear witness to these values.

A season of prayer was declared in the meeting of May 11, and is still continuing. During this season we seek further discernment of the strategy we must enact to embed that new DNA and grow as a church in mission by its building blocks. (Written by Pastor Stephen Dunn)

APPENDIX 2
PASTORAL JOURNAL ENTRY
APRIL 21, 2003

Yesterday was Easter. Another of those days we call “Oh Wow!” experiences. A day or experience when the programming has been done by the Holy Spirit. It was not the numbers in church, it was the powerful sense of worship and the magnetic sense of community. We spoke of necessity of the resurrection as the historical reality upon which Christianity rises and falls. I spoke of the sense that for people today (and even in Paul’s day), the resurrection was too good to be true. Nonetheless, it is true and we need to live in the truth of its new creation.

There has been such a spirit of renewal evident in the congregation that such challenges draw people into prayer, bring them to the altar, mobilize them in ministry. There is also the sense that the Holy Spirit is bringing the community to the church even as we try to figure out how to build those bridges out to the community. Over 200 people in our 10:45 service, twenty per cent at least were first time visitors, and many that we did not know nor have a clue why they chose to be in worship with us. Nonetheless, they witnessed a people deeply in love with Jesus and saw a totally unprompted (by me) movement of a couple to the altar who is living on the edge literally by faith and persons flowing from different parts of the sanctuary to pray with them. I do not have a clue the reason for the prayers or their content.

All of this has given me the motivation and clarity to finally arrive at a way of moving the project forward. A statement of the problem and purpose is necessary both to meet the Seminary’s requirements but also to help my Ministry Context Group tackle the research in earnest.

Having read extensively in Snyder and Runyon’s *Decoding the Church*, and looking carefully at the concerns raised by Drs. Lightner and Draper, I believe that I have arrived at a brief and communicable description of the problem: How can a traditional and inward focused congregation activate this newly granted spiritual (ecclesial) DNA of outreach and evangelism? How do we fan into flame this new gift of the Holy Spirit of God?

The purpose of the study grows from the problem. We need to identify the specific understandings and strategies that provide an effective means of activating or implementing this new outreach focused, evangelism DNA in a congregation that senses the Holy Spirit is recreating (or calling) them in this direction. (Written by Pastor Stephen Dunn)

APPENDIX 3
THINKING FORWARD 2003
INITIAL REPORT FROM THE ELDERS
MAY 16, 2002

THINKING FORWARD
INITIAL REPORT FROM ELDERS
MAY 16, 2002

The Elders have prayerfully examined the reports from the Thinking Forward Meetings conducted January through April 2002. This dialogue is certainly not ended, but we seek to focus in a way that will produce productive results. We have examined our mission statement in light of what we have heard and sense that it is near our target, "building great people for God," but needs a distinctly more outreach or outward orientation in its expression.

Three passages of scripture inform our thinking in powerful ways. Hebrews 10:24, Matthew 5:12-15, and Matthew 9:35-36. We are captured by both the image of the Church as a bridge over the people of God can pass into the culture, to live (and therefore, prove, the truth of the gospel) and then guide people back across that bridge to the "safe place" where they can find Christ. We are compelled by this outreach perspective, and are particularly moved by the words in Matthew 9:35-36:

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers for his harvest field."

Do you sense the movement, the every day movement out where the people are? Do you see the compassion that was at the heart of Jesus' ministry? Do you sense the great need of people who have yet to find a shepherd? Do you recognize that this is God's work (not ours) and as Lord He is positioning people into the field?

We are referring to Matthew 9 as our "scriptural map" for identifying the path for moving forward with God. Ultimately our formal mission statement will incorporate this map in its expression and teaching.

Core values are those characteristics which drive the mission, giving it shape and power. They define the deeply held convictions of the people and their passion for ministry. We have carefully examined what we believe to be the core values of this particular congregation of people, and these are the values: (1) The authority of the Word of God, (2) God's view of human life in which all people matter, (3) Evangelism that calls people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, (4) Worship that brings people into God's presence, (5) Spiritual growth that is intentional and disciplined, (6) All believers using their spiritual gifts to demonstrate God's love, (7) Unity that is true to the Word of God.

Although these probably need some elaboration, we believe they represent an accurate listing of our core values. It is these values that we intend to use as a measuring stick as we develop a direction in mission.

We went from there to identify the key critical issues which at this time seem to be the areas God is calling us to focus upon. Note that our initial discussion brought several powerful observations. (1) Small group ministries are critical to the church. (2) The Sunday School has been neglected in our current approach. (3) People need to learn more about the Word so that they can take on the character of Christ and proclaim the Word. (4) We need to be creating maturing Christians who live the truth in the world. (5) Youth ministry and the need to have a staff member guiding this ministry are critical to our continuing and future effectiveness as a church. (6) We must develop capable leadership. (7) We believe God has called us to minister both to the schools and to the senior citizens of this greater Landisville community. (8) There needs to be a structure that supports the mission effectively by mobilizing people along the chain of maturity to service and ultimately to community-impacting mission. (9) A level of mature stewardship that supports the plan God is giving us.

From these observations, we compiled these six key critical issues. Again, permit a list for now. (1) Small groups with an outward mission built into their DNA. (2) Multigenerational ministries. Mobilizing the whole church to provide ministry to all generations by all generations. (3) Prayer. Raising this to a whole new “kingdom-oriented” dimension. (4) Revisiting the Sunday morning structure to see if it supports the mission we are trying to accomplish. (5) Outreach. Designing a vehicle to get our people out of the church and into the community. (6) Children. Laying biblical and ministry foundations that will assure the children of this church and the greater Landisville area will have faith.

We believe that the next step is a season of prayer. This does not mean our program comes to a standstill, but we need to under-gird this with an even more powerful foundation of prayer. In the mean time, we will be asking members, commissions, staff to be working on program strategies that address those six critical issues. We will be asking for strategies that are consistent with the core values and which live within the scriptural map of our mission statement.

There is more to come. In fact, the best is yet to come.

Bob Crosby
 Bulah Dougherty
 Greg Nauman
 Sam Ruggiero
 Barb Sutton
 Pastor Steve Dunn
Jerry Albright, ex officio
Joe Jordan, ex officio
Jane Swartz, ex officio

APPENDIX 4

CORE VALUES OF THE CHURCH OF GOD OF LANDISVILLE

CORE VALUES OF THE CHURCH OF GOD
OF LANDISVILLE

Adopted by the congregation November 2002

Our statement of mission grows directly out of core values. These basic values, based on what the Bible teaches, define both our deeply held convictions and our passion for ministry. As such they mold who we are and shape what we can do. These core values are consistent with those held by the Eastern Regional Conference of the Churches of God, General Conference and were drawn in part from their documents regarding shared core values, but what follows represents our local expression of those core values.

1. The authority of the Bible as God's Word

The Bible is our only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. We seek to be a Word-driven church that maintains the centrality of the Scriptures. If there is only one value which is at the heart of what we hold dear, this is it! We believe that the authority of God's Word needs to define everything about us from our theology to our ministry focus. (Ps. 119; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)

2. Prayer

If the Scriptures represent our heart, then prayer represents the lifeblood of our personal and corporate discipleship. There never has been nor ever will be a healthy church without people seeking the face of God "on all occasions with all kinds of prayer and requests." (John 15:7; Eph. 6:8-10; 1 Thess. 5:17)

3. God's view of human life in which all people matter

Based on the premise that God created humankind in His image, we value human life in all of its diversity and at every stage of development. We believe that despite our rebellion and rejection, God is not willing that any should perish. He loves every human being and seeks a personal relationship with each one no matter his or her ethnicity, status, or gender. We share this love and great burden for lost people. (Gen. 1:26; Jonah 4:10-11; Luke 19:9-10)

4. Evangelism that calls people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ

We also share in God's redemptive agenda. It is our firm conviction that only Jesus Christ can change lives forever. We believe that everyone needs to individually receive Him as Savior and follow Him as Lord. Therefore, we commit ourselves to proclaim the good news about Jesus Christ by whatever means appropriate that we may welcome people into the family of God until our Lord returns. (Dan. 12:3; Matt. 28:18-20; John 3:7)

5. Worship that brings people into God's presence

The pulse of the church is worship. In our public and private worship life the presence of the Lord or the lack thereof will be manifested. We worship God because He is God and because we seek to glorify Him. In addition our worship

bears witness to the truth that is found in Jesus Christ. In worship both praise and prayers resound. Fellowship abounds and the proclamation of the “good news” announces the grace of God. Worship is not about style or performance. It is about spirit and truth. We seek worship that beats as one with the heart of God (Ps. 95:6; Matt. 22:37; John 4:23-24)

6. Sacrificial servanthood

We believe that the church has an absolute obligation to be looking outward in its perspective and outreaching in its method. The church exists to serve the world in Jesus’ name. Our calling is incomplete if it is not done with a servant’s heart and a servant’s strategy. ((John 13; Matt. 5:13-15)

7. Spiritual growth that is intentional and disciplined

The goal of discipleship is to see every believer mature in Christ, to grow up into Him. This requires a deliberate and systematic course of spiritual development over time. An important part of this process includes accountability towards those placed over us in the Lord. We value a high expectation in the spiritual life of anyone who names Jesus as Lord. For anyone joining the church as a member this commitment needs to be manifest in life and service. We also believe that spiritual development is a lifelong process. (Deut. 6:6-9; Prov. 3:5-8; Luke 6:40; Eph. 4:11-13; 2 Tim. 2:15)

8. All believers using their spiritual gifts to demonstrate God’s love

The apostle Paul makes it clear that every believer receives one or more spiritual gifts through the Holy Spirit in order to build up the body of Christ, the Church. As such we all need to use our particular gifts in the service of the Lord. It remains essential to the Church today that every believer knows and uses their gifts. When this occurs, a blessing results for the individual and the corporate body. However, when someone does not exercise their gift in the life of the Church, the whole body suffers. (Mic. 6:6-8; Luke 10:21; 1 Cor. 12, Eph. 2:10; Jas. 1:22)

9. Unity that is true to the Word of God

Though there may be much diversity within the church as to people, spiritual gifts, wealth, etc., the body is one. Jesus’ high priestly prayer and Paul’s admonition to the Ephesians make it very clear that unity in the body of Christ, the Church, must be preserved. This does not require uniformity. Rather, unity represents a spirit of cooperation and a willingness to work together to resolve whatever issues may arise. (John 17; Acts 15; Galatians 3:26-29; Eph. 4:1-6; Phil. 2:1-14)

In July 2004 and acting upon feedback from both our 2003 Shared Values Surveys and the dialogues generated through the study of Pastor Dunn’s booklet, Building Bridges of Truth and Grace, the Administrative Council adopted a tenth core value.

10. A Kingdom-focused community

There is no place in the Church for a competitive spirit between persons nor between congregations. Just as we as individuals are part of the body of Christ, individual congregations are a part of the larger body of Christ. We work alongside all persons who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord to reconcile people to God, invite them to be a part of his kingdom, and to work to bring glory to God on earth as it is in heaven. (Matt. 12:25-32; Eph. 4:1-6)

APPENDIX 5

EMBEDDING CORE VALUES THROUGH TEACHING

EMBEDDING THE CORE VALUES THROUGH TEACHING

*Plan proposal submitted to the elders by Pastor Dunn
for consideration, revision, and adoption April 21, 2003
Portions informally agreed upon and activated September 2002*

Action Plan

The purpose of this action plan is to provide an intentional, creative, and redundant means to communicate the 9 core values of the Church of God of Landisville. The desired outcome is that through this teaching and related programming in the church that our people might increasingly possess these core values as shared values which are then reflected in their actions as servants of the Lord.

This plan relies heavily at its core upon the preaching ministry of the church as it seeks to interact with and impact the broadest part of our current and emerging membership.

These plans are not listed in priority, for they are intended to be “bundled” as a teaching strategy throughout the year; and would include programs from commissions and teachable moments initiated by individual members as the Holy Spirit should prompt and direct.

Sermon Series on Outreach

This is a three-part series to be preached in January and February using Matthew 5:12-16 as its scriptural focus. It would also be an up front and in-depth means of teaching core value no. 4, “evangelism that calls people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.”

Sermon Series on Core Values

This is an eight-part series to be preached to two blocs. One is in February prior to Lent, and the other is in June during the season of Pentecost. “To Serve This Present Age-Core Values for Today” is the title or theme for this series.

Sermon Series on the Cross

This is a five-part series to be preached during Lent emphasizing the centrality of the Cross to human salvation, the impact of the Cross on the mission of both individual believers and the church, and reaffirming the fundamental teaching found in John 14:6, the exclusive claim of Jesus Christ as the One and Only Savior.

Sermon Series on Authentic Community

This is a twelve-part series to be preached August through October emphasizing the characteristics of authentic community as described in Scripture. The critical element is to understand the community as an essential embodiment and expression of God’s love. John 13:35 is the key verse for this series which

would explore: community as a reflection of the Trinitarian nature of God, the necessity of community for wholeness, the felt need for friendship, Christ's sacrificial love as the fabric of the community, authenticity in relations that builds trust, acceptance that leads to life change, empathy that brings encouragement, conflict resolution that brings reconciliation, forgiveness that heals sin, confrontation that creates accountability, inclusion that nurtures community, and gratitude that enhances joy.

Class 402 – Developing a Servant Outreach

This is a self-designed class in the fourth level of our Life Development Institute. It is designed for those persons whose spiritual gifts, temperaments and passions seem to be directing towards ministries of compassion, mercy, service, and outreach to our neighbors. Pastor Dunn will design this class using texts by Steve Sjogren and Bob Logan that focus on compassion ministries. It will involve students in biblical teaching about servanthood, compassion, and pre-evangelism. It will also teach them strategies to show the love of God to their neighbors in practical ways. It will further give at least two organized experiences in what Sjogren calls “acts of servant evangelism.” This class will involve eight sessions taught in June and July.¹

Class 401 – Becoming a Contagious Christian

We will repeat this eight-week course designed by Mark Mittelburg and Bill Hybels of Willow Creek on building redemptive relationships and sharing our faith concisely and intentionally through those relationships. This class was taught in the summer of 2002 to 16 adults and teens many of whom are using their learnings in their life today. It falls also under the fourth level of our Life Development Institute. This class will be taught as soon as a critical mass of 4 new students can generated.

Core Values Wall

An ongoing display going up after Easter which provides visual reminders and examples of these 9 core values. A form of the “core values wall” will be included in the Website being designed by Joe Jordan, one of our former elders and the person who first identified the scriptural map for our core values, Matthew 9:35-38.

Holy Spirit Stories

Through writing in our “Journal of the Holy Spirit” and opportunities to share in worship, individuals who are putting these core values into action in practical ways will be invited to tell their stories to the church.

Core Value Publications

If time permits, in addition to occasional articles in *The Sunday PLUS* (our monthly newsletter) and *THRIVING IN CHRIST* (our e-mail devotional),² Pastor Dunn (and others) will write brief teaching documents on each of the nine core values and on our overall mission statement.

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1. An actual course has been designed with leader's guide, participant's manual, and power point presentation by this title. It is called *Developing a Servant Lifestyle*, © 2003 by Stephen L. Dunn and is available from the Church of God of Landisville, PO Box 183, Landisville PA 17538.
 2. *Thriving in Christ* is a copyrighted bi-weekly e-mail publication and a free subscription can be obtained from coglandisville@aol.com. Since this Project began portions have appeared in print form.

APPENDIX 6

STRUCTURE FOR OUR EMERGING MISSION

STRUCTURE FOR OUR EMERGING MISSION

Proposal to Church Council
Approved by Council – October 2002
Approved by Congregation – November 2002

This proposal comes from the Elders and has been discussed with the Commission on Worship and Outreach. It was also shared with the September 8th Congregational Information Meeting on Thinking Forward With Vision. Part of this material started from input from different church staff and commission members. If you agree to this change in principle, then proper constitutional amendments would be prepared and submitted to the Annual Meeting in November. Implementation would be effective January 2003.

Proposal No. 1 – Reassign Membership Matters

Given the fact that the Elders deal with pastoral/congregational care matters; and have historically handled church discipline when it occurred; we would propose that recommendations for receiving new members and changes in membership be transferred from Worship and Outreach and placed in the responsibility of the Elders.

Proposal No. 2 – Create “two” Commissions from Worship and Outreach

Currently Worship and Outreach handles two critical areas of church programming. These two do not always fit well together. Given the work involved, they generally must focus on one or the other. In addition, in our emerging vision, outreach (and evangelism) takes on a critically important role that deserves a commission’s specific focus. Finally, because of outreach commitments both Worship and Outreach and Christian Education have moved any “fellowship” or community-building (people already in the church) to the bottom of their priority lists. We are having trouble formulating a new Fellowship Team. The priorities here are correct, but we also need to continue attending to community-building as an important facet of our mission in a multiple cell church. Hence this proposal.

- a. *Create a new Commission on Outreach and Evangelism.* The purpose would be to handle all outreach and mission duties currently under Worship and Outreach. Hospitality Team and Bread of Life Ministry would probably fall under this group. We would add to it any new developments in getting people mobilized into the community, visitation of new people, and our now missing evangelism program. The Senior Pastor would be the staff member relating to this commission on a regular basis.
- b. *Create a new Commission on Worship and Fellowship.* This commission would retain the worship and music responsibilities of the current commission. We would add to it the responsibility to create programs which build up the fellowship *between* the various small groups of the

church. This is logical because worship is the first piece of community building. Things from CE like Fall Family Festival, Family Retreat, Valentine's Banquets, etc. would move under this commission and they would be encouraged to develop other logical items. The Music Director would be the staff member related to this commission on a regular basis, along with the Senior Pastor.

Proposal No. 3 – Create three new officers: one elder, one deacon, and one deaconess to staff this new structure

We would quite obviously need to add personnel to the Council to achieve this. Because CE has the benefit of our three part-time staff members and the new Worship and Fellowship Commission would have the benefit of our Music Director, we would propose that the distribution of commission membership be as follows:

Christian Education – one elder, two deaconesses, one deacon (plus the CE Director/SS Superintendent, Small Group Coordinator, and Director of Youth and Family Ministry) and other volunteer staff. *4 members plus CE/SS plus staff*

Stewardship and Property Management – two elders, three deacons (plus the Senior Pastor) *5 members plus staff*

Worship and Fellowship – one elder, one deacon, two deaconesses, youth member of Council (plus Music Director and Senior Pastor, as time permits) *5 members plus staff*

Outreach and Evangelism – two elders, one deacon, two deaconesses (plus Senior Pastor) *5 members plus staff*

APPENDIX 7

STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES FOR A GROWING CHURCH

STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES FOR A GROWING CHURCH

*This plan was proposed by the elders and adopted by
the Administrative Council*

Action Plan

1. We will involve even worship participants in ministry as soon as possible.
2. We will involve new members in responsible leadership as soon as possible.
3. We will organize our commissions to work as ministry management teams.
4. We encourage commissions to involve as many gifted people as possible in their specific area of ministry.
5. We encourage commissions to create smaller ministry teams to handle various aspects of their specific areas of ministry.
6. All ministry teams are answerable to commissions.
7. Commissions should be allowed to choose chairpersons with management and leadership gifts (even if that person is unavailable to serve on Council in a particular year) subject to the approval of the administrative council.
8. We will develop the administrative council as the policy making of the Church, the overall evaluators of mission, and the persons who legitimize the specific authority that is given to commissions and staff.
9. We continue to develop the elders as the general strategic planning team of the church.
10. We grow or redesign the structure to keep it responsive and fruitful to the needs of the church's ministry.

Immediate Suggestions

1. We allow commissions to determine the size needed and personnel required to effectively carry out their particular part of the mission.
2. We allow commissions to use new members as voting members of their commission subject to action by the Council confirming their membership.
3. We continue to encourage commissions to use active participants as advisory members of their commissions and active members of their ministry teams.
4. We subdivide the Commission on Stewardship and Property Management into separate commissions.
5. We do not increase the number of elders, deacons and deaconesses at this time and those persons continue as the voting members of the administrative council of the Church.
6. When commissions are reorganized there needs to be a minimum of two of the abovementioned officers on each commission.
7. Each commission should have at least one elder as a member (specifically to assist with the strategic planning and the spiritual oversight dimensions of the elders' responsibility.)

BASICALLY WE ARE PROPOSING TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION AT ITS VARIOUS APPROPRIATE PLACES TO MAKE THESE SEVEN ITEMS A REALITY IN OUR CHURCH STRUCTURE.

Specifically those actions will be:

- A. Creation of two new commissions (Finance and Property Management) from the old Commission on Stewardship and Property Management Commission.
- B. Require every commission to have at least two council members (including one elder) as a part of this membership.
- C. Allow each commission to nominate to the Council additional persons who would serve as voting members of their commission (not as members of the Council, however.)
- D. Give commissions permission to have a chairperson who is not a Council member (but who must be a church member), again subject to the Council's approval.

Rationale:

1. With the addition of the multipurpose center and the growth of our ministry, this Commission has too much work for one commission. This is similar to the situation that led to the creation last year of two new Commissions – Worship and Fellowship and Outreach and Evangelism from our old Worship and Outreach Commission.
2. We have not proposed an increase in our 19 member Council as it is near the maximum size for accountability and decision-making.
3. Because the Council has the delegated responsibility and authority from the Congregation for the policies and actions of the Church, persons receiving a portion of this authority as members of commissions need to have that confirmed by the body that is elected by the congregation in the first place.
4. Allowing commissions to grow to meet their ministry needs and allowing those members to vote encourages greater participation from our membership in both decision-making and membership as the primary work of the church is done through commissions.
5. Because Commissions need effective leadership, we recognize that the person with the best administrative gifts may actually be in non-Council personnel and therefore, we want to give the Commission the best possible leadership. Again, however, this person of authority would have to be confirmed by the Council.

APPENDIX 8
SMALL GROUP STRATEGY

SMALL GROUP STRATEGY

Action Plan was developed by senior pastor, reviewed by small group coordinator and adopted by the elders

We will attempt to develop small groups for a variety of purposes, but each small group (Sunday school classes, ministry teams, support groups, discipleship groups, Bible studies) shall be encouraged to develop four common purposes.

1. To provide shepherding, support and accountability to its members as spiritually maturing disciples of Jesus Christ.
2. To teach the core values of the Church necessary to give a common understanding of the faith and insure the unity of the Body.
3. To help their members identify and use their gifts in ministry.
4. To connect people (especially Pre-Christian people) to Jesus Christ.

In order to assist our groups to achieve those common purposes, we will do the following:

1. Provide a basic curriculum on discipleship that small group leaders will be encouraged to incorporate into their ministries in a manner appropriate to that small group's specific mission.
2. Provide an initial mentoring experience led by the Senior Pastor to assist our small group leaders own these core values for themselves.
3. Provide an ongoing mentoring experience led by the Senior Pastor and others to help undergird the spiritual well-being of our small group leaders.
4. Create new small groups intentionally devoted to assisting particularly new people understand and apply those values in their own lives.

The Marks of Discipleship

The initial offering will be written and taught by Pastor Dunn. It shall be called "Six Marks of Christ's Disciples". Using a combination of Bible study and group reflection, it shall seek to imbed these six aspects:

- A. Daily Prayer
- B. Weekly Worship
- C. Bible Reading
- D. Sacrificial Service
- E. Spiritual Friendships
- F. Giving

Particular emphasis will be given to the core values of unity, authority of the Word, evangelism, and gifts-based ministry weaving them into these six topics.

Mentoring the Mentors

A meeting will be held on Monday, August 25th specifically inviting all small group leaders of teens and adults to explain this new strategy and to enlist them in a short-term small group of eight weeks to assist in their own growth in Christ. More than one mentoring group may be created depending upon the needs and availability of these leaders. The group(s) will commence as close to August 25th as possible. Pastor Steve will teach this section.

An attempt will be made to enlist “potential” small group leaders who might be the organizers of the initial small groups dedicated specifically to teaching those Six Marks of Christ’s Disciples.

At the conclusion of the eight week group, a further covenant group(s) will then be organized to provide monthly support for these small group leaders. In the subsequent group, additional material will be introduced (1) to help these mentors continue to grow in Christ and (2) provide specific teaching applicable to the ministry needs of various small groups. Pastor Steve and an apprentice(s) will take responsibility for the ongoing covenant group(s).

Creating New Groups

Working the Small Group Coordinator, new groups shall be started as leadership for those groups is available. We will set an initial goal of at least two such groups to be up and running by Christmas 2003.

APPENDIX 9
PROPOSAL FOR ASSOCIATE PASTOR

PROPOSAL FOR ASSOCIATE PASTOR

This proposal originated with the elders and was adopted by the congregation in a special meeting October 26, 2003

Proposal

The Associate Pastor would serve as an extension of the work of the Senior Pastor. In particular, the Associate Pastor would complement the present Senior Pastor by focusing on issues of general church administration, the visitation portion of the pastoral care ministry, development and support of the Senior Citizen ministry (including the new Senior Citizen Center program), and providing an additional primary resource for our Life Development Institute and for our leadership development program as it relates to small groups and the assimilation of new people.

The Associate Pastor would particularly extend the work of the Senior Pastor by regular involvement in the preaching ministry, the visitation of the potential church members, and crisis counseling for our members and other people from the community. He would also work with the Elders in providing general spiritual oversight during times of the Senior Pastor's absence.

Such a position would free the current Senior Pastor to maximize his ministerial gifts in the areas of leadership and vision-casting for the congregation, strategic planning and leadership development for the church, the preaching and worship ministry, prayer, crisis counseling, mentoring of leaders, providing spiritual direction to our members, helping mentor and mobilize the outreach and mission ministries of the church, visiting and assimilating new persons, and general staff management.

Such an Associate would also help our Senior Pastor maintain a healthy 50-55 hour work week while insuring that crucial pastoral care and ministry oversight issues are handled in a fruitful and timely manner. As such, this position would be most profitable to the church if it can be full-time.

As with all staff members, the Associate would work under the supervision of the Senior Pastor and be accountable to he and the Elders for the conduct of his ministry.

Chief qualifications for this position are similar to that of a Senior Pastor with a particular concern for spiritual maturity, gifts of pastoral care, administration and teaching. This person must be a team player who works comfortably with the concept of being an Associate. Given our other staff positions and their assignments, this person must have a passion for adult ministries and a heart for the older part of the congregation.

We recommend the commencement of this position at the earliest possible time but no later than January 1, 2004.

Support Document - Senior Pastor's Work Week

Sunday Morning	5:00
Preaching and Worship Preparation	8:00 (*)
Prayer	5:00 (*)
General Staff Management	5:00
Volunteer Leadership Management	3:00
Commissions and Committees	4:00 (*)
General Pastoral Care/Visitation	6:00
Crisis Counseling	6:00 (*)
Strategic Planning/Vision Development	2:00
Mentoring for Spiritual Growth	5:00 (*)
Programming/Small Groups	3:00
Ministering/Meetings in the Community	3:00
Connecting and Assimilating New People	1:30
Leadership Development	2:00 (*)
Outreach and Missions	2:00
General Administration/Communication	4:00

Please note that the items with an asterisk (*) represent variable times. The total of these times with their assignment is 64 hours and 30 minutes. It is only when some of the items marked with an asterisk are less that a typical work week stays about 52-55 hours. When all of these occur the work week generally is 60-70 hours (or more.) Vacations or compensatory time or study/training days necessitate some of these items simply not being done at all. Increasingly typical is Pastor Steve's average work week of the past five (excluding his vacation week) that was 60 hours, 69 hours, and two consecutive 70 hour weeks.

This work week generally requires Steve to work Sunday morning and evening, all day Monday through Thursday (morning, afternoon and evening), and 2-3 hours on Saturday. Friday is his Sabbath day when there are no emergencies. Excluding his vacation week in September, the last five weeks in a row have required him to work without a true day off.

In September 2001, our church averaged 125-30 in worship. We now average 225-30 in worship. We now (September 2003) have approximately 140 families with around 400 people identified with the church as "members" or "active participants" or "worshippers."

Accompanying this growth, the following areas of ministry now consume more time on a weekly basis: preaching and worship preparation, commissions and committees, crisis counseling, mentoring for spiritual growth, outreach and missions. What has "diminished" but really should not is "general pastoral care,"

“volunteer leadership management,” “connecting and assimilating new people” and “prayer.”

Only “programming/small groups” is declining by design as the elders have chosen to encourage Steve to have less “scheduled” or pre-committed time so he can be available particularly for pastoral care, counseling, and spiritual mentoring which are among his major assets for us at this time. None of this accounts for the potential push of adding the ministries of the new Multipurpose Ministry Center, the continuing arrival of new people, and the expansion to a third worship service.

We propose the calling of a special congregational meeting on Sunday, October 26, 2003. The purpose of the meeting is to take action on the following motion: To approve the recommendation of the elders and the Administrative Council to create the full-time position of Associate Pastor to become effective January 1, 2004.

The Elders:

Sam Ruggiero, Chair

Donna Crosby

Bulah Dougherty

Scott Lebo

Greg Nauman

Barb Sutton

Pastor Steve Dunn

APPENDIX 10
PARTNERING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Serving the Community as the Spirit Leads
Sharing God's Love With All

In the year 2003-2004 we will focus on getting individuals to step outside their comfort zone and engage in acts of servant or evangelistic ministry as an expression of their commitment to Christ and their part in the ministry of the church. It is our hope that such experiences will help imbed a sense of sacrificial servanthood and passionate evangelism in the core values of those persons.

Outreach Component

1. To provide ongoing practical experiences where our people can serve the community in Jesus' name.
2. To involve our people in quality, established ministries that match our core values.
3. To create at least one new outreach ministry identified directly with the church itself.

We will also explore and expand partnerships in these established ministries within the Lancaster community.

1. *Council of Churches Feeding Teams*: Continue this bi-monthly effort with the goal of establishing an expanding core of persons who regularly cook, serve, and minister to the homeless who come to Christ Lutheran Church in Lancaster City.
2. *Milagro (Miracle) House*: Beginning in May 2003 to introduce the total congregation to the work of Milagro House (a program for single mothers and their children) through a presentation by Rene Valentine, the Director. Immediately encourage persons to offer their services to Milagro as needed. In June 2003 commence a practical offering by collecting diapers to be delivered to Milagro. Involve every willing member and especially children in physically providing those diapers. In July 2003 meet with Rene with the intention of identifying at least two events or programs in the next six months that put an organized ministry group on site at Milagro. In January 2004 create an event in our new multipurpose ministry center where they could bring the residents to our site for some recreational or fellowship experience.
3. *Love, INC*: Beginning in July 2003 become one of the core churches in this organization (sponsored internationally by World Vision). To do this we will send representatives in May and June to organizational meetings. Initially we would be involved in *resources* (providing people to be a part of a resource bank to meet the needs of the poor in our community), *referrals* (using their case workers to determine persons' financial needs and then providing the cash to meet the needs

of those approved persons), *prayer* (using our existing Kingdom Prayers group to pray for specific needs identified by Love, INC and identifying prayer teams that will go to Love, INC sites for prayer with individuals in need). We would invite the Love, INC director to address the congregation on June 29th. At this service we would administer the 10-minute networking survey by which individuals in the congregation could identify availability to serve clients. Appoint a liaison to work with Love, INC to make contact with these people as needed.

4. *Senior Center Team*: Create a team that will plan an “activity center” ministry to be housed in our new multipurpose ministry center which will provide a gathering place for the senior citizens of Landisville. This team of 5-6 persons would be organized in June and July 2003. They would outline the mission and goals of the center, initial programs to be offered, and the resources and budget needed. This budget would be presented through the Commission to the church to have operational funds for 2004.

5. *Class 402, Developing a Servant Outreach*: Through our Life Development Institute offer a class taught by Pastor Dunn based on Steve Sjogren’s *Conspiracy of Kindness*. This 8-week class will create at least three servant outreach experiences (based on “random acts of kindness”). Growing out of this we would identify a core of persons who would continue to do such random acts of kindness without the community approximately every 6-8 weeks for the next year. To sustain this we would need a Servant Evangelism Coordinating Team.

6. *Option: Youth Ministry Center*: Will attach a formal proposal at a later point and establish a team to accomplish this similar to no. 4 above.

Evangelism Component

1. *Tsaile VBS Team*: Continue preparations and conduct a VBS for approximately 100 Navajo children in Tsaile AZ in July 2003. (This will involve 35 people).

2. *Brazil Team*: Set up wither a work team or a spiritual enrichment team to put 5-10 persons on the mission field in Brazil in 2004.

3. *Becoming a Contagious Christian*: At the first available opportunity, offer this practical evangelism class to persons with the gifts and passions for evangelism.

4. *Small Groups*: Incorporate into the small group ministry of the church a direct teaching opportunity for evangelism and the value of seeing the small group as an evangelistic resource of the church.

Adopted May 2003 by the Commission on Outreach and Evangelism – Church of God of Landisville

APPENDIX 11
SENIOR CENTER TEAM

SENIOR CENTER TEAM

*Plan Developed by Senior Center Task Force
February 12, 2004*

Mission Statement: To be a service to the more mature community through fellowship, learning, outreach, and worship.

Name: The Christian F.L.O.W. Center.

Day of Week/Opening Date: In the beginning the center will operate one day per month. We will talk to the existing FLOW small group to see if they want to be integrated into this ministry. This group currently meets Tuesdays, and this day is preferable. Our hope is open the center in April.

Transportation: We will not provide transportation services at this time. This will be revisited after the center has been in operation for a period of time.

Staffing: The following positions will be needed on a regular basis: a kitchen crew of 3-4 people, 1 or 2 greeters, 3 or 4 people to set up and tear down. The task force will be able to fulfilled these needs but we will solicit additional help. Speakers and music people will be sought as needed.

Advertising: We will contact Karen Haldeman, our church's promotion director, for all of this work. We will use The Merchandiser and both Lancaster newspapers. All advertising will include the mission statement and an invitation for people of all faiths to participate.

Charges: There will be no charge. This is a ministry. A donation will be accepted for the meal.

Devotion: Devotional times will be included in the center's daily program. This is vital to maintain the Christian aspect of the center.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF
LANDISVILLE CHURCH OR GOD
CHRISTIAN F.L.O.W. CENTER

10:00-10:15 am Fellowship Time (coffee and tea available). This would be a time for our guests to get to know each other and for our staff to get to know our guests.

10:15-11:15 am This time would be flexible with regards to content. It could be used in the following manner: game time, special speakers, crafts, music program, exercise, projects, computer skills, current event discussions, demonstrations, etc. It may be a good idea to vary the content of this time (see list of suggested activities).

11:15-11:30 pm Devotional time and prayer

11:30-12:30 pm Lunch

12:30-1:00 pm Clean up and fellowship

1:00-3:00 pm This time would be flexible with regards to content. Some of the same activities of the morning session could also be used during this time. Again, it may be a good idea to vary the content each time. This time could be divided into 1 hour time periods and two activities be offered. This session would end with prayer.

Suggested activities for morning and afternoon:

1. Speakers – The sky is the limit here regarding subject matter – doctors and other health care people, financial planners, gardeners, cooks, and bakers
2. Crafts – Again the sky is the limit – could tie in with the holidays
3. Exercise
4. Computer skills – keyboarding, using graphics to make cards, etc.
5. Projects – The sky is the limit – bake cookies, make gingerbread houses
6. Music programs
7. Games
8. Volunteer Bible Study

Submitted by Senior Center Task Force,
Jim and Marilyn Snyder, Bernie McFarland, John and Joanne Peters, Jerry and Val Albright, Judy Byers, Sam Ruggiero, Margaret Sager, Pastor Barry Sellers

APPENDIX 12
YOUTH CENTER TEAM

YOUTH CENTER TEAM

Final Proposal Form – October 2004
Adapted from Agape Center Training Guide

Name: This center shall be called Agape Center.

Vision Statement: Seeking to meet the needs* of youth by sharing the love of Jesus with all, creating a safe place for them to participate in a variety of healthy activities and events. (* spiritual, social, physical, mental, and emotional)

Agape Center Director's Role: To provide direction, make sure the train is on the track, and provide environment where all other staff (lay leaders) can take effective responsibility for their areas of ministry. (At this time the Director shall be a lay volunteer from the church but have ministry staff status).

Staff's Role: To provide adult supervision, support, and care for youth while helping them through fun activities to form a trust and a friendship in a safe environment.

Goals of the Agape Center:

1. Bible studies
2. After school hours for recreation, socializing, and forming relationships with adults.
3. Scheduling special events
4. Counseling (in-house)

Rules:

1. RESPECT – yourself, others, property
2. Follow procedures
3. Stay in Agape Center/MPR wing

Procedures:

1. Youth must use the main door to enter and to exit.
2. Youth must fill out an information/history form on their first day coming to the center.
3. Youth must sign in each time they come to the center.
4. If they leave prior to the end of the program they must sign in again.
5. Youth need to be responsible for hanging up coats, taking care of possessions (backpacks, etc.).

Disciplinary Procedures:

1. Youth will be warned verbally of any inappropriate conduct.
2. We will use the three strike rule. Youth will receive 2 warnings and be told to leave at the 3rd inappropriate conduct.
3. Youth may not return on the same day.

4. Parents will be called if actions warrant it.

Safety Expectations:

1. A soft, blue first aid kit marked Agape Center is available.
2. In case of an emergency call 911 and get child's information sheet. Call parents. etc.
3. If a minor accident, please write it down on child's information paper with date and what occurred. Also, tell the parents if you see them at pick-up time.
4. Confidentiality.
5. We will abide by the church's established procedures for reporting suspected child abuse, etc.

Core Value:

These are the same as the church's published core values.

Notation:

Staff members are responsible for securing their own replacements and informing Sarah Hinkle, the Director. We will always have 4 staff members on duty at all times. Two will be in the MPR and 2 in the Agape Center itself. It is important to be consistent with this policy for the sake of our youth.

Scriptural Reminders:

- a. Jesus needed disciples (Luke 6:40).
- b. Jesus set forth qualifications (Mark 1).
- c. There will be ups and downs, Jesus warned his disciples of how the world would react to them, but he assured them that He would always be with them.
- d. What could you receive for your efforts? A sense of satisfaction, seeing changed lives, gratitude for your contribution, sense of worth and accomplishment, friendships, learning, closeness to God, respect from others, knowledge of community, fun and laughter, relief from selfishness.
- e. Jesus called people to action. He said, "Come and follow Me."

Prepared by Pastor Scott Lebo and Sarah Hinkle

APPENDIX 13

TSAILE MISSION VBS TEAM

TSAILE MISSION VBS TEAM
Landisville Church of God
July 2003

*Approved 2002 by Commission on Worship and Outreach
Reaffirmed 2003 by Commission on Outreach and Evangelism*

Purpose is to provide a Vacation Bible School experience for approximately 100 children and adults at our Tsaile AZ Navajo Church. The secondary purpose is to provide a cross-cultural mission experience to persons from the Landisville Church of God, particularly young people.

Time Frame is still to be negotiated, but tentative plans are for the 2nd or 3rd week in July 2003. This will be finalized in early summer 2002 after the new pastor at Tsaile, Sam Cunningham, is on the field.

Basic Outline: The team will arrive in Tsaile on Saturday before VBS. Sunday will be spent worshipping with the Tsaile people and assisting in any final recruitment of students. VBS will begin Monday and run through Friday. Sessions will be in the morning. Afternoons will be divided between VBS prep, sightseeing, follow-up visitation, rest, etc. Wednesday evening the team will share in the normal Wednesday Night services at Tsaile. The team will return the following Saturday.

Team Oversight: The team will work under the sponsorship of the Commission on Worship and Outreach which shall have the final say on personnel, budget, and plans. The actual Team Leader for the Tsaile Mission VBS Team will be Pastor Steve Dunn.

Travel: Because of the distance and time involved, the team will primarily travel by air from the Lancaster area to Albuquerque, where the Tsaile Staff will pick them up and transport them to the Navajo reservation. Families can choose alternative forms of transportation provided they can arrive at Tsaile by Saturday and will not leave before Friday afternoon.

Personnel: In addition to the Team Leader, a minimum of 5 teachers and 5-8 helpers will be needed for each class. At least one of these leaders shall be capable of teaching adults. At least one guitarist and keyboardist will be needed for the music program. Craft leadership will also be needed (1-2 leaders, plus 2-3 helpers). A cook and a cook's helper will be needed. The minimum anticipated size of this team will be 21 persons. Young teens may be on this staff. Younger children may go if accompanying their parents. The children would probably be included in the VBS classes themselves. Team members must be active members or attenders of the Landisville Church of God or one of its small groups. We will request that they complete Class 101 before going to Tsaile.

Work Team Option: If there are projects the church needs done, we may have the option of taking some additional work team personnel.

Cost: The anticipated cost is one airfare per team member plus meals en route and at the site, plus transportation to and from the airport. If the team decides to use the Navajo Community College Dorms, there will be a cost per night. An attempt will be made to have a reasonable working budget by July 2002. here will also be a cost for curriculum and craft supplies.

Fund-Raising: Fund-raising will be done as a team with all persons sharing in the activities to raise monies for the total team expense. If a family chooses to travel by alternate transportation, those travel costs will be at their expense although the church may make a contribution to that expense if money is available.

Anticipated Time Line

March 2002	Approve the Proposal
April 2002	Complete application and start taking applications
April 2002	Pastor Steve meet with Pastor Cunningham
June 2002	Finalize the Team and have initial team meeting
July 2002	Finalize the working Budget
July 2002	Begin Fund-Raising
September 2002	Second Fund-Raising Event
January 2003	Finalize team before ticket purchase
January 2003	Begin team training
May 2003	Complete team training, fund-raising and finalize assignments
July 2003	VBS !!!!!!!

APPENDIX 14
HOSPITALITY TEAM AND
NEWCOMERS MINISTRY

HOSPITALITY TEAM AND NEWCOMERS MINISTRY

This action plan was a revision of a loosely defined plan and was approved by the Commission on Outreach and Evangelism in March 2004

Proposed Plan and Revisions *Proposed changes are in italics*

Mission Statement: The purpose of this ministry is to make first-time visitors and newcomers feel welcome during their initial visit(s) to the church and to help connect newcomers seeking a church home with the Church of God family.

Accountability: This ministry serves under the supervision of the Commission on Outreach and Evangelism, who selects a team leader(s) responsible to the commission. The staff member who resources this team is the Senior Pastor and others as he may assign.

Hospitality and Connecting Process

1. Greeters staff the main entrances at the three worship services to welcome people, be on the alert for immediate needs and direct them to the worship services, nursery, or classrooms. *They are given a pink card as they are greeted attached to an announcement about "Seven Minutes."*
2. *The bulletin and worship leaders highlight and invite visitors to attend "Seven Minutes About Landisville Church of God" immediately following the worship service in the church library. (A brief tour will be offered to anyone who has the time and desire.)*
3. *When they arrive they are greeted by a hospitality person who collects the pink card or asks them to fill one out. They are given a "parting gift". This gift includes our information packet. One of the pastors is also present to learn names and make small talk. Following a one-minute welcome by the pastor, the hospitality person spend no more than 5 minutes just describing some of the neat things happening at LCOG right now and taking one minute for questions.*
4. A letter is sent from the Senior Pastor thanking them for attending, along with a "First Impressions" sheet. This is done within 24 hours. If they marked any informational or prayer aspects, these are assigned to the appropriate person by the Senior Pastor. *Where appropriate an initial follow-up regarding the specific request will be completed before the next Sunday morning. (Note: If this person came with someone or at the invitation of someone in the church, the Senior Pastor makes a contact to thank them.)*
5. A "Bread of Life" visit (or with some other appropriate gift) by members of the hospitality team no later than Thursday night. (A pastor can be asked if no one is available). Just a brief "thanks" and an invitation to return is all that is necessary.

6. Upon receipt of the "First Impressions" sheet, the Senior Pastor sends a follow-up letter thanking them and responding to any concerns.
7. After the second visit, a second letter is sent by someone from the pastoral staff or one of the elders. *This may be a handwritten note.*
8. *After the third visit or after they stop marking "visitor", a visit will be made by the pastors or elders at the convenience of the persons being visited.*
9. *Every 2 months, Pastor Steve and Dianne will open their home on a Sunday evening and invite "newcomers" to 90 minute informal session with light refreshments. This will replace "Introduction to Landisville in 2004."*
10. At this reception, they will be told about Class 101 and invited to attend the next one that is scheduled.

Others:

Upon their request, name tags will be made and a mailbox will be created for newcomers. In some cases, the hospitality team or pastors will make a direct offer to continuing visitors.

APPENDIX 15
CORE VALUES SURVEY INSTRUMENT

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DON'T KNOW	
53	work with others to resolve issues if they arise	1	2	3	4	5	6
53	speaking about God's Word in my home in accordance with the direction provided by the Scriptures	1	2	3	4	5	6
54	spend extended times alone with God in prayer	1	2	3	4	5	6
55	pray to God to give me His love for those who are hard to love	1	2	3	4	5	6
56	fully understand my role in the evangelism process	1	2	3	4	5	6
57	participate in ministries with a direct evangelistic intent	1	2	3	4	5	6
58	encourage my brothers and/or sisters in Christ in their walk with God during worship	1	2	3	4	5	6
59	demonstrate my growing relationship with Christ through service to others	1	2	3	4	5	6
60	am excited about my spiritual growth journey	1	2	3	4	5	6
61	meet with a group that provides opportunities to discuss my personal spiritual growth	1	2	3	4	5	6
62	look ahead to see how I might grow spiritually	1	2	3	4	5	6
63	focus on God's purpose for me in my life	1	2	3	4	5	6
64	believe our unity comes from our common faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord	1	2	3	4	5	6
65	parent my children in accordance with the direction provided by the Scriptures	1	2	3	4	5	6
66	spend a regular part of my prayer time listening for God's voice	1	2	3	4	5	6
67	have loving relationships with non-believers	1	2	3	4	5	6
68	believe the results of evangelism should include obedience to Christ	1	2	3	4	5	6
69	encounter the living God at worship in our Church	1	2	3	4	5	6
70	tell others of the benefit(s) of my worship experience	1	2	3	4	5	6
71	exhibit an attitude of humility	1	2	3	4	5	6
72	pray regularly for spiritual insights in my life	1	2	3	4	5	6
73	intentionally compliment others on specific acts of their spiritual growth	1	2	3	4	5	6
74	evaluate my spiritual growth journey on a regular basis	1	2	3	4	5	6
75	am fulfilled by my ministry	1	2	3	4	5	6
76	include praise in my personal prayer	1	2	3	4	5	6
77	feel I can ask God for anything when I pray	1	2	3	4	5	6
78	experience unconditional love in our Church	1	2	3	4	5	6
79	believe we are to give responsible service to the world in order to create more Christians	1	2	3	4	5	6
80	prepare for worship through prayer	1	2	3	4	5	6
81	find direction in worship for my every day service to God	1	2	3	4	5	6
82	believe my heart is broken by what breaks God's heart	1	2	3	4	5	6
83	spend time in prayer daily	1	2	3	4	5	6
84	have offered to help friends become more familiar with the personal benefit of prayer	1	2	3	4	5	6
85	believe God, through the Holy Spirit, has given me one or more spiritual gifts	1	2	3	4	5	6
86	always speak well of my Church	1	2	3	4	5	6
87	include confession in my personal prayer time	1	2	3	4	5	6
88	reach out to the unchurched	1	2	3	4	5	6
89	believe evangelism is the proclamation that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation	1	2	3	4	5	6
90	am able to explain to people how they can become a Christian	1	2	3	4	5	6
91	prepare for worship through study	1	2	3	4	5	6
92	find inspiration in worship for my every day service to God	1	2	3	4	5	6
93	value complete obedience to Christ	1	2	3	4	5	6
94	read the Bible daily	1	2	3	4	5	6
95	have specifically offered to help friends to become more familiar with the personal benefit of Bible study	1	2	3	4	5	6
96	believe my spiritual gifts build the body of Christ	1	2	3	4	5	6
97	always speak well of my Church's leaders	1	2	3	4	5	6

YOUR AGE
 under 18
 19-25
 26-35
 36-45
 46-55
 over 55

SEX
 Female
 Male

MARITAL STATUS
 Single
 Married

OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN AT HOME
 0
 1-2
 3-4
 more than 4

YRS. OF MEMBERSHIP IN OUR CHURCH
 0-5
 6-10
 11-20
 more than 20

CHURCH ATTENDANCE PER MONTH (average)
 0-1
 2-3
 all Sundays

From your point of view, what is our greatest strength as a congregation? (The one thing that most strongly recommends us as a congregation to join.)

What is the one thing you would recommend to our leadership to improve the quality of your experience as a member of our congregation?

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	DO NOT SHOW	
32	work with others to resolve issues if they arise	1	2	3	4	5	6
33	speaking about God's Word in my home in accordance with the direction provided by the Scriptures	1	2	3	4	5	6
34	spending extended times alone with God in prayer	1	2	3	4	5	6
35	praying to God to give me His love for those who are hard to love	1	2	3	4	5	6
36	fully understanding my role in the evangelism process	1	2	3	4	5	6
37	participating in ministries with a direct evangelistic intent	1	2	3	4	5	6
38	encouraging my brothers and/or sisters in Christ in their walk with God during worship	1	2	3	4	5	6
39	demonstrating my growing relationship with Christ through service to others	1	2	3	4	5	6
40	being excited about my spiritual growth journey	1	2	3	4	5	6
41	meeting with a group that provides opportunities to discuss my personal spiritual growth	1	2	3	4	5	6
42	looking ahead to see how I might grow spiritually	1	2	3	4	5	6
43	focusing on God's purpose for me in my life	1	2	3	4	5	6
44	believing our unity comes from our common faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord	1	2	3	4	5	6
45	parenting my children in accordance with the direction provided by the Scriptures	1	2	3	4	5	6
46	spending a regular part of my prayer time listening for God's voice	1	2	3	4	5	6
47	having loving relationships with non-believers	1	2	3	4	5	6
48	believing the results of evangelism should include obedience to Christ	1	2	3	4	5	6
49	encountering the living God at worship in our Church	1	2	3	4	5	6
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53	intentionally complimenting others on specific acts of their spiritual growth	1	2	3	4	5	6
54	evaluating my spiritual growth journey on a regular basis	1	2	3	4	5	6
55	being fulfilled by my ministry	1	2	3	4	5	6
56	including praise in my personal prayer	1	2	3	4	5	6
57	feeling I can ask God for anything when I pray	1	2	3	4	5	6
58	experiencing unconditional love in our Church	1	2	3	4	5	6
59	believing we are to give responsible service to the world in order to create more Christians	1	2	3	4	5	6
60	preparing for worship through prayer	1	2	3	4	5	6
61	finding direction in worship for my every day service to God	1	2	3	4	5	6
62	believing my heart is broken by what breaks God's heart	1	2	3	4	5	6
63	spending time in prayer daily	1	2	3	4	5	6
64	having offered to help friends become more familiar with the personal benefit of prayer	1	2	3	4	5	6
65	believing God, through the Holy Spirit, has given me one or more spiritual gifts	1	2	3	4	5	6
66	always speaking well of my Church	1	2	3	4	5	6
67	including confession in my personal prayer time	1	2	3	4	5	6
68	reaching out to the unchurched	1	2	3	4	5	6
69	believing evangelism is the proclamation that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation	1	2	3	4	5	6
70	being able to explain to people how they can become a Christian	1	2	3	4	5	6
71	preparing for worship through study	1	2	3	4	5	6
72	finding inspiration in worship for my every day service to God	1	2	3	4	5	6
73	valuing complete obedience to Christ	1	2	3	4	5	6
74	reading the Bible daily	1	2	3	4	5	6
75	having specifically offered to help friends to become more familiar with the personal benefit of Bible study	1	2	3	4	5	6
76	believing my spiritual gifts build the body of Christ	1	2	3	4	5	6
77	always speaking well of my Church's leaders	1	2	3	4	5	6

YOUR AGE
 under 18
 19-25
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CHURCH ATTENDANCE PER MONTH (average)
 0-1
 2-3
 all Sundays

From your point of view, what is our greatest strength as a congregation? (The one thing that most strongly recommends us as a congregation to join.)

What is the one thing you would recommend to our leadership to improve the quality of your experience as a member of our congregation?

APPENDIX 16
SUMMARY OF SURVEY DATA
AUGUST 2003 AND 2004

Our final survey report supplied the data from the August 2003 and August 2004 surveys in combined form. For the purposes of space, it is this report, rather than separate reports, that is provided on the following pages. The outside research consultant noted in bold-face what he considered to be the significant statistical changes from 2003 to 2004.

		Percentage of Respondents						
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know / No answer	
Goal								
28	2004	0	1	3	21	69	6	
28	2003	0	0	5	33	62	0	
	Difference 2004-2003	0	1	-2	-12	7	6	
The Authority of the Bible as God's Word								
Category	Question	Year	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know / No answer
	Bible only and all sufficient rule for faith and practice							
1	1	2004	0	0	0	34	66	0
1	1	2003	0	0	1	37	60	2
		Difference 2004-2003	0	0	-1	-3	6	-2
1	6	2004	0	0	0	42	58	0
1	6	2003	0	1	6	48	42	3
		Difference 2004-2003	0	-1	-6	-6	16	-3
1	11	2004	0	3	11	49	31	6
1	11	2003	0	3	11	51	26	9
		Difference 2004-2003	0	0	0	-2	5	-3
1	16	2004	1	0	3	34	58	4
1	16	2003	0	1	6	44	39	10
		Difference 2004-2003	1	-1	-3	-10	19	-6

1	20	2004	Our church teaches basic understanding of scripture as a priority in out Sunday school programs	0	1	13	34	21	31
1	20	2003	Our church teaches basic understanding of scripture as a priority in out Sunday school programs	1	3	8	34	24	30
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	-2	5	0	-3	1
1	24	2004	Our church teaches the basic understanding of scripture as a priority in our Youth group curriculum	0	3	17	21	13	46
1	24	2003	Our church teaches the basic understanding of scripture as a priority in out Youth group curriculum	0	5	15	15	14	51
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-2	2	6	-1	-5
			"Word drive" Church; centrality of scriptures						
2	2	2004	Our church shares a vision that is consistent with the Bible, the Word of God	0	0	1	30	69	0
2	2	2003	Our church shares a vision that is consistent with the Bible, the Word of God	1	1	0	37	60	1
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	-1	1	-7	9	-1
2	7	2004	Our church communicates the Word of God as central to its work	0	0	0	42	58	0
2	7	2003	Our church communicates the Word of God as central to its work	0	0	2	53	41	4
			Difference 2004-2003	0	0	-2	-11	17	-4
2	29	2004	I participate in class(es) that teach me a deepening understanding of the Word of God	1	6	14	42	24	13
2	29	2003	I participate in class(es) that teach me a deepening understanding of the Word of God	3	16	16	39	18	8
			Difference 2004-2003	-2	-10	-2	3	6	5
2	41	2004	I participate in small groups that teach me a deepening understanding of the Word of God	1	7	18	34	32	8

2	41	2003	I participate in small groups that teach me a deepening understanding of the Word of God	2	16	28	29	21	4
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	-9	-10	5	11	4
God's Word defines everything about us									
3	12	2004	Our church as a body makes decisions that grow from a commitment to the Word of God	0	3	4	48	42	3
3	12	2003	Our church as a body makes decisions that grow from a commitment to the Word of God	0	2	11	55	26	6
			Difference 2004-2003	0	1	-7	-7	16	-3
3	17	2004	Our church holds its people accountable for living the Word of God	0	1	23	51	16	9
3	17	2003	Our church holds its people accountable for living the Word of God	0	11	26	42	8	13
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-10	-3	9	8	-4
3	53	2004	I speak about God's Word in my home in accordance with the direction provided by the Scriptures	0	0	17	59	24	0
3	53	2003	I speak about God's Word in my home in accordance with the direction provided by the Scriptures	0	6	22	49	22	1
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-6	-5	10	2	-1
3	65	2004	I parent my children in accordance with the direction provided by the Scriptures	1	0	20	38	24	17
3	65	2003	I parent my children in accordance with the direction provided by the Scriptures	3	2	16	40	25	14
			Difference 2004-2003	-2	-2	4	-2	-1	3
Prayer									
Percentage of Respondents									
Category	Question	Year		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know / No answer
	Represents the life blood of personal and corporate discipleship								

4	21	2004	Our church has a prayer ministry that supports our evangelistic ministry	0	3	4	39	42	12
4	21	2003	Our church has a prayer ministry that supports our evangelistic ministry	0	2	10	44	31	13
			Difference 2004-2003	0	1	-6	-5	11	-1
4	30	2004	I include thanksgiving in my personal prayer time	0	1	6	41	49	3
4	30	2003	I include thanksgiving in my personal prayer time	0	1	4	47	47	1
			Difference 2004-2003	0	0	2	-6	2	2
4	42	2004	I demonstrate my deepening walk with Christ through personal prayer	0	3	14	51	31	1
4	42	2003	I demonstrate my deepening walk with Christ through personal prayer	0	3	18	53	26	0
			Difference 2004-2003	0	0	-4	-2	5	1
4	76	2004	I include praise in my personal prayer	0	0	10	52	38	0
4	76	2003	I include praise in my personal prayer	1	4	5	58	31	1
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	-4	5	-6	7	-1
4	87	2004	I include confession in my personal prayer time	0	1	10	55	32	2
4	87	2003	I include confession in my personal prayer time	0	3	14	46	35	2
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-2	-4	9	-3	0
			Seek the face of God on all occasions... All kinds of prayer and requests						
5	54	2004	I spend extended times alone with God in prayer	1	10	34	38	13	4
5	54	2003	I spend extended times alone with God in prayer	3	17	30	35	15	0
			Difference 2004-2003	-2	-7	4	3	-2	4
5	66	2004	I spend a regular part of my prayer time listening for God's voice	3	9	27	54	4	3
5	66	2003	I spend a regular part of my prayer time listening for God's voice	3	13	36	36	9	3
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-4	-9	18	-5	0

5	77	2004	I feel I can ask God for anything when I pray	0	3	4	34	58	1
5	77	2003	I feel I can ask God for anything when I pray	0	1	16	43	38	2
			Difference 2004-2003	0	2	-12	-9	20	-1
God's view of Human Life in which all people matter									
Category	Question	Year		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know / No answer
Percentage of Respondents									
Value diversity									
6	3	2004	Our church has diversity of people	1	0	17	41	38	3
6	3	2003	Our church has diversity of people	1	7	15	53	21	3
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-7	2	-12	17	0
6	8	2004	Our church has diversity of gifts	0	1	1	49	45	4
6	8	2003	Our church has diversity of gifts	0	0	5	46	45	4
			Difference 2004-2003	0	1	-4	3	0	0
6	13	2004	Our church has diversity of styles of ministry	0	1	4	45	49	1
6	13	2003	Our church has diversity of styles of ministry	0	7	12	49	26	6
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-6	-8	-4	23	-5
6	25	2004	Our church is not a clique	1	6	20	48	23	2
6	25	2003	Our church is not a clique	2	8	18	44	21	7
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	-2	2	4	2	-5
6	88	2004	I reach out to the unchurched	0	4	39	44	10	3
6	88	2003	I reach out to the unchurched	2	10	33	37	15	3
			Difference 2004-2003	-2	-6	6	7	-5	0
Love everyone									
7	31	2004	I build others up	0	0	13	45	34	8
7	31	2003	I build others up	0	2	18	54	24	2
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-2	-5	-9	10	6
7	43	2004	I pray to God to give me his love for others	0	0	16	56	27	1

7	43	2003	I pray to God to give me his love for others	1	6	15	48	30	0
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	-6	1	8	-3	1
7	55	2004	I pray to God to give me His love for those who are hard to love	0	1	21	54	23	1
7	55	2003	I pray to God to give me His love for those who are hard to love	0	6	16	58	17	3
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-5	5	-4	6	-2
			Seek personal relationship						
8	18	2004	Our church provides me opportunity to move beyond superficial relationships	0	1	18	39	35	7
8	18	2003	Our church provides me opportunity to move beyond superficial relationships	1	5	10	55	26	3
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	-4	8	-16	9	4
8	67	2004	I have loving relationships with non-believers	0	0	18	49	30	3
8	67	2003	I have loving relationships with non-believers	0	2	16	56	24	2
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-2	2	-7	6	1
			Share love						
9	22	2004	Our church has the reputation in our community as a loving Church	0	3	3	39	42	13
9	22	2003	Our church has the reputation in our community as a loving Church	1	2	9	38	26	24
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	1	-6	1	16	-11
9	78	2004	I experience unconditional love in our Church	0	6	14	39	37	4
9	78	2003	I experience unconditional love in our Church	0	10	13	44	29	4
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-4	1	-5	8	0
Evangelism that call people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ									
				Percentage of Respondents					

Category	Question	Year		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know / No answer
11	32	2004	I believe evangelism is complete when you become a Church member	20	47	14	10	3	6
11	32	2003	I believe evangelism is complete when you become a Church member	21	38	16	9	6	10
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	9	-2	1	-3	-4
11	33	2004	I regularly invite people to welcome Jesus Christ into their life as Lord and Savior	1	23	47	20	6	3
11	33	2003	I regularly invite people to welcome Jesus Christ into their life as Lord and Savior	6	18	52	18	5	1
			Difference 2004-2003	-5	5	-5	2	1	2
11	44	2004	I regularly pray for my pre-Christian friends	0	4	32	42	20	2
11	44	2003	I regularly pray for my pre-Christian friends	0	6	36	39	16	3
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-2	-4	3	4	-1
11	45	2004	I participate in programs of outreach that remind people that God loves them	1	13	25	41	14	6
11	45	2003	I participate in programs of outreach that remind people that God loves them	2	11	36	38	10	3
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	2	-11	3	4	3
11	56	2004	I fully understand my role in the evangelism process	1	16	35	28	10	10
11	56	2003	I fully understand my role in the evangelism process	1	21	35	17	11	15
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-5	0	11	-1	-5
11	57	2004	I participate in ministries with a direct evangelistic intent	3	17	39	14	13	14
11	57	2003	I participate in ministries with a direct evangelistic intent	2	24	37	20	6	11
			Difference 2004-2003	1	-7	2	-6	7	3
11	68	2004	I believe the results of evangelism should include obedience to Christ	0	0	6	55	35	4
11	68	2003	I believe the results of evangelism should include obedience to Christ	0	2	5	50	37	6
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-2	1	5	-2	-2

Category	Question	Year		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know / No answer
11	79	2004	I believe we are to give responsible service to the world in order to create more Christians	0	4	7	48	38	3
11	79	2003	I believe we are to give responsible service to the world in order to create more Christians	0	4	14	47	32	3
			Difference 2004-2003	0	0	-7	1	6	0
11	89	2004	I believe evangelism is the proclamation that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation	1	7	7	37	45	3
11	89	2003	I believe evangelism is the proclamation that Jesus Christ is the only way to salvation	0	3	8	38	41	10
			Difference 2004-2003	1	4	-1	-1	4	-7
11	90	2004	I am able to explain to people how they can become Christian	0	1	20	48	27	4
11	90	2003	I am able to explain to people how they can become Christian	1	10	20	47	17	5
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	-9	0	1	10	-1
Worship is the pulse.. Beats as one with God's heart									
Percentage of Respondents									
12	69	2004	I encounter the living God at worship in our Church	0	3	6	45	42	4
12	69	2003	I encounter the living God at worship in our Church	1	1	12	49	33	4
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	2	-6	-4	9	0
Public worship									
13	80	2004	I prepare for worship through prayer	0	7	34	44	14	1
13	80	2003	I prepare for worship through prayer	2	11	24	48	13	2
			Difference 2004-2003	-2	-4	10	-4	1	-1

13	91	2004	I prepare for worship through study	1	9	39	37	11	3
13	91	2003	I prepare for worship through study	2	17	42	26	10	3
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	-8	-3	11	1	0
			Private worship						
14	34	2004	I worship consistently on a personal basis	0	1	10	45	41	3
14	34	2003	I worship consistently on a personal basis	0	5	12	47	36	0
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-4	-2	-2	5	3
			Worship to glorify God... bears witness to the truth of Jesus						
15	46	2004	I offer my praises to God during worship	0	1	13	45	39	2
15	46	2003	I offer my praises to God during worship	0	6	16	50	27	1
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-5	-3	-5	12	1
			Fellowship abounds						
16	58	2004	I encourage my brothers and/or sisters in Christ in their walk with God during worship	1	3	24	48	18	6
16	58	2003	I encourage my brothers and/or sisters in Christ in their walk with God during worship	1	7	36	35	15	6
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-4	-12	13	3	0
			Proclamation of the good news						
17	70	2004	I tell others of the benefit(s) of my worship experience	1	3	20	47	25	4
17	70	2003	I tell others of the benefit(s) of my worship experience	2	6	29	40	19	4
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	-3	-9	7	6	0
			About spirit and truth						
18	35	2004	I participate in worship to grow in my personal relationship with God	1	0	6	37	56	0
18	35	2003	I participate in worship to grow in my personal relationship with God	0	3	9	38	49	1
			Difference 2004-2003	1	-3	-3	-1	7	-1
18	81	2004	I find direction in worship for my everyday service to God	0	3	14	62	21	0
18	81	2003	I find direction in worship for my everyday service to God	1	4	19	56	16	4

22	71	2004	I exhibit an attitude of humility	0	1	21	58	13	7
22	71	2003	I exhibit an attitude of humility	1	5	19	54	13	8
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	-4	2	4	0	-1
22	82	2004	I believe my heart is broken by what breaks God's heart	0	1	14	58	27	0
22	82	2003	I believe my heart is broken by what breaks God's heart	0	3	25	39	23	10
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-2	-11	19	4	-10
22	93	2004	I value complete obedience to Christ	0	0	10	51	38	1
22	93	2003	I value complete obedience to Christ	0	3	16	47	30	4
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-3	-6	4	8	-3
Servant's strategy									
23	36	2004	I put others first	0	0	21	48	31	0
23	36	2003	I put others first	0	4	18	58	18	2
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-4	3	-10	13	-2
23	48	2004	I share goodness with others whether or not it is merited	0	1	16	69	13	1
23	48	2003	I share goodness with others whether or not it is merited	0	4	19	61	14	2
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-3	-3	8	-1	-1
Spiritual growth that is intentional and disciplined									
Percentage of Respondents									
Category	Question	Year		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know / No answer
	Maturing in Christ through spiritual growth								
24	60	2004	I am excited about my spiritual growth journey	0	1	25	31	41	2
24	60	2003	I am excited about my spiritual growth journey	0	4	25	44	23	4
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-3	0	-13	18	-2
24	72	2004	I pray regularly for spiritual insights in my life	0	3	17	54	21	5
24	72	2003	I pray regularly for spiritual insights in my life	0	6	22	44	26	2

28	38	2004	I have volunteered to serve in Church leadership roles	0	16	25	25	30	4
28	38	2003	I have volunteered to serve in Church leadership roles	5	21	18	36	17	3
			Difference 2004-2003	-5	-5	7	-11	13	1
28	50	2004	I have volunteered to serve on community organization boards that attempt to advance Christ among non-Christians	4	30	42	10	6	8
28	50	2003	I have volunteered to serve on community organization boards that attempt to advance Christ among non-Christians	6	30	43	12	3	6
			Difference 2004-2003	-2	0	-1	-2	3	2
28	84	2004	I have offered to help friends become more familiar with the personal benefit of prayer	0	18	42	28	11	1
28	84	2003	I have offered to help friends become more familiar with the personal benefit of prayer	4	26	37	23	6	4
			Difference 2004-2003	-4	-8	5	5	5	-3
28	95	2004	I have specifically offered to help friends to become more familiar with the personal benefit of Bible study	1	25	32	30	9	3
28	95	2003	I have specifically offered to help friends to become more familiar with the personal benefit of Bible study	7	22	38	23	6	4
			Difference 2004-2003	-6	3	-6	7	3	-1
			Appreciate that this is a life long process						
29	62	2004	I look ahead to see how I might grow spiritually	0	3	20	56	17	4
29	62	2003	I look ahead to see how I might grow spiritually	0	11	31	42	14	2
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-8	-11	14	3	2
29	74	2004	I evaluate my spiritual growth journey on a regular basis	0	11	32	38	16	3
29	74	2003	I evaluate my spiritual growth journey on a regular basis	1	17	40	24	11	7
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	-6	-8	14	5	-4

		Difference 2004-2003											
		0	2	-5	5	-3	1						
31	51	2004	I know my primary spiritual gift(s)	0	6	24	31	31	8				
31	51	2003	I know my primary spiritual gift(s)	3	5	23	39	25	5				
			Difference 2004-2003	-3	1	1	-8	6	3				
			Blessing occurs for me when I use my spiritual gifts										
32	63	2004	I focus on God's purpose for me in my life	0	4	11	55	24	6				
32	63	2003	I focus on God's purpose for me in my life	0	6	20	54	18	2				
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-2	-9	1	6	4				
32	75	2004	I am fulfilled by my ministry	1	11	25	41	17	5				
32	75	2003	I am fulfilled by my ministry	2	13	32	36	13	4				
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	-2	-7	5	4	1				
			Blessing occurs for the church when we use our gifts										
33	23	2004	Our church is continually blessed by God	0	0	1	31	68	0				
33	23	2003	Our church is continually blessed by God	0	0	3	41	53	3				
			Difference 2004-2003	0	0	-2	-10	15	-3				
Unity													
				Percentage of Respondents									
Category	Question	Year		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know / No answer				
34	5	2004	Our church is led by the Holy Spirit of God	0	1	6	27	63	3				
34	5	2003	Our church is led by the Holy Spirit of God	0	0	4	41	54	1				
			Difference 2004-2003	0	1	2	-14	9	2				
34	10	2004	Our church is empowered by the Holy Spirit of God	0	1	3	38	56	2				
34	10	2003	Our church is empowered by the Holy Spirit of God	0	1	5	41	50	3				
			Difference 2004-2003	0	0	-2	-3	6	-1				
34	15	2004	Our church shares a common vision of ministry	0	0	9	51	35	5				
34	15	2003	Our church shares a common vision of ministry	0	5	16	57	16	6				
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-5	-7	-6	19	-1				

34	27	2004	Our church is called to unity	0	1	6	59	30	4
34	27	2003	Our church is called to unity	1	2	8	53	28	8
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	-1	-2	6	2	-4
34	40	2004	I believe the unity of our church must be preserved	0	0	3	38	56	3
34	40	2003	I believe the unity of our church must be preserved	0	1	6	35	55	3
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-1	-3	3	1	0
34	52	2004	I work with others to resolve issues if they arise	0	0	17	52	28	3
34	52	2003	I work with others to resolve issues if they arise	1	4	24	54	16	1
			Difference 2004-2003	-1	-4	-7	-2	12	2
34	64	2004	I believe our unity comes from our common faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord	0	0	4	41	52	3
34	64	2003	I believe our unity comes from our common faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord	0	1	7	42	48	2
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-1	-3	-1	4	1
34	86	2004	I always speak well of my Church	0	0	3	41	56	0
34	86	2003	I always speak well of my Church	0	5	7	45	43	0
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-5	-4	-4	13	0
34	97	2004	I always speak well of my Church's leaders	1	0	7	42	49	1
34	97	2003	I always speak well of my Church's leaders	1	6	9	36	46	2
			Difference 2004-2003	0	-6	-2	6	3	-1

Age	Percentage		Difference	
	2003	2004	2004-2003	2003
Under 18	6	3	-3	-3
18-25	6	7	1	1

26-35	12	13	1
36-45	13	3	-10
46-55	16	24	8
over 55	46	48	2
No answer	3	3	0
Gender	2003	2004	
Female	59	56	-3
Male	38	39	1
No answer	3	4	1
Marital Status	2003	2004	
Single	16	21	5
Married	81	72	-9
No answer	4	7	3
Number of Dependent Children (Not asked 2004)	2003	2004	
None	49	-	
1 to 2	24	-	
3 to 4	10	-	
more than 4	1	-	
No answer	16	-	
Years of Church Membership	2003	2004	
0 to 5	40	44	4
6 to 10	10	17	7
11 to 20	7	10	3
more than 20	34	25	-9
No answer	9	4	-5
Church attendance per month	2003	2004	
0 to 1	2	1	-1
2 to 3	26	25	-1
all Sundays	66	69	3
No answer	6	4	-2

	2003	2004
Attendance Status (New 2004)		
Member	-	80
Attendee	-	17
	-	3

APPENDIX 17

SAMPLES FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT JOURNAL

SAMPLES FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT JOURNAL

Entry Submitted October 15, 2002 by Sarah Hinkle¹

Dear Steve,

John and I want to e-mail our sincere thanks for all that you have done for us since January. It is so hard to believe all that has happened in that time. We truly feel blessed. I remember the first time stopping into the church office and asking Patty for info regarding the church. You happened to be in your office and welcomed me. I will never forget your asking me what we were looking for in a church. My response being that we were looking for a church where truly the congregation is the church. We know that God answers prayers but that prayer got answered very fast. You were such a big part of our feeling "at home" and informed at LCOG. THANK YOU! Through you and others at church we were able to immediately trust that Gods' plan is awesome and to continue to serve and seek the joy He so richly gives. We feel so fortunate to call you "friend" as well as pastor.\

Have a great week!
Love, Sarah and John

Entry Submitted March 2, 2003 by Marilyn Snyder

Dear Pastor Steve

Praise God. We saw Jesus at the Landisville Church of God during the 2nd service today! I saw, with my own eyes, a human vessel transformed before me into "a mighty man of God". As far as I was concerned the service could have gone on and on. Wow - wheeeee.

Entry submitted September 20, 2003 by Joe Jordan

Steve,

Thanks for the great chat tonight. I had some other thoughts on the way home and I wanted to share them as some additional encouragement to you. Your leadership has produced a new culture in our church. There has been a change from "passionate about progress" to "passionate about loving others". A "word picture" may help you see what I am "driving" at...

Imagine driving home from the grocery store with a load of groceries in the back seat. As you are driving, you hear the sacks start to shift and you know that some of the sacks are spilling out onto the floor. You have two choices - stop and secure the groceries, or wait until you get home to sort out the mess.

You have taught us that it is better to stop and get the groceries in order, so that the bread doesn't inadvertently get squashed, or the eggs get unintentionally cracked, than to rush to our destination and then try to pick up the mess. In our hurry, we might find that our groceries are ruined, and the trip was for nothing. (I

have never been able to figure out how to put a cracked egg back together, or to un-squash bread...)

I believe God stopped our car. You have helped us to see why. And, in the process, taught us to care more about the groceries than getting "there" quickly.

Have a great vacation!

Joe

Entry Submitted September 30, 2003 by Gaye Rock

I forgot to tell you something, This Saturday our Sunday School class (Beth Lebo's) is painting the house of a friend of mine who is depressed about her surroundings. I thought you should be aware of this, as it is really being done in the Church of God's "helpfulness sphere". Her name is Alexandra, and when I volunteered us (hee hee) she started crying and asked why a bunch of strangers would help her out. I told her it was a practical way of showing God's love and she said if that was the case and the attitude, she might consider going back to church! Anyway, I only mention this because it is ostensibly a church project, and I thought as our fearless leader, you should be aware. No need to broadcast it.

Blessings Galore, Gaye

Entry Submitted May 17, 2004 by Samuel Ruggiero²

With Pastor Steve on Vacation, I thought that I would try this out and tell you that it isn't easy being a Pastor. Just a few weeks ago Pastor Steve inquired about whether or not I would like to do the message for Saturday Night Spirit. Some of you know me and some of you don't, but anyway I accepted this challenge. Deep in my heart I have felt a yearning to deliver a message that God has been putting on my heart. I believe that this is a Dream come true for me and it will allow me to share what has been inside of me for a long time. God has given me so much and I wanted to return the faith walk that He has given to me. I can also acknowledge that it takes a lot of preparation to deliver a message on what your soul and heart is telling you to share with others. I respect all of our Pastors with the Job they do, their hard work in preparation shows every Saturday and Sunday. One thing that I have found out is that God walks with you while you prepare to share His word. He has been beside me everyday since I took on this Dream of mine. By the way, my message on Saturday night is entitled "Joys of Dreams."

To reach a goal entails consistency and a steady effort toward the objective. Since God helped us to establish our aim, we can remain fixed on accomplishing it. Even if others discourage us, we stay the course as the Lord has asked. I guess that is where I come in, I want to stay focused on my objective telling the wonders of creation and those that discourage me will have to answer to a higher power. We must remember that God set the goal for us, we will not allow others

to change our direction. Goals require courage to act upon them. Courage is the willingness to take action without knowing the outcome, but we can do that because it is God who asks. We must also deepen our trust in Him, that word courage will come. It is too easy to put our own strength into achieving goals and forget about depending on God.

The people who do God's work God's way don't wait until their efforts fail before they begin trusting Him. When you depend on your strength, God always intervenes and tells you to use His strength before failure. God will use various people and resources to provide for us, but He is the source of everything. God is the source of everything you need. Your children, job, spouse and friends are only tools he uses to meet the needs of your life. Any or all of these things could disappear tomorrow and your needs will not go unmet. For nothing can separate you from the Source.

Total and complete dependence on God requires a fair amount of waiting. Ask God for the wisdom to help you discern those times when waiting is your best course of action.

-
1. This item was the first I received and put into a file for the original concept of "The Holy Spirit Journal" but pre-dates the formal journal as we began promoting it in March 2003.
 2. This item was submitted for both The Holy Spirit Journal and as a guest item in the e-mail devotional published through the church called "Thriving in Christ."

APPENDIX 18
SUMMARY OF ELDERS COMMENTARY
ON PASTORAL JOURNAL

SUMMARY OF ELDERS' COMMENTARY
ON PASTORAL JOURNAL

Notation: Six elders each read one year (two for each year) of Pastoral Journals, or Diaries. Each essentially signed off on the accuracy of those journals and then five provided written comments. In some cases they underlined or keyed entries and wrote marginal comments. In some cases they wrote summary comments. Clarification was at times sought and that is reflected in each summary under the respondent.

2002 Pastoral Diary Comments by Bob Crosby

*Items in quotations are keyed or underlined in pastoral diary by the respondent.
Dates refer to the journal entry.*

1. It is important to learn about conflict management. "When things are going well, you need to guard your heart. For Satan will surely work to make you heartsick." (2/6/02)
2. "In a church our size, the senior pastor still needs to share in the shepherding of the older and sometimes marginalized members of the flock." (2/19/02)
3. People need someone with skin on constantly, quietly and lovingly reminding them of the unfailing and unconditional love of Jesus.
4. The slowness towards Thinking Forward meetings (3/2/02) and getting involved is an ongoing battle with Satan even in 2005.
5. Even the oldest Thinking Forward participants expressed at least a limited push for youth ministry.
6. Our concern for outreach was also within the USA.
7. Referring to the arrival of the Lutherans from another church in the community that was dividing. "I grieve because that pastor seems unconcerned about the losses. I am thankful that thus far these families are not losses to the Kingdom." (3/11/02) Bob added that the elders were meeting with them because "we wanted these folks to be active in His work whether at our COG or wherever."

8. Church discipline over behaviors is always difficult.
9. "Dreaming YOUR BIG DREAMS (God's) is a goal I consider worthy. I do not want to criticize my predecessor, but I sense that he had a big dream that was his more than the church's. As a result, the church did not give itself to that dream. Help me to be careful keep my eyes fixed firmly fixed on You." (3/24/02)
10. Someone other than the pastor must take active leadership for prayer groups, someone who doesn't have a dozen other things on their plate.
11. It was significant on May 29, 2002 that out of a prayer meeting we affirmed the need to broaden lay leadership by taking advantage of members' spiritual gifts recognized or unrecognized.
12. 15 people in a church our size taking *Becoming a Contagious Christian* in a summer school is truly amazing.
13. Instead of the pastor's thought, "Change always produces problems" (6/24/02) we need to say "challenges."
14. Perhaps appropriately the church expansion project does not appear in the pastoral diary entries after July 19.
15. Early on we were seeing a need for a team effort with spiritual gifts (perhaps three interested lay folks) and a pastor.

2002 Pastoral Diary Comments by Joe Jordan

*Items in quotations are keyed or underlined in pastoral diary by the respondent.
Dates refer to journal entry.*

1. "It is obvious this is a good church, people who love God, and who are attentive to demonstrate that love to their pastor and his wife. No matter what the challenges we must face in the church or in our lives, the love of God's people at Landisville is one of those 'givens' right that compensates our spirit. God, You are so gracious and good.
Last night's elders meeting was a blessing. It went two hours generating wonderful ideas for ministry and people were sharing their hearts for individuals who God has placed on their hearts. I have a sense God has given me a very fine elder team this year who will serve as well during this expanding time of vision." (2/5/02)

2. "We have a Thinking Forward Meeting at the Albrights tonight. Looks like 12 people will be present. These meetings have been extremely energizing. To this point I believe they have been good for the church.

As always, however, there are persons in need and I am in the midst of counseling one such couple. And our youth ministry seems to have been suffering. We have not filled Phil's vacuum. There are some youth behaviors beyond Wayne and Debbie's skills to handle at this point and there are also seem to be some power struggles involving youth and staff that present some mine fields until we resolve what are essentially personal conflicts. While Satan can't quench the vision, he turns his wiles upon people in strategic places because if he can undermine relationships he can break the unity that drives the vision. And too few people really use the energy of the Spirit to keep relationships whole. Sometimes I think a little 'how to fight like Christians in the church' training would help. When things are going well, you need to guard your heart. For Satan will surely work to make you heartsick." (2/6/02). Joe writes regarding Satan's undermining relationships, "Yes! I've seen it!" and the need for conflict management training, "Amen!"

3. "Lord, as I teach people about Jabez, let this day be an opportunity for me to be a blessing and perhaps to encourage at least one person to accept Christ into their heart. Enlarge my territory for you. In Jesus' name. (2/12/02)

Joe: "He did!"

4. "So often shut-ins are forgotten people, especially in younger churches. Maintaining care of them is a crucial issue in keeping faith with the community covenant. That was reaffirmed at last night's Thinking Forward meeting. (One man) talked of his hurt and pain over past pastoral neglect ... In a church our size, the senior pastor still needs to share in the shepherding of the older and sometimes marginalized members of a flock. I will visit this man very soon." (2/19/02)

Joe: "Steve's predecessor said his goal was to build two churches in same building."

5. "We had our seventh Thinking Forward meeting last night. 13 people present. We are 7 for 7 with an appeal for a full-time youth pastor/director. Bulah indicated we need to get this word out to people attending the Thinking Forward meetings, but this sentiment is very powerful. I've already told the elders this is a 'no-brainer.' God is up to something that we need to get on board with ASAP. Four of the 13 attendees made a point of saying the pastor was one of the things personally valuable to them at this time." (2/19/02)

6. "Yesterday was an extremely busy day with two Thinking Forward meetings. The one for parents I felt to be highly profitable. We have decided by parental consensus that a multi-cell youth ministry is the way to go. That will necessitate, however, getting a full-time Youth Pastor ASAP. I'll be meeting next week with CE to review the strategy for this. The latter TFM was

our smallest to date but it went almost 90 minutes and generated many fine ideas including the testimony of Russ Saunders that one of the church's strengths was that, "We are survivors." (3/4/02)

Joe: On our own strength? No way!

7. "The Haiti team leaves this afternoon on the first leg of its journey, a piece of the church's earliest DNA, foreign missions, has been reawakened." (3/8/02)

Joe: Was this written at that time or realize it by hind sight?

8. "The Lord continues to bless us here. Two new families and two potential membership families were in worship yesterday. 227 people made it our highest worship since last Easter. We continue to see Lutheran families... I am glad they are excited but I grieve over the bleeding of our sister church. I grieve because the pastor seems unconcerned about the losses. I am thankful that thus far these families are not losses to the kingdom. Our elders have already suggested that set up a meeting with the new families to hear their stories, and gather their observations of the church, and share our direction from the Lord as we understand it. (3/11/02)

Joe: "Did you contact the other pastor?" (The answer is "yes").

9. "Ad Council will be tackling big issues... The people here, however, firmly believe in God's provision, a belief reinforced last year through the transitions that brought me here as their pastor. I really have a sense God is going to provide." (3/15/02)

Joe: "Amen!"

10. "Last night's Ad Council was excellent. We did approve Tsaile, a Youth Pastor Search Committee, a multi-cell youth ministry, and a regular contract for music director Jim Riggs. I had 100% participation in leadership training time, which also seemed well-received. Jim Baughman, one of my deacons, was in this morning and said, 'Sounds like it is going well here at the church.' That's the general consensus of many of our leaders and reinforces that we are on the right track with the Lord. A big thanks to You, Lord. (3/16/02)

Joe: Wow!

11. "We cannot do great things for God if we are not prepared at our innermost core to be a people who pray without ceasing and a people who pray with extraordinary faith. I KNOW this can be who these people are, there is already a sense of prayer in them that is beautiful." (3/24/02)

Joe: "Unity! Unity! Unity! I agree about our need for big dreams and know the Holy Spirit works through any uneasiness."

12. "First day of Eastern Regional Conference. Bob, Greg, and I had a profitable time dialoguing vision for LCOG. It's amazing how much we are on

the same page, especially on the need for being an outreach church. Bob has especially grasped Lewis' bridge concept in THE CHURCH OF IRRESISTIBLE INFLUENCE. I am beginning to see plan emerge." (4/26/02)

13. "How do we become a prayer-driven church?" (5/7/02)

14. "Today is a BIG day. The Elders and I have a day apart to seek God's specific guidance for the Landisville Church of God. We have been working on this directly for five months and today we will see what the Spirit of the Lord has written on their hearts. I have a sense that God is going to do an incredible thing today as we gather at Crosby's cabin. Personally, I can hardly wait to be part of this experience. Already I sense a unity and direction among my partners and I that gives me confidence that the Holy Spirit has been at work in a powerful way and we are listening." (5/11/02)

Joe: Yes!

15. "(Greg and I) affirmed the importance of broadening lay leadership." (5/29/02)

16. "Yesterday was a fine elder's meeting. Once again, Joe Jordan got us out of the box as we thought about our mission statement. Barb Sutton zeroed in on the key for a new one and Jerry Albright cleaned up the communication. (This resulted in our new mission statement.) (6/04/02)

Joe: I want a tattoo with this mission statement.

17. "SPM found the money to proceed with a Youth Pastor. They also set about a course to acquire the land and make some adjustments we need to build a stronger facility for our future. Worship and Outreach and I had a detailed discussion about the contemporary service. We will worship in a way that others could observe (could see Jesus) and become worshipers themselves. Contemporary music, we agreed, needs to be preachable—possessing a content broad enough to speak to many audiences and scripturally sound and obvious. We'll see what comes from the germination of this idea. One of our musicians, however, is not happy that this has not gone far enough." (6/11/02)

Joe: "Rock the House! didn't fly."

18. "Lord, deliver us from human hurts and misunderstandings which so easily divide us. Help us to seek instead the unity of the Spirit that accomplishes the work of the Spirit." (6/14/02)

Joe: "Yes, yes, yes! Amen."

19. "Before leaving work yesterday, I had a good talk with Michael. He helped me look at the issue of the Contemporary Service once again from the perspective of the worshiper. Last week's songs were too new and too elaborate and too few actually entered into the singing of those songs. Since

music is so critical to the worship experience, this was not a good outcome. We do not judge ministry by a single service, but it is illustrative that Sunday things seemed to 'break down' and this is what we observed, It also reminded us that there is contemporary and there is contemporary, People mean and expect different things when they speak of "old hymns." (6/25-02)

Joe: "Part of creating a safe place?"

20. "(Regarding upcoming facility decisions) ... we are going through an important transition stage here at LCOG. That transition requires us to keep a firm eye on the vision and a strong prayer connection." (6/29/02)

21. Referring to decisions to expand multiple worship styles in an effort to better reach the "lost" Joe notes, "Many have come to Christ through this ministry."

22. Referring to an 8/3/02 entry about God giving us a contact with Barry Sellers, who ultimately became Associate Pastor over a year later, Joe wrote: "THAT was an answer to prayer."

23. "WOW! This day has been something. Our new Sunday morning format began today as well as our ACTS format. God gave us great weather. The new format went off almost without a hitch. At 8:30 we saw one new family, and two other 'exploring' families. The 10:45 service crossed over in awesome dimensions. The Lord simply knocked our socks off." (9/8/02)

24. "Preaching to the people from Jeremiah. Reminding them that idolatry, not atheism is the problem we face." (9/15/02)

25. "William called me today. He made a step of faith and quit his job that was undermining his marriage. I praise God to see him trust the Lord. This kind of maturing is going on in many people." (12/4/02)

Joe: Yes!

26. "There is an intensity of the Spirit that we sense ever increasingly in worship. This has been gaining momentum particularly in the past 5-8 weeks. Some are tempted to think it has to do with music with drums added that has heightened the energy level, but the intensity is in both services. And today there were no drums, I might tie more to the liturgy, but the liturgy is barely recognizable in the later service. Some speak of it as the sermon, and I truly recognize a greater connecting with the people in these past two months—a great hunger and responsiveness to the Word. Yet today it was particularly present in the prayers of the community—those led by Randy Lefever at the lighting of the Advent Candle and the incredibly vulnerable sharing that occurred at the 10:45 prayers. Both worship services went longer and no one seemed the slightest impatient or distracted and that itself was incredible.

There is only one way to truly describe it—people are hungering for God’s presence and work in their lives. They are drawing together in vulnerability and concern, a koinonia that I truly believe marked the church in those first days of Acts. Even those who are relative strangers to one another are reaching out—not in simple friendship but to express the love of Christ that dwells in their hearts.” (12/15/02)

Joe: “Are you still sensing this today?”

27. “As the Spirit leads’ is an important note here. The temptation will be as we come together to plan to push the Spirit to the periphery or overlook or undervalue the indigenous work of the Holy Spirit. This is VERY DANGEROUS for who the Church of God of Landisville is today is clearly more the intentionality of the Spirit than the intentionality of men. We would push the personal agendas or settle for limited expectations if the Spirit had not been driving this work. Understanding and documenting that to me is an important part of the Project. We did not create the DNA, the Spirit did by making us a new or renewing church with an outreaching vision.” (12/31/02)

Joe: “Being Spirit led is the only safe way.”

2003 Pastoral Diary Comments by Donna Crosby

I have been very honored to have been able to read this journal. It gives me insights into your love for people, for God, the depth of your spirituality, your vision for the church, and altogether what you do you do for the right reasons. And although many times you feel bogged down in day to day stuff you always keep the greater vision.

As the memories of that year come back I am amazed at all the good that was being accomplished despite a great many difficulties.

The church was certainly growing in numbers. But even with this fast growth it seems people were able to be connected through small groups, Sunday School classes, music groups or just to feel connected to each other through the Spirit in worship services. I got a general sense that prayer became both more important and more effective during the year.

Very significant was the new building. There was the frustration of getting it approved by government offices, getting the money to build it, and just getting it built. But the joy that all this was accomplished totally out-weighed the frustration.

Other significant observations were how we dealt with the following:

1. Notable was your concern as well as support of many others in the effort to “save” both Dave and Nick as part of the church family.
2. The way the war with Iraq was dealt with was important. Not only was there special prayer at the beginning of the war, but those involved in it have continued to be remembered.

3. Throughout your writing you have an awareness of your tendency to overwork, but at least you make some effort to keep a balance.
4. I miss the School of Prayer, but with all the stuff there is to do, I may be the only one. The 365 Days of the Bible (being done in 2005) helps to replace it.
5. The problems with youth ministry began early in the year and continued throughout.
6. Taking the team of 30+ to Tsaile was a huge undertaking which changed lives.
7. The hiring of two pastors – one replacement and one new – was an outstanding accomplishment, totally God led. With the problems with youth ministry and budgeting, it had to be.
8. Our work with “Annie” was significant, again changing the lives of those who worked with her, both through in-depth prayer and the understanding of other peoples’ problems.
9. What happened to our small group strategy? (action plan)

2003 Pastoral Diary Comments by Greg Nauman

This was fun to see how God’s hand was in everything we did in 2003. We navigated quite a few crises and came out stronger in the end. Thanks for your leadership and for having me as a friend.

*Items in quotations are keyed or underlined in pastoral diary by the respondent.
Dates refer to the journal entry.*

1. Already in January (1/7/03) we sensed problems with our new youth pastor. At the same time Sam Ruggiero “somewhat reluctantly” agreed to be chairperson of the elders.
2. “God getting the final word. God making the decision. Now that’s a concept! I wonder how many of us as individual believers or how many of our churches want to hold on to the outcome of a decision so tightly that we would never truly run the risk of letting God do the actual final deciding. ‘It seemed tight (in the Holy Spirit) to do so ...’ is a paraphrase of a key expression that appears so often in the story of the early Church. It is a phrase that finds its way into the thinking of the Landisville Church of God and myself more and more these days. Perhaps we need a sign that reads: **GOD HAS THE LAST WORD.**”
(1/7/03)

3. “One of the things that emerges from my prayerful reflection on the Word is that *this is the year of pastor as teacher*. Getting those core values embedded so that we might be faithful to the new DNA God has granted us is a top priority. (1/10/03)

4. “The Holy Spirit, whom God gives to those who obey him, corroborates every detail.” (Acts 5, MSG)

“The Corroborator. The one who confirms the truth. I love this description of the Holy Spirit from Peterson’s translation. We are learning this daily here at LCOG. Believe God. Take a step into the Jordan by faith, a direction you believe God has given you. The corroboration is Acts 5, as Gamaliel saw it, would be the “fruit” of the ministry done in Jesus’ name. We should always be concerned about bearing fruit – for it is the truest evidence of God’s presence in a work, it is the surest testimony to our obedience to God’s leading.” (1/14/03)

5. Elders and church board meetings seemed filled with Jabez-like vision.

6. Speaking of a January 28 call by me to call the congregation to a heart of worship, Greg wrote, “Your strength has been that you could do this in a non-threatening way, and that people can see it is God’s vision. We believe that you are also a follower of this vision as we are.

7. “Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less.” This is a quote from Rick Warren, although I know it is not original with him. Humility is one of the vital aspects of being a true community, a *koinonia*. Too often we have failed as communities because we have failed to demonstrate this mark of Christlikeness.” (2/3/03)

8. The need to be intentional about *koinonia* and connecting is ongoing. It is, however, critical to our health.

9. “Today’s devotions is Acts 1.1-11, Waiting on the Lord. Confident that He will work. Being careful not to run ahead of him. Not naively assuming that we have no responsibility ultimately. Another way of saying this is, ‘Timing is everything’ or better, ‘The Lord’s timing is everything.’ Such a simple, subtle message, yet so crucial. How many times have I run ahead of Jesus because I wondered if He was running with me at all. Well, if He’s not running with me, then maybe I need to stop and wait for Him. Don’t run ahead of Jesus. Don’t run without Jesus. But be prepared at some time to run. Some of this running will be a sprint.” (2/11/03)

10. The Lord seems to be testing our resolve when finances are tight.

11. We were blessed with so many great *men* in leadership.

12. All those government decisions (about the building) *needed* to be in God's hands.

13. "This DNA of hospitality, of encouragement, of love of people, of love of You with its transparency and genuineness, its unashamed trust in You – Lord I cannot begin to express my gratitude at being privileged to be a part of such a beautiful people of God. No one here claims perfection. But we claim a love of Christ and a love by Christ and I affirm the Master's own words, 'By this sign shall all people know that you are my disciples, that you have love for one another.' You can teach about that love, but you cannot program it. That kind of love is the fruit of surrendered lives, lives surrendered to the 'Love That Will Not Let Us Go.' It is a love that can be fanned into flame, and that we must do in every way. That love is the essential double helix in our spiritual DNA. That love makes this church at Landisville both unique and also God's church. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! Thanks be to God!" (3/3/03)

14. As early as March people were being drawn to the dream of ministry to senior citizens.

15. "Early on Tuesday I received a phone call from a distraught Gaye Rock. Brian has been deployed to the front lines. After much prayer and mobilizing others to pray, I finally sat down and using my e-mail devotional, wrote that pastoral epistle on the war. The key – P R A Y ! ! ! Later in the day we had a small but mighty prayer meeting for peace, and comforted Jerry Albright, who is Brian's father-in-law. A meeting to dream and vision regarding Hospitality followed, which went well. And THEN A SUPER BIBLE STUDY. At one point, Randy Lefever shared an eloquent testimony that these guys needed to hear about the incredible working of the Holy Spirit that he sees going on in the church today. He admonished them not to miss that they were being filled by the Spirit and used by the Spirit, and that this smaller church was having an impact far beyond itself in Landisville. It was a gift, a Word from the Lord, I think and I thanked Randy for it. I had started the day singing boisterous praise songs. And I ended a 12+ hour day with a song in my heart and an energy in my spirit that was simply incredible." (3/13/03)

16. We always need to remind ourselves this is God's church and we must do things God's way.

17. "Nine and a half hours, a little over 500 miles on the road and we're home. Tonight's Purpose Driven Life was attended by 16 and went very well. As Dianne noted, there are people who are really engaging this material and growing. That is quite exciting. Another Holy Spirit thing. On the down side, the Planning Commission cancelled its meeting. Our old challenge, Mr. M 'forgot' we were on the agenda. Now we could be delayed another month and will lose at least one additional contractor (over the two we have already lost). Makes me wonder when the township is required to act with integrity and make good on its mistakes instead of making us suffer all the consequences for their choices. I am thinking I

will be asking that question in the next day or so. (3/27/04). Greg adds, "God sure worked this episode out in the church."

16. If the gifts aren't present for a particular ministry, or it is not prospering, God may be saying that's not our calling as a church.

17. The whole bid process for the building, coming in at a figure we could work with, was an awesome work of God.

18. "It seems to me that I need to be teaching authentic community that is rooted and grounded in the love of Christ. And this means that I must teach relationships that are embodiments of the love of Christ. Building community precedes witness, although the building process itself is the very beginning of witness. Core values will be reflected in behaviors. Core values require a community in which to be nurtured. Core values also must shared values if there is to be genuine community. I'll never get all of this teaching, etc. done. In fact, all I might do in my remaining lifetime is plant and water. The full harvest may come long after I lay down the responsibility. But I believe that there is a powerful community of witness being created by the Holy Spirit in Landisville. And I intend to do my part in the time that it is given to me. Thanks be to God!
"(4/7/03)

19. God ultimately removed the "players" in our youth ministry division from the scene.

20. "Easter Sunday evening. Glorious is the operable adjective, unless you prefer joyous. I rose at 5:30 after insufficient sleep but the Holy Spirit took over immediately. By 11:50 we had shared in three powerful services filled with the excitement of the Spirit, bound by a strong sense of community, and joined by many strange, new faces. 317 at the regular services and another 50 at Sunrise – heading towards 400. I spoke on 1 Corinthians 15:1-8,12-22 on the issue that for many the resurrection is too good to be true, but nonetheless true. I shared my own Dodge Spirit story that is so well suited to illustrate that gospel truth and John Cooper and I both shared the story of Jeremiah and his empty Easter egg reminding of us of the necessity of the empty tomb as the heart of the Christian message.

Many responses to this personalization of the gospel truth, and Nick Koppenal started the cycle of "too good to be true" stories that so many in this congregation could tell. Worship received the added joy of Brian Rock's tearful welcome home and the quiet and deliberate gathering of prayer around William and Beth Dixon at the altar. The nursery was overwhelmed at 10:45 and several of our parents rescued the nursery workers by reclaiming their babies and walking them around the back of the sanctuary. Once again that spirit of service and hospitality at work.

Even my troubled youth staff seemed to be able to laugh together. And the music, like so many Sundays, was inspired and inspiring. We announced next

week's ground-breaking to "amens" by my typically quieter 8:30 crowd and thunderous applause at 10:45. Thank You, Lord."

21. We really stopped worrying and let the Holy Spirit lead and God grew the church.

22. We were trying to reshape the culture of LCOG to one with a "passion for loving others.

23. "I am living daily in a journey along a trail blazed by the Holy Spirit. It is so obvious that He is at work in my world and in my church and in my life. There is a certain amount of risk in that reality. He is, after all, the Spirit of Christ and Jesus has an uncanny way of going into unlikely places, places that expose us to dangerous opportunities. But there is a certain reassurance in this reality. For I go know nowhere the Spirit has not been before, except when I walk a different path than that of the Spirit. Life in the Spirit has been one of great freedom: freedom from guilt, freedom from fear, freedom for performance expectations, freedom from sin's worst consequences. Yes, there are some desires and experiences that have been removed from my life. But measured against the fruit of a Spirit-filled life, they are no great loss. And when I count the blessings of those fruit, then walking in the Spirit really is a no-brainer."(6/5/03)

24. "It is always amazing what happens when you turn a lay person loose with a little guidance for their God-given passion." (6/9/03)

25. We were prepared to lose people who did not want to be in step with what the Spirit was doing in the church.

26. "My second observation is that I am responsible for one thing. To be an expression of God's love to the "others" with whom I am connected. And I should not let any form of busyness negate attentiveness to relationships expressing themselves in God's love." (6/27/03)

27. Building community and maintaining unity were big issues for the church at this time in its life.

28. 18 Navajo lives were changed but so were 35 Anglo lives by our ministry at Tsaille.

29. "Saturday Hershey spoke to me of his commitment to sprinklers in the new addition (if we go towards it). In one sense a small thing until I heard the reason. 'Remember the mission statement, Steve.' When I paused, he continued, 'A safe place for people in need.' That safety is not merely spiritual, it is also physical. We have been encouraged to go to Phase 2 before sprinklers are required. What thrilled my heart was to hear the mission statement on the lips of one of my church leaders obviously being the motivation for a very practical decision he had made as a leader. That was an Oh! Wow!" (8.4/04)

30. The way God worked to keep Scott in the loop when offered another job and still bring Barry was amazing and a blessing.

31. "It is sometimes scary. So many times lately people say that I am one of the main reasons they are attracted to the church, that my preaching and leadership are particularly valuable to them. Lord, I am delighted to play a key role connecting people with God and His Church, but I am so aware of my frailness as a man and the fickleness of crowds. I want to see Jesus high and lifted up. I guess it's good this makes me uncomfortable. When it stops making me uncomfortable, I will be in danger of crossing the line." (9/7/03) Greg's comment "Sounds like a good tension."

32. We always seemed to have the right people in the right positions of leadership at the right time making the right decisions. "Oh Wow!"

33. "When you commit yourself and the church to following the leadership of the Holy Spirit, He places you increasingly in the front lines of a spiritual battle." (9/30/03)

34. "...But in our system, the Search Team gets to recommend and we cannot abandon our commitment to consensus decision making. Merely affirming a strong recommendation from the elders is not the road to consensus. If Scott is to be the one, we will indeed all hear it from the Lord. And if Scott is to be the one, he will be able to "wait upon the Lord" as he works in the Search Team" (10/16/03). Greg added, "Has made us stronger in the long run-our commitment to consensus decision making."

35. It was an important question we were asking when adding a third staff member, "Do we want to make an incremental step to merely address a deficiency in our current ministry or do we want to position ourselves in faith for the next big wave of growth and responsibility we believe God will be sending our way very soon? ... (The question must be) "What is God calling us to do?" (10/19/03)

36. "As we looked at the data tonight one of the learnings was that 92% of the respondents would affirm, "Our church is led by the Holy Spirit." That was an astounding, thrilling answer. We are preparing focus groups and I indicated that I wanted an answer to the question, 'Why do we make that statement?' Immediately Randy answered, 'Because that's what they hear preached from the pulpit every week.' And of course, the conclusion would be that if you want this value you must teach this value. But Doug added, 'That's not the entire picture. They have heard that preached a lot before under previous administrations. Part of the difference is you. You model that leadership of the Holy Spirit.'" (10/21/03)

37. “October 30 is a red letter day for the Church of God of Landisville. Now we have a complete staff. January 1st they begin. New facility, new staff, new beginning – big time! Praise the Lord!

38. During the end of the year, we felt that some of our former youth staff still seemed to operate like loose cannons and required the elders to be united in handling them.

2004 Pastoral Diary Comments by Samuel Ruggiero

Good morning, Pastor. I have reviewed your pastoral journal and thank you for allowing me to share your thoughts daily of God’s wonderful work in His church. I have marked certain days that I felt inspirational and holy spirited ... the ones I selected told of how God is working in the life of the church and the community. You always say that we should go where Jesus is and everything we do is for His glory. Your journal on those days I selected were that way ... Again, Pastor Steve, I felt that the Holy Spirit was in those dates and the work of God in our church. – Your brother in Christ, Sam

Note that all of these are quotations simply marked “excellent” or scored by Sam. They are all from the pastoral journal. Dates refer to the journal entry.

1. “There is a growing sense that a *kairos* of the Spirit is upon us, a sanctified time when lives can be impacted and added to the Kingdom in a significant way. I know that is being felt throughout the church by the leadership and congregation alike. God has commissioned us with the ministry of reconciliation and He has positioned us and is now equipping us to totally engage in a serious ministry of reconciliation to God. It is my heart-felt prayer that we will obediently seize the day to exhibit the Good News – to season our community with God’s grace and light our community with God’s love. “Now is the day of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.”

2. “I shared with our two women’s bible studies that we are praying for 25 of our fathers to attend the March 12-13 Seminar and 25 fathers who are in their circles of influence. I have asked that they pray this will have a major impact both on our church and our community.” (1/12/04)

3. “Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way ... in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love, with truthful speech and in the power of God ...” (2 Corinthians 6:4a, 6b-7a)

God has given us a full arsenal of tools to be the servants of his grace to a world that, although no friend of grace, desperately needs that grace. As a pastor, as a servant leader, I am particularly drawn to these four descriptors: To be a man

filled with the Holy Spirit, obedient to the Spirit's promptings. To be a man known by God's love, unashamed and authentic. To be a man of integrity, particularly as a communicator of truth. To be a man utterly dependent upon the power of God, to be a vessel of that power for the powerless. By being an embodiment of Christ, the Kingdom of God is revealed in my leadership.

I am getting used to a brand-new reality—Senior Pastor. I continue to affirm the work of Barry and Scott. It is incredible. Last night I left the building at 8:30 after an hour with each of my two primary commissions. Two more commissions were still meeting but Barry and Scott were the point men there. That was a blessed feeling. We started this morning with a fine staff meeting and then Barry headed to the hospital. I was able to sit down, delve into the Word and a couple of hours later had my exegetical work done, an outline completed, a “preachable” first draft for this weekend's sermon. I was also able to have a leisurely 45 minute visit with Woody Miller – mostly just listening to him. I felt no pressure or distractions from being attentive to him. Clearly, I am going to have more time for the Word, prayer, planning and equipping for worship and outreach, and to just be “attentive” to the flock as the Lord prompts. I particularly look forward to adequate time for prayer, the Word, sermon prep, vision-casting and pastoral care.

Yesterday Scott and I were having a brief meeting to do some planning. My “I am sure your decision or solution will be acceptable” attitude prompted Scott to say, “Compared to my previous work here, the approach is different as night and day and I prefer your day.” That gentle and unprompted affirmation humbled me and reminded me that the leadership values I have chosen are truly from the Lord. We will stay this course because it is clearly bearing fruit in unity, creativity, and confidence.” (1/14/04)

4. “A banner is spread across the banquet table and there is a great celebration in Heaven. This morning at a few minutes before noon ‘Annie’ came to the altar, bowed the knee, and gave her heart to the Lord, Jesus Christ. Her name is now emblazoned across that banner. There were huge tears of joy at the altar of the church. In fact, we pretty much ended the service with that single act of surrender, long prayed for with great energies of love wrestling with the Evil One for the eternal soul of this desperate, but now hope-filled child of the Living God. Many who had been praying “cover” for her since Thursday surrounded her at the altar. Later almost 20 of us met in my study to pray a hedge of protection around this newly born babe in Christ. Marilyn cried. People clapped. Dianne, as we exited the church, pirouetted with joyful ecstasy. What began the spring of 2003 as a last ditch effort to rescue one who had been dedicated to Satan ended (so to speak) with the Spirit filling her heart as the Holy One reclaimed one for whom Christ has died. I really think there is no conversion experience that has brought great joy to me as a pastor, a person who has dedicated himself to reconciling people to God. Lord, my heart overflowed. Maria noted that a fresh snow had already covered the landscape, symbolic of the cleansing of Annie's soul. Though her sins were as scarlet, now she is whiter than snow. Lord, my soul leaps for joy.

The beginning of the same service had a joy almost as powerful. Taylor Marie Vulgaris, barely six years old had given her heart to Jesus Christ. This morning she made her profession of faith by following the Lord in baptism. Again, my eyes overflowed with tears as our hearts were bursting with joy for Taylor's faith. Thank You for today, Lord!" (1/18/04)

5. "The Spirit blows where it will ..." (John 3)

What a truth! The institutional church actually struggles with this concept as we try to program the work of God, to put Him in an organized box. God, of course, refuses to be restricted to human expectations and defined by human limitations. The church that sees itself as an organism, as a living entity, grasps the truth more naturally. This is specifically so when the church's image of itself is that it is the continuing Body of Jesus Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit. When you submit to the Spirit and follow His leading, it really comes as no surprise that the (wind) Spirit blows where it will. And what a ride! How great an adventure is ours when we journey with the Holy Spirit! The wind blows right through the world's deepest need to breathe new life and new hope into what is dying to resurrect it in grace. And each time I experience or witness the evidence of the Spirit, I have to bow my head in humble and grateful appreciation that we should be so privileged (myself in particular) to be a part of the Great Work of God. My prayer tonight is, 'Blow Spirit, blow with winds of gentle grace and hurricanes of holy power. Blow Spirit, blow!'

Last night's D. Min. was truly energizing. These folks are truly enjoying the opportunity to explore the work of the Lord at the Landisville Church of God. No hesitation and a readiness to plunge in and share the observations of their heart. I am particularly impressed by the "shared vision" that is expressed by them --- not only a shared vision; but a solid, biblical, outward-focused vision. If they reflect even a quarter of the people then this vision has clearly begun to permeate and shape the church. It gives me a sense of awe at what I have been given articulation through me as chief vision caster, and how important it has been not only to teach that this church is led by the Holy Spirit, but to model the Spirit's leadership in my own life. But even more, I am over and over reminded that this not my vision nor my church -- it is God's! The Spirit is doing the shaping and defining. And He is not using only my voice to cast vision, but many distinct voices---each with their own passion for Christ and circle of influence." (1/20/04)

6. "Ash Wednesday. A little spiritual warfare is going on in my life. This is Lent and I need to look again at my anchor which is the cross and my goal which is Christ-likeness. Starting out with a sense of being overwhelmed makes it easy to lose your spiritual focus. Lord, as I gather with Your people tonight, as we once again claim the cross as our anchor, may I sense the empowerment of Your Holy Spirit lifting me up. I have an important message tonight. My heart's deep concern is that Your people at Landisville will grow deeper in faith, that they may grow and mature in every way, that they will be unified and committed to

proclaiming God's glory in our lives. That we might be the people of a great God. That our great God might be honored because of the evidence of His transformation of us as a people. I pray that this message and this Lenten season will be vessels that with that very mission and calling. In Jesus' name. Amen." (2/25/04)

7. "We need seriously to get Annie's Easter intervention completely planned this week. As this goes on, five more persons join the church tomorrow. I am excited because our Music Director, Jim Riggs and his wife Saralee are among them." (3/20/04)

8. "Bob Crosby at Prayer Meeting said one of his joys was 'that our church has become sensitive to the needs of the people around us, that we have a heart for people who need Jesus.' Hearing those words verbalized does my heart good.

Lance Finley came yesterday and we spoke of my chapter. I think he was surprised that I had a grasp on these truths about ministry to the postmoderns. He did point to Revelation 11 and "the two witnesses" as a piece of eschatology worth exploring. It speaks of the resurrection power at work in the church in all circumstances and particularly at the end of history. Increasingly, I am thinking of the importance of a new eschatology for the church on the other side. One that emphasizes triumph in a world coming to its end. The church is strong and must prevail. It is the prophetic word of God. Too often we go on the defensive, fighting a rear guard action." (3/24/04)

9. "A house of prayer. That is what God wants for His Temple. And as our body is the temple of the Lord, does it not also need to be a house of prayer. As I thought about this imagery, one of the strong things I am sensing is a constant desire to see the people of the church become more prayerful. Last night as I sat in Kingdom Prayers, Too; I noted the persistent smallness of these groups. What came to me was not 'how to get more people into prayer meeting,' but 'how to get more prayer into people.' Prayer partners and triads formed in my mind. As if to confirm it, we had a new lady named Lisa visit last night. At a point of sharing in Bible study, she talked about what having prayer partners has meant in her life. So now I am beginning to wrap my mind around that. Building up prayer partners in the church. Not a new idea, just one often deferred." (3/25/04)

10. "A powerful Few Good Men last night. We talked about how the church deals with the postmodern world. The dialogue over this makes me want to rewrite it in some way. The theological stimulation could turn this chapter into a book itself. Last night my mind wrapped around the church of the rapture versus the church of the resurrection. Rapture has captured the modern mind, but resurrection may be the hope of the postmodern one. (I may have to e-mail Brian McClaren about this.)

Prayers for Annie today, who is growing ever more fearful about Easter. Did not get to see the Stephens about Danna's letter about bur-out and leaving the church. Lord, open this door. Barry shared the enthusiastic testimony of Ruth

Donohue at his small group and how she is persevering in her witness to her husband and son. We pray for this contagious Christian.

‘Help us be channels of your Good News.’ This was Jim Rigg’s prayer at choir tonight which began with thanking God for the music and moved to the blessing of Jean Spiese and then moved to the impact of my sermon series “which so many of us are talking about and we are learning to do (again, Jim’s words)” and then moved on to these words I started with. I know I was moved by the prayer. Barb was in tears. When Jim’s spirit-warmed heart begins its overflow there is a winsome affection and joy that touches the depths of those who are praying with him. It is incredible. It is a blessing.

Searching for and found a better safe house for Annie. Enjoyed a small, but moving Kingdom Prayers.” (3/31/04)

11. “Yesterday was another fine day in worship. A number of visitors for the weekend. The choir did a superb job in its cantata – twice! Woods and Spieses were back in worship. We followed worship with a very good Trauma Team meeting with Annie and her husband. Later Sam called to say that Annie was open to an anointing. Dianne and Marilyn say this will help some, so we will have such a service tomorrow night before the regular Healing Prayers. One more step to help her. It was good for her to be affirmed by team member yesterday who thanked her for the opportunity to come alongside her in prayer. Lord, this thrills my heart.

Tonight is our Elders’ meeting. The growing spiritual sensitivity and maturity is producing a strength in them and for the church that is truly a wonder – an “Oh! Wow!” of the Lord. Never have I had elders who across the board demonstrated such gifts, such maturity, such faith. Praise the Lord!

Spiritual warfare persists in troubling at least two of our younger families. Lord, guard their hearts and do not let them draw away from the church—but to draw closer to the Body for the help, support, and accountability that they need.” (4/5/04)

12. “The Elders’ Meeting began to focus on strategy, especially for prayer and caring for our caregivers. The issue of spiritual burn-out is ever before us and dare not be ignored, especially as I observe at least two elders and a whole lot of children’s workers who are close to over-loaded. Our ability to meet this challenge will go a long way to being the ‘safe place’ that is part of our vision as a church.

We have two casualties of the spiritual warfare for Annie. A couple whose family problems have over-whelmed and left two critical twelve hour holes in our ministry. We, of course, will release them with grace and encouragement. Now I am praying the Lord will identify their replacements. The Elders will be going to the safe house Thursday night to pray and to sanctify the space we will be using in this spiritual battle. Tonight we will bring Annie and her husband to a gathering of the elders so that we might anoint her for healing from the worst effects of her D.I.D. The battle is clearly underway.” (4/6/04)

13. "Last night was supposed to be a meeting of the remaining part of the my D. Min. team. Only Jess Williams showed up, but we had a great discussion. From her perspective the postmodern material is right on, especially the summaries or categories. The 'Compass' is vital. The section on worship needs to stay. I have been thinking about a typical D. Min. as a 'modern' document, yet those who are going to use it (as students) will increasingly be postmodern. What about a postmodern dissertation, one that blends those 'stories' as a hook for the principles. People need dialogue, even with the theological section. Theology, after all, is the science of God. This project needs to be above such reductionist, objectified categorization of the truth. Detached waiting may not be an appropriate communication tool. Postmodern may sound too much like sermon, but modern sounds too much like a scientific tract. One of my delights is to "surprise" my younger people with my ability (despite being an aging baby boomer) to exegete the culture and think outside the box of modernity, that they have come to expect (and not always appreciate) of their pastors and their church. They want us to understand them. Maybe there's hope for the church in this new day of God's grace." (4/21/04)

14. "Without details, I am frustrated. There is no margin in my life. I am always concerned that this will work against making wise decisions, undermine me spiritually, and impair my leadership of the church. I see it in many ways. And yet, I am persuaded that the Lord is in charge and that He will help us (the church and I) handle all the challenges. He is mindful of my state and He knows that providing for the flock's needs through my ministry partners (elders, etc.) helps "mind" me. I know that life does not have to be easy or perfect, and that I am not indispensable I know that the Lord is working for the good of His people and His pastor. None of this has changed, nor will it. My God is able and at work. I need to let Him complete His work in me. So for now, Lord, I simply trust You and look for Your help in restoring the balance. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen." (4/30/04)

15. "Late on Sunday afternoon. Although it is Memorial Day Weekend we had almost 250 in worship. A number of new people, two sets who came without the people that had originally invited them. A wonderful spirit of joy in the sharing time. Yvonne and her husband John were in the 10:45 service. We jammed the altar as we dedicated/commissioned Wayne and Debbie for the new ministry at Penbrook. It was an outpouring of affection that I hope will always leave them with joyous memories. It was a reminder that this indeed is a kingdom ministry. The Lord gave me a message from Psalm 25 about the mercies of God and how we must let God be God and use His power to transform, to not play games that we can or want to control Him. It was a message I know was needed and spoke to many. (Dena Slater called later and wants to meet to discuss the message.) Thomas Vulgaris told me today he wanted to be baptized, so that group for June 13th is now growing. That day will be an awesome one as well. The fellowship and worship today were so very special. I am glad I was back from North Carolina to share in it." (5/30/04)

16. "Mike Darrenkamp died late yesterday afternoon. A sudden heart attack while he was mowing probably brought on by his diabetes. A neighbor found him down in the yard and Maggie called me. The EMS, police, every one of the emergency crew was there before I arrived but within just a minute of my arrival they knew he was gone. A whole lot of ministry went into the next three hours, then Dianne was called back for two more with Marilyn and Jim. The news, as we spread it to the appropriate persons, was both a shock and a sadness. Lisa recounted Mike's last act of ministry, sharing with the children of Wee Church how God had led him back to the church through his daughter. Indeed, the Mike of today compared to the Mike of a year ago was amazing. It was so obvious that Jesus had taken up residence. I know he is at peace with the Lord. Today's attention now turns to Yvonne, who is moving ever nearer her death as well."
(7/26/04)

17. "I serve an amazing church. So many people at work for today's beginning to the Fine Arts Camp and tomorrow's celebration services for Mike Darrenkamp. At the same time people continue to visit Yvonne at Zion United as she nears her final days. In fact, the nursing home has commented on the level of support she is getting. That work will get heavier with a third plus shift at 9:00 tonight when many will be in the church to shift the building's focus from VBS to funeral. Val Albright said last night, "I guess it's wonderful to have a church that is so busy." Yes, when it is busy in useful, people-serving, God-honoring ministry.

Maggie is starting to amaze us with the strength and faith she is exhibiting. She wants people to be reminded that Mike is with Jesus and that there should be gladness. She has helped pick music for his service and it is "joy" music. Her two requests for specials are "I've Just Seen Jesus" and "How Great Thou Art." The song she wanted the congregation to sing is "Shine Jesus, Shine." Last night she showed up at Kingdom Prayers with Lisa and asked us to pray for Kim and Diane, her unchurched, next-door neighbors, especially husband Kim who had suffered the trauma of finding Mike's body Sunday. It is truly, truly incredible, Lord what You have done in Maggie's life in the last year. You are truly a great God, a mighty God of healing and grace."
(7/28/04)

2004 Pastoral Diary Comments by Bulah Dougherty

*Items in quotations are keyed or underlined in pastoral diary by the respondent.
Dates refer to the journal entry.*

1. Both Pastors Barry and Scott functioned competently from the outset as self-starters in their respective ministry areas. The leadership celebrated that this reduced the pressure on Pastor Steve.

2. We learned that suffering is part of everyday discipleship.
3. Early in January we knew that God was enlarging our territory and that the Holy Spirit was building upon a spirit of obedience. We also knew more needed to catch this vision.
4. God's timing is always on target.
5. Scott, who had worked with us before, no longer had frustration under Steve. Scott's quote in journal: "Compared to my previous work here, the approach is different as night and day and I prefer your day." (1/14/04)
6. The day Annie, our SRA victim became a Christian, our hearts grew more committed to helping rescue more such as her.
7. We wanted to see more and more what would happen if we stopped trying to program God's work and let Him out of the box.
8. "But even more, I am over and over reminded that it is not my vision nor my church—it is God's! The Spirit is doing the shaping and defining. And He is not only using my voice to cast vision, but many distinct voices—each with its own passion for Christ and its own circle of influence." (1/20/04) Bulah adds, "God at work!"
9. "But God's intention is to be fruitful. When we stop being humble servants of Christ, when we stop making faith-filled choices of obedience, He will move His anointing elsewhere because He intends to be fruitful. Our faithfulness does not control the length of the season, it does not produce the anointing but our faithlessness will forfeit it." (1/24/04) This was a prophetic word from Pastor Glenn Peck shared with the elders. Bulah noted that we found this to be true.
10. We did not understand why some persons thought we might choose an aggressive, abusive leadership style.
11. Our elders grew, particularly Sam Ruggiero, our head elder.
12. We began focusing on the goal to help the church grow and mature in every way.
13. It became vital that we add "kingdom-focused" to our core values.
14. Learning about the evangelistic chain that involved the total church was an important concept.
15. We watched even older members reawaken in their passion to find a ministry and use their gifts.

16. The church of the rapture mentality sometimes robs the church of its present vitality.

17. It was important for us to recognize “burn-out” in people and try to heal them to hold them.

18. Bulah, our longest term elder and oldest leader, highlighted as an important factor in our church’s ministry this journal observation: “Never have I had elders who across the board demonstrated such gifts, such maturity, such faith.” (4/5/04)

19. We were strengthened by Pastor Scott’s honesty and certainty about what he believed.

20. “Yes men’ do not always speak your will ...” (4/16/04)

21. The FLOW Center generated great momentum for outreach.

22. The young adults (college and finishing college) were becoming a real blessing to the church.

23. People early saw the benefit of Barry and Scott and did not complain about the strain this added staff put on the budget because we recognized God was providing.

24. The Lord was in charge and making the decisions.

25. Spiritual warfare over Annie, our SRA victim, taught us to depend on God’s strength.

26. Our ministry was helping people gain confidence in the Lord.

27. We found that an ministry of outreach and evangelism required a passion for the lost.

28. People saw in our pastor that the ministry was not about him.

29. Growing churches didn’t need rules so much as lessons in courtesy.

30. The elders needed always to maintain confidentiality.

31. Parents uncommitted to Sunday School generally meant kids who were absent from that program. It was a problem we had to address.

32. Pastor Steve's starting of a young adult ministry as senior pastor was an important step to affirm this age group.

33. The elders grew spiritually as they participated in ministries of anointing for healing.

34. Pastor Steve's messages on servanthood and obedience were among his most significant. Our prayer ministries at worship began to reveal a compassion and caring for people that was deeply moving.

35. There are times that "no" just needs to be the answer to ministry requests.

36. We celebrated that Joe Jordan and his family were such a help to us but that now another church in Indiana would get to have their gifts.

37. Referring to no. 31 above, it became important in July that Pastor Steve reminded the parents of their commitment to helping their children find faith in Jesus Christ.

38. Busyness is good when it is useful, people-serving, God-honoring ministry that makes the church busy.

39. Annie's continuing spiritual growth encouraged the elders with the goodness and greatness of God.

40. We celebrated long time residents of Landisville who were finally getting their hearts right with the Lord and getting involved in ministry.

41. We celebrated God's moving Steve into leadership with the Lancaster County Council of Churches.

42. God needs to get the credit.

43. The emergence of Leadership Prayers, a new ministry for praying for our pastors and elders, was a good plan that will help us in the future.

Afterthoughts

Throughout this D. Min. project, in part because of the Senior Pastor's teaching and the things we were learning, but mostly because of a hunger and thirst for leading the church in righteousness and its mission, our elders were at all times deeply reflective about the meaning and impact of what was being

taught – the precedents and the fruit. Their varied comments above give you a small reflection of the value of their contribution to helping the church follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

APPENDIX 19

THOUGHTS ON A SPIRITUAL GIFTS COUNSELOR

THOUGHTS ON SPIRITUAL GIFT COUNSELOR

*This document was prepared by the senior pastor
for exploration with possible candidates
for this position in summer of 2004*

1. Would provide for regular consultations with persons seeking to understand their gifts and find placement with one of the extended ministries of the ministries of the Church of God of Landisville.
2. Would administer spiritual gifts instruments and maintain a file of the file of the congregation's spiritual gifts as they are discovered.
3. Would work with the pastoral staff to see that adequate opportunities are given for Spiritual Gifts training (i.e., Class 301 and others).
4. Would meet with pastoral and ministry staff, commission chairs, etc. to determine what kind of ministries would be available – and what gifts and skills are required.
5. Would refer person to staff members or mentor for further gifts exploration or deployment and monitor that process.
6. Would be responsible to the Senior Pastor for direction (training budget has to come from Christian Education's small group ministries.)

APPENDIX 20
POLICY FOR ENCOURAGING
INDIGENOUS MINISTRIES

ENCOURAGING INDIGENOUS MINISTRIES

*Proposed by Senior Pastor and Adopted
by Church Council January 2004*

The Church of God of Landisville is firmly committed to the priesthood (ministry) of all believers. Within this understanding we have always taught that the way to determine God's will for the church or for individuals is to figure out what God is doing (or initiating) and go do it with Him.

Although our staff and ministry commissions routinely identify needs and develop programs of ministry, we have always affirmed and encouraged individuals or groups of similar passions to follow God's leading and to initiate ministries as God prompts them.

We are reminded of two important scripture principles. I Corinthians 12 teaches that the church is a body and we are work "together" in unity. We are also taught that all believers are accountable to Christ (1 Corinthians 3) who is the head of the church and therefore, to the leadership of the church who are responsible to see that our ministries are consistent with the mission God has given the Church of God of Landisville and faithful to the authority of the Word of God (i.e., operated by its principles.)

New ministries as they are identified should understand that they will be placed under the mentoring or authority of one of our five ministry commissions. This is sometimes done through the guidance of the staff member who handles that area of ministry or through a member of the Commission that is responsible for that area of the church's mission. This is particularly important if they intend to represent the Church of God of Landisville, recruit among its members, use its facilities, be supported by its resources, and be promoted by church staff and through church publications.

Initially new ministries are responsible to raise their own support (within the guidelines of the Finance Commission), unless the Commission under whom they are placed has available monies to assist them.

New ministries are asked to be mindful of the commitments made to existing ministries when recruiting leadership and workers. The church is committed to healthy Christians who are not overextended and who are working according to their spiritual gifts. Again, seeking the counsel of the appropriate pastor or mentoring commission will help insure that the total church's ministry is kept strong and unified.

**DO YOU FEEL GOD IS LEADING YOU TO
START A NEW MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH
OR AS A PART OF THE CHURCH'S MISSION?**

Prayerfully consider these questions:

- What would be the purpose of this ministry?
 Who would be the specific target (beneficiaries) of this ministry?
 What resources of leadership, workers, finance and facility/equipment
 would this require?
 Are there specific persons you believe would share in the leadership of this
 ministry (if it is more than a one or two person ministry)?
 How does this ministry contribute to the stated mission of the Church of God of
 Landisville?

*Make an appointment with a pastor, church staff member,
 or commission chair and share your dream.*

- They will help you refine the initial details.
 They will alert you to any potential barriers or problems.
 They will prayerfully connect you with a leadership mentor
 (from the staff or a commission).
 They will help you find a commission that will accept accountability
 responsibility for your ministry.

The mentor or commission will help you

- Share your dream in the church.
 Identify and encourage people of similar passions and gifts
 to join you in this ministry.
 Help get you connected with the physical needs
 (rooms, schedules, resources, promotion) to make this ministry a reality.
 Pray for you big time !!!!!!!

If You Ministry Involves ... See this Staff Mentor

Worship or Prayer	Pastor Steve
Leadership Development	Pastor Steve
Senior Ministries	Pastor Barry
Outreach or Evangelism	Pastor Steve
Music Teams or Choirs	Jim Riggs
Care for the Property	Pastor Barry
Children or Youth	Pastor Scott
Family or Parenting	Pastor Scott
Sunday School Classes	Cindy Cooper
Small Groups and Bible Studies	Gaye Rock
Visitation or Congregational Care	Pastor Barry
Mission Teams	Pastor Steve
Ministry in the Community	Any Pastor
Helping Specific Church Members/Target Groups	Any Pastor