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Kingdom Entrepreneurs: Beyond the Church with the Church

A Project Report

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By

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Abstract

In 1974 a group of Christian leaders from around the world met for the purpose of addressing challenges in global evangelism. Those participating in the Lausanne Congress knew something needed to be done to improve the efforts of Christians to take the whole Gospel to the whole world. The Lausanne Covenant launched a global movement and a call to action encouraging Christians to move from the comfort of their own churches to the mission field of their communities. This call was to not only show the love of Jesus, but to serve and help others grow in relationship with Jesus by carrying out the Great Commission in creative and holistic ways. Decades later, research continues to show the decline of the North American church.

This project focuses on how congregations can embrace Kingdom entrepreneurs to effectively carry out the Great Commission. Centered on the theology of mission, the purpose of this project is to encourage congregations and Kingdom entrepreneurs to work and serve together to take the whole Gospel to the whole world.

Using a qualitative research method, twenty-three Kingdom entrepreneurs were interviewed. Responses to questions in the categories of theology, mission and purpose, ministry and Kingdom connection, and stewardship were coded and analyzed. Themes, recommended best practices, and areas of further research related to embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs were identified.

The findings in this study reveal the need for a better understanding of the gifts and skills God has already placed in a congregation, the need for theologically grounded language to better define entrepreneurial mission, and the need for a more intentional focus on collaborative efforts between Kingdom entrepreneurs and congregations to carry out the Great Commission.

Acknowledgments

I thank God for how He has brought this project together, constantly providing the vision and the provision for me to be able to complete it.

When I was eight years old, my mom loaded me and two coolers full of ground sausage and ground hamburger from our livestock farm into our station wagon and drove me around our rural southern Ohio neighborhood. My goal was to sell all of the meat I could. All of the proceeds from my sales efforts were invested in my livestock projects on the farm. On that chilly fall night, my entrepreneurial spirit was born. Important lessons were learned.

Since then that entrepreneurial spirit has led me to take on new and challenging career roles, move away from that small town, launch my own business, and now lead a nonprofit ministry. As I think back on those days on our family's farm, I have to thank both of my parents, Robert and Patricia, for not only encouraging me, but for providing me with such great examples of what an entrepreneur is and does. Thank you for your ongoing encouragement and support.

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To "MyMatt," thanks for the daily reminder that everything will be OK. I'm starting to think you might be right. Friday nights at the kitchen counter can now resume. We may not look like a winning team, but we are one!

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Finally, to my mentor, ministry partner, church consulting superhero, and friend, Rev. Dr. Kent R. Hunter, thanks for your honest feedback, critical questions, and willingness to embrace this project as we discern how to best help pastors and congregations in the future. There are not enough words to thank you for how you have blessed me by sharing with me your heart for the Great Commission and God's people. I pray God uses this project to bless you and the future of our ministry efforts.

The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed.

– Hudson Taylor

For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come.

– René Padilla

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Chapter One

Introduction

Every five years since 1935, the Gallup Organization polls individuals asking this question: "Do you happen to be a member of a church, synagogue, or mosque?"[1] In 1935 the poll reported that 73% of Americans identifying as a member of a Christian church. The 2020 poll showed that 47% of Americans identify as being a member of a church. A decline in church membership took place in each five-year segment of the poll except for the five years following World War II. The poll suggests that as the population of the United States has increased, the church's ability to gain new members is decreasing. The research also shows the influence of Christianity is waning across those in younger age demographic categories. The Gallup poll encompasses all major subgroups in Catholic and Protestant churches.[2]

An extensive religious trend report from the Pew Research Center, released in September 2022, modeled recent and future trends of religion in America.[3] The research report presented several scenarios related to the current state of Christian churches across the U.S. and trends in religious switching.[4] The Pew research summary trend of switching is concerning. "Depending on whether religious switching continues at recent rates, speeds up, or stops entirely, the projections show Christians of all ages shrinking from 64% to between a little more than half

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[1] Jeffrey M. Jones, "U.S. Church Membership Falls below Majority for First Time," Gallup, March 29, 2021, https://news.gallup.com/poll/341963/church-membership-falls-below-majority-first-time.aspx.

[2] Jones.

[3] "Modeling the Future of Religion in America," Pew Research Center, September 13, 2022. https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/09/13/modeling-the-future-of-religion-in-america/.

[4] According to the Pew Research Center, religious switching is defined as a change between the faith affiliation in which a person was raised (in childhood) and their present religious identity (in adulthood). The research shows that switching does not happen in a single moment but is described as a gradual process with those who may never have felt a strong connection to their faith identity even though they have been raised in a faith tradition.

(54%) and just above one-third (35%) of all Americans by 2070."[5] The Pew research also reports, "People who are religiously unaffiliated, sometimes called religious 'nones,' account for 30% of the U.S. population. Adherents of all other religions—including Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists—totaled about 6%."[6] The report continues, "This accelerating trend is reshaping the U.S. religious landscape, leading many people to wonder what the future of religion in America might look like."[7] As a consultant to churches, the researcher has experienced a similar question, "What will our church look like in five or ten years?" being asked by Christian congregations.

While the main focus of the Pew study is to analyze and project trends based on several different scenarios, it does not explore the theories or root causes of these trends. Nor does it provide strategies to reverse the potential trends. It does reveal the complexity of religious challenges in America. The research brings clarity to understanding the challenges the Christian church[8] in the U.S. is facing related to expanding the reach of the Gospel.

Based on research conducted in 2017 and 2018, the Barna Group generated an extensive report on the awareness and understanding of the mission of the local congregation and specifically how Matthew 28:19-20, the Great Commission,[9] is understood as part of that

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[5] Pew Research.

[6] Pew Research.

[7] Pew Research.

[8] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 171. The church, as defined for this project, applies the definition by David J. Bosch: The church is "that community of people who are involved in creating new relationships among themselves and in society at large and, and doing this, bearing witness to the lordship of Christ."

[9] Matthew 28:19-20, "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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" [NIV]. This passage will be referred to throughout the project as the Great Commission.

mission. The 2018 study report revealed that only 17% of regular church attenders could identify and define the Great Commission.[10] The survey results further revealed that 51% of Christians were unfamiliar with the Great Commission and its meaning for the mission of the church.[11] Barna updated the survey in 2022 to show that 63% of Christians are unfamiliar with the Great Commission.[12] The Barna report points out, "The actual term "the Great Commission" is not in the Bible, but rather refers to key passages that explain God's call for disciple-making and the mandate for mission work."[13] This unfamiliarity with the Great Commission is a significant issue concerning the ability of the local congregation to reach more people and disciple them to become followers of Jesus. Barna concludes, "regardless of how it is expressed, there are serious challenges facing the whole Church."[14] These issues impact the growth of Christianity in the United States.

Collectively, this research shows that Christian churches in the United States are in a state of numeric decline, and Christianity as a faith movement in the U.S. continues to struggle.

[10] Barna, *The Great Disconnect*, 6.

[11] Barna, *The Great Disconnect*, 8.

[12] Barna, *The Great Disconnect*, 15.

[13] Barna, *The Great Disconnect*, 17.

[14] Barna, *The Great Disconnect*, 17.

Christians are given the mission to share the good news of Jesus.[15] However, many Christians are not engaging in the mission of the whole congregation to reach their whole community. Matthew 28:19-20 reads, "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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."[16] Christians understand this as the Great Commission, the call to go and make disciples, just as Jesus did. The Great Commission is often shared in sermons and teachings about the purpose of the church alongside Acts 1:8, "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."[17] Christians remain largely unaware of their role in the mission of the church: to be witnesses for Christ and to fulfill the Great Commission.

As people wonder what the future of religion may look like and Christian congregations ponder what their churches may look like in five to ten years, it is helpful to understand where the recent history of the church has engaged with these questions. Efforts to address the challenges facing the church locally and globally have launched movements, programs, and

[15] The good news of Jesus refers to the act of God sending his Son, Jesus, into the world. It is the death of Jesus on the cross that brings reconciliation between God and the world. In John 3:16 we read, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" [NIV]. Later in John 13:34-35, we read how Christians are to respond to this news by following this command: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another" [NIV]. Living out this command includes the commission to share this news by following the Great Commission. Additionally in Luke 14:23 we read, "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full" [NIV]. The reinforces the message that as Christians we are to be actively going out into the world to share the good news that Jesus died for all people for the forgiveness of sin and to enable reconciliation with the Father and that there is a place for everyone to have a relationship with God.

[16] Matthew 28:19-20 [NIV]. All of the scriptures used throughout the project are taken from the NIV translation.

[17] Acts 1:8.

approaches to more effectively carry out the Great Commission. Understanding the current state of Christianity and these historic efforts are essential for creating new platforms for sharing the Gospel through the local church today.

Background

In July 1974, 2,700 evangelical Christians[18] from more than 150 nations came together for the International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland. The Lausanne Congress was considered the largest gathering of Christians ever held, representing a wide spectrum of evangelical church bodies.[19] Under the leadership and influence of Billy Graham, several concerns about the state of global Christianity were outlined and addressed in the Lausanne Covenant. According to Timothy Tennent, "The Lausanne Covenant is widely regarded as one of the most important theological documents in the evangelical movement."[20] The Lausanne Covenant is "a Biblical declaration on evangelism, which brings together the proclamation of Christ, the offer of salvation, the call for repentance and faith, and the cost of discipleship."[21] Further, the covenant provided a platform where "solid grounds are laid for Christian social responsibility, namely the character of God, the value of human beings made in his image, the requirement for neighbor-love, and the righteousness of the Kingdom."[22] Tennent writes, "The Lausanne Movement is fundamentally a network of Christians committed to world

[18] John R.W. Stott, ed. *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement, 1974-1989* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub, 1997), x.

[19] Stott, xi.

[20] Lars Dahle, Margunn Serigstad Dahle, and Knud Jørgensen, eds. *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014), 45.

[21] Stott, xv.

[22] Stott, xv.

evangelism. This does not mean we expect every person in the world to respond to the Gospel, but that it is our sacred duty to make sure that every people group in the world has the opportunity to hear the Gospel and to see the living witness of the Gospel lived out through the witness of the church."[23]

René Padilla,[24] reflecting on Lausanne I and the signing of the Lausanne Covenant, "If there is one thing that Lausanne I made clear, it was that social action and evangelism are essential aspects of the church's mission; that proclaiming the Gospel cannot be separated from expressing God's love in concrete ways."[25] The Lausanne Covenant became a central guiding document for many evangelical churches, pastors, and ministry leaders as they sought to address issues regarding church growth[26] and how the local church carries out effective global evangelism.

The call to action toward greater global evangelism created a more defined and significant meaning at Lausanne. René Padilla explains the idea this way:

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[23] Dahle et al, 47.

[24] René Padilla served as general secretary for Latin America of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students and later of the Latin America Theological Fraternity. He was president of the Kairos Foundation of Buenos Aires, international president of Tearfund UK and Ireland, and president of the Micah Network for integral mission.

[25] Padilla, 21.

[26] Donald A. McGavran and C. Peter Wagner, *Understanding Church Growth*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1990), 6. For this research, the author is using church growth as defined by Donald McGavran and C. Peter Wagner in their book *Understanding Church Growth*. "Church growth is basically a theological stance. God requires it. It looks to the Bible for direction as to what God wants done. It holds that belief in Jesus Christ, understood according to the Scriptures, is necessary for salvation. Church growth rises in unshakable theological conviction. Anyone who would comprehend the growth of Christian churches must see it primarily as faithfulness to God. God desires it. Christians, like their Master, are sent to seek and save the lost. Rather than gaining something for oneself, finding the lost is to become 'your servant for Christ's sake.' Church growth is human action: the strong bearing the burdens of the weak and introducing to the hungry the bread by which humans live. Nevertheless, God's obedient servant seeks church growth not as an exercise in improving humanity, but because the extension of the church is pleasing to God. Church growth is faithfulness. Church growth follows where Christians show faithfulness in finding the lost. It is not enough to search for lost sheep. Church growth follows where the lost are not merely found, but are restored to normal life in the fold, though it may be a life they have never consciously known."

> Lausanne, unlike some evangelical gatherings, had headstrong horizontal as well as vertical concerns. The world was not simply there to be evangelised, but to be loved and served. People are not just pew-fodder, scalps or statistics for our success-oriented evangelistic reports, but people with a wide range of personal, social, political, and other needs. The church is not simply to boom its message at them from air-conditioned pulpits, but to reach out in caring service and compassion. The incarnational responsibilities of our faith can be neither invaded nor avoided. Jesus' kenotic pattern (Phil. 2:5-8) is ever to be ours. And we are to try and actualise in the world externally that peace or shalom of God which we know internally.[27]

Padilla makes a critical point: Christians are given a mission not just to introduce others to Jesus Christ, but to love and serve others just as Jesus did. What Christians know about Jesus cannot only be shared among those already in the pew claiming the same faith. All Christians are equally called to carry this faith externally to others who do not yet know Jesus. This means taking the mission and ministry of Jesus beyond the established church congregation as a movement. The call to take the mission out to others is shared in Acts 1:8, "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."[28] The call to be and go make disciples requires all Christians to be witnesses sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in the world.

L. Gregory Jones addresses the issue of the internally focused church this way: "…as the church we also have turned inward and been shaped more by fear than by hope. We have become preoccupied with managing what already exists, rather than focusing on innovative renewal of organizations and entrepreneurial approaches to starting new ones. We have developed bad models and understandings of organizations relying on images that suggest they are machines

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[27] C. René Padilla, *The New Face of Evangelicalism: An International Symposium on the Lausanne Covenant* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 85.

[28] Acts 1:8 [NIV].

rather than organisms."[29] The fear-over-hope approach Jones puts forth suggests Christians are becoming managers of the faith rather than missionaries called and sent to be messengers for the faith.

In Lausanne, over forty years before the Pew, Gallup, and Barna research, global Christian leaders were concerned about the state of Christianity. "We are deeply stirred by what God is doing in our day, moved to penitence by our failures, and challenged by the unfinished task of evangelization. We believe the Gospel is God's good news for the whole world, and we are determined by his grace to obey Christ's commission to proclaim it to all mankind and to make disciples of every nation."[30] Further in the covenant, we read, "World evangelization requires the whole church to take the whole Gospel to the whole world."[31] Fifty years later, the issue of how to carry out the Great Commission to the ends of the earth continues to challenge the church.

Language and Vocabulary Used

Throughout this project, the researcher uses terms and phrases commonly found in the secular business and commerce world that are not as commonly used in the world and the work of the local church. Lesslie Newbigin explains the need for change and the mission of the church: "The fulfillment of the mission of the Church thus requires that the church itself be changed and learn new things."[32] The researcher believes Newbigin's words are relevant to this

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[29] L. Gregory Jones, *Christian Social Innovation: Renewing Wesleyan Witness* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2016), 8. In this quote, Jones is referring to Christian church members.

[30] The word "we" in this quote refers to those in attendance serving as delegates to the Lausanne Gathering. Stott, 7.

[31] Stott, 28.

[32] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1989), 124.

project in the specific area of language. To fulfill the mission of the church, the church needs to learn new skills and concepts, including learning and applying new language in ways that are meaningful and helpful. Several words and key phrases describe how mission-minded Christians carry out the work of the Kingdom of God. A significant amount of content focuses on defining the key words typically used in settings for business and commerce, as well as defining terms used for work and ministry. Chapter two explores the definitions for words and key phrases such as Business as Mission, redemptive entrepreneurship, Christian social innovation, and other terms used today to describe the creative and mission-minded efforts of Christians. These words and phrases have meaning in the business and commerce sectors and are increasingly being used in ministry settings to describe specific types of efforts and Christians carrying out these efforts.

Background research for the language and vocabulary clarifies how words used in business and commerce are translated and applied to the mission-focused work God calls Christians to as they fulfill the Great Commission. Research findings shared in chapter four offer further support and definition with additional vocabulary used by those participating in the research study as they describe their work in the Kingdom of God. This project is not focused on whether it is right or wrong to use terms that cross lines of business and church, but on showing the application and use of such words within the scope of this project.

Project Purpose

The 1974 Lausanne Congress increased awareness of the urgency of global evangelism. Lausanne contributed to the further development of other initiatives and movements that emphasized evangelization and the call to make disciples while transforming communities and influencing society. Two initiatives coming from Lausanne generate the need and foundational support for a deeper awareness of evangelism and mission mentioned previously. One such

initiative is expressed as integral mission.[33] The other is the Business as Mission Movement (BAM).[34]

Coming into more recognized use in mission efforts since the early 1970s and often referred to as holistic mission, integral mission means "the mission of the whole church to the whole of humanity in all its forms, personal, communal, social, economic, ecological, and political."[35] René Padilla writes in *What Is Integral Mission?* regarding integral mission and the local church:

> More concretely, an integral church is a community of faith which gives priority to 1) commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord of everything and everyone; 2) Christian discipleship as a missionary lifestyle to which the entire church and every member has been called; 3) the vision of the church as the community that confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and lives in the light of that confession in such a way that in it can be seen the inauguration of a new humanity; and 4) the use of gifts and ministries as instruments that the Spirit of God uses to prepare the church and all its members to fulfill their vocation as God co-workers in the world.[36]

This comprehensive definition by Padilla not only describes the church community, but instructs that the church as a community is to help prepare its members to use their gifts to reach the world for Jesus, including in vocational settings.

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[33] C. René Padilla and Tetsunao Yamamori, eds. *The Local Church, Agent of Transformation: An Ecclesiology for Integral Mission*, Brian Cordingly, trans. (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones Kairós, 2004), 9. According to the translator of *The Local Church, Agent of Transformation* by Tetsunao Yamamori and René Padilla, the expression "integral mission" is gaining attention in liberal and evangelical church circles. Integral mission, sometimes called "holistic mission," translates the Spanish term *misíon integral* and means the mission of the whole church of the whole of humanity and all its forms—personal, communal, social, economic, ecological, and political. The researcher will use the term integral mission throughout this project where integral mission and holistic mission apply.

[34] An in-depth explanation and exploration of the Business as Mission Movement, commonly referred to as BAM, is provided in chapter two.

[35] Padilla, *What is Integral Mission?* ii.

[36] Padilla and Yamamori, 20.

The Business as Mission Movement (BAM) shares some of the same principles of holistic mission.[37] But BAM has some critical differences. BAM distinctly focuses on doing good through creative marketplace[38] initiatives combining with missionary principles to conduct activities outside a local church congregation. Many Christian business owners tithe or provide special financial gifts or offerings to missions. BAM calls for business owners to do more than just tithe. Instead, owners must and should look for ways for their businesses to have a more holistic impact. A Lausanne Occasional Paper introducing BAM defines BAM in terms of mission going beyond faith in the workplace. "Business is a mission, a calling, a ministry in its own right. Human activity reflects our divine origin, having been created to be creative, to create good things by good processes, for us to enjoy—with others."[39] BAM understands the critical importance of the mission of God and uses business and organization platforms to carry out that mission.

Each of these initiatives is further defined and discussed in Chapter Two. Both initiatives have the capacity to impact the challenges facing the local church today. Both provide strategies and platforms for Christians to carry out the Great Commission while taking the whole Gospel to the whole world, as described by the Lausanne Movement. Both initiatives, when joined together, can bring about transformational change. In his book *The Church on Mission: A Biblical Vision for Transformation among All People,* Craig Ott writes this about transformation

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[37] Jay Hartwell, "Lausanne Occasional Paper: Business as Mission," Lausanne Movement, October 20, 2004, https://lausanne.org/content/lop/business-mission-lop-59.

[38] Samuel Lee and W. Jay Moon, *Faith in the Marketplace: Measuring the Impact of Church Based Entrepreneurial Approaches to Holistic Mission* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2021), 14. The researcher will use the definition of marketplace as provided by Samuel Lee in his book *Faith in the Marketplace*. Summarizing Lee, the marketplace is where people get their income, form relationships, and exchange value with one another. The marketplace also creates a sense of purpose and self-identity as people engage with one another.

[39] Hartwell.

and change, "There are at least two ways in which a church might be considered transformational. One is the transformation of individuals and congregations as the gospel changes their lives. This occurs largely within the church. The other is the transformational influence the believers and congregations have upon the people and communities around them, largely outside the church."[40] Instead of focusing only on loving and serving those who already know Jesus, both initiatives meet the increasing need for individuals and communities to be transformed by Jesus by taking the Great Commission outside the physical walls of church buildings.

The challenges facing the church in the U.S. increase the need for holistic ministry, as described by Padilla, and call for more creative approaches to carry out the Great Commission that come from engaging creative, mission-minded Christians like those engaged in Business as Mission. The call for creativity to meet the needs facing the church today leads to this research question: How does the local church embrace Kingdom entrepreneurs[41] to achieve the Great Commission? This project takes into consideration the following subtopics and questions: What are the specific characteristics of Kingdom entrepreneurs? And what are the best practices for a local church seeking to support or collaborate with a Kingdom entrepreneur?

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[40] Craig Ott, *The Church on Mission: A Biblical Vision for Transformation among All People* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), 5.

[41] Steve Rundle and Tom A. Steffen, *Great Commission Companies: The Emerging Role of Business in Missions*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2011), 41. Professor Steve Rundle at Biola University puts forth the following definition of a Kingdom entrepreneur: "Kingdom entrepreneurs are authentic businesspeople with proven competence in at least one area of business administration. They are spiritually gifted, much like traditional missionaries, but are called and equipped to use those gifts in a business context. Kingdom entrepreneurs have a genuine desire to see communities of faith spring up in the spiritually driest places and are willing to live and work in these places to make that happen. Rather than perceiving the business as a distraction from their ministry, kingdom entrepreneurs recognize it as a necessary context for their incarnational outreach. The daily struggle—meeting deadlines, satisfying customers, being victimized by corruption—is precisely what enables kingdom entrepreneurs to model Christian discipleship on a daily basis."

Henry Kaestner writes about Kingdom entrepreneurship: "The Garden of Eden and all the plants and animals in it were shared between God and man. That's the perfect vision of entrepreneurship—that we can be united in purpose, passion, and pursuit of God."[42] This project will explore how Kaestner's idea of a perfect vision of entrepreneurship is being carried out in the Kingdom of God today and how Kingdom collaborative efforts to further the Great Commission might have a transformational impact on commerce, communities, and the local church.

Kingdom Entrepreneurs: A Historical Perspective

Paul E. Pierson writes, "Our theology of mission, focused on the Kingdom of God, certainly puts the priority on communicating the Good News of Jesus and inviting men and women to become His disciples. However, it also teaches us to seek the welfare of those among whom we live as an expression of the compassion of Christ."[43] Kingdom entrepreneurs, who understand integral mission, are capable of fulfilling Pierson's suggestion of spreading the Gospel, making disciples, and leading new ventures that contribute to the well-being and care of people. Throughout history, there have been examples of Kingdom entrepreneurs carrying out God's mission, as seen in the Old and New Testaments, the early church fathers, and historical Christian movement leaders.

The concept of entrepreneurship can be traced back to God, who is the original Kingdom Entrepreneur. In Isaiah 43:19 we read, "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you

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[42] Henry Kaestner, *Faith Driven Entrepreneur: What It Takes to Step Into Your Purpose and Pursue Your God-Given Call to Create* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2021), 9.

[43] Paul Everett Pierson, *The Dynamics of Christian Mission: History through a Missiological Perspective* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 2009), 55.

not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."[44] God constantly creates new things and calls upon His people to do the same to expand His Kingdom. According to Henry Kaestner, God created humans to be part of his entrepreneurial process, as evidenced in Genesis 2:15, when God put humans in the Garden of Eden to work and care for it.

Summarizing Kaestner, Kingdom entrepreneurs have the ability to bring order out of chaos, solve problems, fight against injustice, and create opportunities for others. God created the world and entrusted it to us to be its stewards as we carry out his mission to care for and improve the well-being of all people. From the beginning, God has created men and women to share in his entrepreneurial process, and we are all called to continue this mission today.

In his book *Called to Create*: *A Biblical Invitation to Create, Innovate, and Risk*, Jordan Raynor describes God as the original entrepreneur: "We are made in the image of the First Entrepreneur; thus, when we follow his call to create businesses, nonprofits, art, music, books, and other products, we are not just doing something good for the world, we are doing something God-like. This is important because it validates the deep desire in our souls to create."[45] This deep desire to do something good for God, meet the needs of others, and serve others connects to integral mission. Creating new ways of serving and meeting needs connects Christians directly back to God as an entrepreneur. Creating new platforms to share the Gospel connects Christians to the mission of God.

As the Son of God, Jesus modeled what it means to live a mission-focused life. Jesus modeled much of his ministry in public places, many times in the marketplace. In their book

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[44] Isaiah 43:19 [NIV].

[45] Jordan Raynor, *Called to Create: A Biblical Invitation to Create, Innovate, and Risk* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2017), 11.

Business as Mission: A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice, Steve Rundle and Neal Johnson write,

> The Bible is replete with stories of Jesus' ministry to, within, and through the marketplace. He was in the marketplace continually, both literally and metaphorically. He was a businessman himself, he worked in the marketplace, called his disciples from the marketplace, and during his ministry actively and repeatedly engaged the marketplace: he taught there, set many of his parables there, and abhorred its desecration of God's holy temple through crass commercialization and the unabashed commoditization of God.[46]

Christians engaged in BAM follow the holistic example of Jesus in the marketplace. This focus sets BAM apart from for-profit businesses owned by Christians.

Neal Johnson and Steve Rundle provide further insight into how Jesus incorporated his ministry into the marketplace of his time. They write,

> Regardless of marketing labels, it is clear from Scripture that Jesus recognized that the marketplace is where people actively engage life, earn their livings, conduct their daily lives, feed their families, and receive the bread and wine that graces their tables. He understood that the marketplace, in one form or another, is a thriving part of every human community and transcends all cultures, national borders, and ethnic differences.[47]

Jesus was a master storyteller who helped those around him understand their roles in the Kingdom. Many of those stories are set in the marketplace or community setting. According to Johnson and Rundle, Jesus knew that to connect with people, to understand their needs and their pain, and to save them from where they were, he had to meet them where they were.[48] This approach of meeting people where they are today is needed to turn around the challenging trends revealed by Gallup.

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[46] C. Neal Johnson and Steve Rundle, *Business as Mission: A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 169.

[47] Johnson and Rundle, 171.

[48] Johnson and Rundle, 171.

Chapter Two provides a further definition of the concepts of Kingdom entrepreneurship and integral mission based on available research and writings. The literature review in Chapter Two explores biblical models of entrepreneurship in the early church, historical entrepreneurial church figures, present-day movements influencing entrepreneurial ministry, and mission initiatives taking place beyond the walls of traditional church buildings and established congregations. As pastors and ministry leaders come to terms with the challenging trends in membership, outreach to unchurched people, and how to carry out the Great Commission, much can be learned from exploring integral mission and Kingdom entrepreneurship.

Integral/Holistic Mission and Kingdom Entrepreneurs

Taking the whole Gospel to the whole world involves more than just pastors or paid church workers. In their book *The Local Church, Agent of Transformation: An Ecclesiology for Integral Mission*, René Padilla and Tetsunao Yamamori write:

> Integral mission demands the "declericalization" of ministries and a "laicization" of the clergy. In other words, it requires a recognition of the apostolic nature of the whole church. This implies, on one hand, that all members, by the simple fact of being disciples of Christ, share in the commission to go into the world in the name of Jesus Christ, as his witnesses. It also implies, on the other hand, that the leaders are a part of the *laos*, the people of God, just as all of the rest of Christ's followers, no more no less.[49]

The people of God are commissioned to take the mission of the church into the world. This commissioning means taking the mission beyond the local church setting. The work of integral mission is not limited to those trained for ministry, but also applies to those serving in business and community settings. Ephesians 4:11-12 reminds us that the people of God are to be equipped to do the work of God.

[49] Padilla and Yamamori, 45.

Steve Rundle and Tom Steffen provide further clarity that mission is not limited to those with special training or vocational calling. The authors share, for the purpose of understanding Kingdom entrepreneurs, that there are two types of Christians. According to Rundle and Steffen, "First, there are professional Christian workers who assist in the spread of Christianity as part of their vocation. It is what they are gifted, trained, and paid to do. Those who are paid to do this crossculturally are 'missionaries.'"[50] In the local church setting, these professional Christian workers are pastors and paid staff with specific training who are called to serve a church to carry out certain duties as assigned by the church.

Rundle and Steffen define a second type of Christian called Kingdom professionals, "those who are called and gifted for service in the marketplace."[51] According to Rundle and Steffen, Kingdom professionals are "equally committed to their faith and to reflecting Christ, but they earn their living in some other way. They see their profession not as a distraction for ministry but rather as a necessary context through which relationships can be built and Christ can be revealed."[52] Rundle and Steffen make the point that individual Christians have the opportunity to use their gifts and calling in settings beyond the local church, beyond being paid as a pastor or church worker.

Rundle and Steffen continue: "Kingdom professionals recognize the intrinsic value of work; that work itself is an integral part of God's holistic, redemptive plan for the world. But they take their calling a step further, seeking to make the most of their God-given opportunities to impact the people around them and measuring success according to their contribution to what

[50] Rundle and Steffen, 41.

[51] Rundle and Steffen, 41.

[52] Rundle and Steffen, 41.

God is doing."[53] Kingdom professionals value work and mission and see the use of their gifts as a way to serve and help others while joining God in his mission to draw people closer to him.

In his book *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society,* Lesslie Newbigin describes the task of ministry in such a way that affirms the need for integral mission to be part of our ministry efforts beyond the church walls. Newbigin states,

> The task of ministry is to lead the congregation as a whole in a mission to the community as a whole, to claim its whole public life, as well as the personal lives of all its people, for God's rule. It means equipping all the members of the congregation to understand and fulfill their several roles in this mission through their faithfulness in their daily work. It means training and equipping them to be active followers of Jesus in his assault on the principalities and powers which he has disarmed on the cross. And it means sustaining them and bearing the cost of that warfare.[54]

The task of Christians to carry out the mission of God does not just fall to pastors. It includes all individuals being equipped to take the mission of the church into their work, whatever that might be.

Newbigin expresses the deep need for Christians to take their faith beyond the walls of their church and cautions them not to be focused internally, only ministering to those already attending church, but instead focusing on taking Christ to the whole world. Newbigin writes, "I have made clear my belief that it is the whole church which is called to be in Christ—a royal priesthood, that every member of the body is called to exercise this priesthood, and this priesthood is to be exercised in the daily life and work of Christians in the secular business of the world."[55] Christians are called to take the Great Commission into every aspect of their lives. For

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[53] Rundle and Steffen, 41.

[54] Newbigin, 238.

[55] Newbigin, 235.

Kingdom entrepreneurs, this means taking the Great Commission into the marketplace and places of commerce or wherever they find themselves doing business.

Newbigin points out that all Christians have gifts to be used. Churches need to understand the gifts God gives each Christian as a member of the royal priesthood and understand how those gifts are used and applied in different types of ministry. Newbigin writes, "…a Christian congregation must recognize that God gives different gifts to different members of the body and calls them to different kinds of service."[56] He continues, "Only when a congregation can accept and rejoice in the diversity of gifts, and when members can rejoice in gifts which others have been given, can the whole body function as Christ's royal priesthood in the world."[57] In the book *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work*, Miroslav Volf writes, "When God calls people to become children of God, the Spirit gives them callings, talents, and 'enablings' (*charisms*)[58] so they can do God's will in the Christian fellowship in the world in anticipation of God's eschatological new creation. All Christians have several gifts of the Spirit. Since most of these gifts can be exercised only through work, work must be considered an essential aspect of Christian living."[59] Newbigin and Volf point out that some of these gifts lend themselves to specific use in settings and service outside the church. As Newbigin points out, as

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[56] Newbigin, 231.

[57] Newbigin, 231.

[58] C. Peter Wagner, *Apostles and Prophets: The Foundation of the Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2000), 42. C. Peter Wagner defines spiritual gifts as special attributes given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the body of Christ. According to Wagner, these gifts are given according to God's grace for the use within the body. Wagner shares further that the common Greek word for spiritual gifts is *charisma.* Wagner points out the significance of this, as the root word for of *charisma* is *charis,* which means grace. Wagner makes a significant point that there is a very special connection between spiritual gifts and God's grace and that all Christians are to use these gifts given to them by God's grace to build up the body.

[59] Miroslav Volf, *Work in the Spirit: Toward a Theology of Work* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001), 124.

the church discovers and learns about the gifts God has given to each member of the body, the church is better able to meet the needs of the community it is trying to serve. Every Christian has gifts given to them by God's grace, and the local church is called to equip and send Christians with specialized gifts to carry out the type of holistic mission that is needed today. Congregations serving and carrying out holistic mission includes equipping and sending those who consider themselves to be entrepreneurs to create new platforms to take God's mission to the whole world.

Project Goal

The primary goal of this project is to explore how the local church can partner and collaborate with individuals in the congregation to take the Great Commission beyond the walls of an established congregation in creative and holistic ways. There are mission-minded Christians with entrepreneurial and creative ideas creating platforms for effective outreach and evangelistic relationship building in communities where the local church and congregation are not effective.

A secondary goal of this project is to research the common themes and patterns present in these successful platforms, identify how these individuals carry out mission and ministry, and explore how local churches can increase participation in these initiatives or launch their own. The research from this project may encourage more pastors and ministry leaders to embrace the idea of mobilizing Kingdom entrepreneurs to help their congregation carry out the Great Commission. By combining integral mission with Business as Mission, these entrepreneurial platforms play an important role in transforming the communities the church desires to serve.

Steve Rundle and Tom Steffen write, "Regrettably, many church leaders understand mobilization to mean getting their business-trained members plugged into business-related

ministries that the church is already doing. While there is a place for that, what is most always overlooked is the role the pastoral staff can play in helping those same members in their own workplaces! God is at work in the marketplace, and most church leaders have a hard time seeing it or knowing how to equip the saints for ministry in that context."[60] Despite the challenges facing churches, there is little mobilization of those with specialized interests and gifts to use those gifts in entrepreneurial ways.

Research Methodology

The research design for this project will utilize the qualitative methods approach in a natural (field) setting as defined by John W. and J. David Creswell.[61] Chapter Three provides more details about the research methodology and information about the research group studied for this project. A qualitative research design process will be created to analyze data through inductive and deductive data analysis. This project will also include elements of an emergent qualitative design since questions, sites, and individuals studied may shift once the researcher enters the field to launch the qualitative research process.

The qualitative data analysis will be conducted by the researcher. The researcher will create a tracking tool for coding purposes. Results from a personal data form will be recorded and tracked. Coding, review of interview notes, and personal observations will be included in the data analysis process. One-on-one and video interviews will be conducted to gather information from those directly working on projects and initiatives that meet predetermined criteria derived from the literature review process. All notes, consent forms, data forms, and interview forms will

[60] Rundle and Steffen, 225.

[61] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications, 2018).

be kept secure and confidential. As the interviews are conducted, a systematic approach will be used to organize and track the information gathered. This will help determine which interviews provided good information and which interviews may not have provided information that is useful to the research project.

Christian business owners in a for-profit company who only provide tithes or other financial support to ministries or mission projects will not be included in the research. Churches with off-site or multisite worship services or other Bible studies or groups meeting in community spaces that are extensions of an established church will not be included in the research. Churches with preschools, day cares, private schools, or other similar ministries that may demonstrate a connection to either the integral mission movement or the BAM Movement as defined in Chapter Two may not be included if they are primarily focused on serving one particular people group or denominational body.

Potential Significance

Encouragement for Pastors and Ministry Leaders to Engage Kingdom Entrepreneurs

One desired outcome from the research is to encourage creative thinking among pastors and ministry leaders about what new things God could be calling their church to do beyond the walls of the established physical church space. By showcasing examples and models of Kingdom entrepreneurs and their efforts, pastors and ministry leaders may start to ask deeper questions about how to engage members who have certain entrepreneurial gifts. There is no guarantee that a church can grow numerically just by engaging Kingdom entrepreneurs. It is anticipated that churches will discover different expressions of outreach and evangelism that result in

transforming communities and lives. Instead of focusing on such things as worship attendance or giving units, the mark of success will be measured by Kingdom impact and Kingdom growth.

According to Rundle and Steffen, there is an important role for churches to play in mobilizing Kingdom entrepreneurs in new ways, but it requires time and a change in thinking about business and the church. The authors write, "Churches can help inspire and equip their business professionals in many ways, but they should also understand that, as a general rule, mobilization into Business as Mission is a gradual process. It begins with an integrated view of work in ministry, a view that is shared by both the church leaders and the business professionals in the pews."[62] Rather than trying to separate church mission and commerce, pastors should be encouraged to think in terms of mobilizing those business professionals to carry out the Great Commission.

Lesslie Newbigin refers to this need for encouragement for pastors. "There is a need for 'frontier groups,' groups of Christians working in the same sectors of public life, meeting to thrash out the controversial issues of their business and profession in light of their faith. But there is also a need to consider how far the present-day traditions of ministerial training really prepare ministers for this task."[63] One major challenge is that pastors are not trained to or encouraged to embrace business professionals and their ideas.

Acceptance and Creative Collaboration in Integral Mission and the Great Commission

As pastors and ministry leaders learn more about integral mission and mobilizing Kingdom entrepreneurs through BAM, this could increase engagement with those individuals

[62] Rundle and Steffen, 225.

[63] Newbigin, 230.

carrying out mission externally. Instead of being unsure of what to do with these individuals or their entrepreneurial ideas in a church, a pastor or ministry leader may find it more productive to engage with those individuals. By embracing integral mission combined with Business as Mission, churches may discover new collaborative ways to grow their church and multiply their discipleship efforts. The research and findings from this project could result in more acceptance of those with entrepreneurial gifts and further collaboration between the local church and those with a calling to explore new approaches to expand God's Kingdom. Rundle and Steffen write, "Pastors can help their membership understand that business can in fact be a divine calling and a powerful means of serving people (that is, ministry). The church can help equip their members to become more effective ambassadors for Christ in the marketplace."[64]

Newbigin writes, "The congregation has to be a place where its members are trained, supported, and nourished in the exercise of their parts of the priestly ministry in the world. The preaching and teaching of the local church has to be such that it enables members to think about the problems that face them in their secular work in light of their Christian faith."[65] Miroslav Volf makes a similar point about work and the church: "After long years of neglecting social concerns, evangelical Christians have been vigorously involved in a 'catching up process' as they have come to much deeper appreciation that the people of God have social as well as evangelistic responsibilities in this world."[66] Mobilizing and collaborating with Kingdom entrepreneurs may provide ways for the church to make up for lost ground in evangelism and address the ongoing concerns initially identified by Lausanne.

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[64] Rundle and Steffen, 225.

[65] Newbigin, 230.

[66] Volf, 6.

Summary

As the North American church continues to decline,[67] Christians with creative and entrepreneurial gifts with an interest in integral mission have the potential to turn this trend around. From the creation story to today, we know that God is a creative, entrepreneurial God who not only does new things, but who also invites and challenges all Christians to do likewise for the sake of his mission. Kingdom entrepreneurs have the desire to follow the model of Jesus and of many other Kingdom leaders from the past to go out into the world of the marketplace and practice integral mission while they carry out the Great Commission. As pastors and ministry leaders continue to be challenged with plateaued membership and churches in a state of decline, creative and entrepreneurial solutions could be the key to turning around these trends. As René Padilla writes,

> Every Christian is called to follow Jesus Christ and to commit to God's mission in the world. The benefits of salvation are inseparable from a missionary lifestyle and among other things this implies the practice of the universal priesthood of all believers and all spheres of human life, according to the gifts and ministries that the Spirit of God has freely bestowed on his people. It is the responsibility of pastors and teachers "to equip his people for the works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:12).[68]

There is biblical and historical evidence to support embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs to help local churches take the Great Commission beyond the physical walls of their established congregations. Research from this project may provide helpful solutions to Christians as they seek to carry out the type of Great Commission ministry work that transforms commerce, communities, and the local church.

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[67] Barna, *The Great Disconnect*, 6.

[68] C. René Padilla, Juan José Toscano, and Claudia Lorena Juárez, *What Is Integral Mission?* Rebecca Breekveldt, trans. (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books International, 2021), 9.

The Lausanne Congress points to many of the deep and concerning challenges facing the local church in the areas of evangelism, church growth, and taking the whole Gospel to the whole world. These challenges are increasing as the population of the United States increases and the needs of that population increase. In his book, *We Aren't Broke: Uncovering Hidden Resources for Mission and Ministry,* Mark Elsdon writes, "But that doesn't mean the church and faith-based institutions have nothing to offer their communities. It just means that the expression of 'church' in the world is changing. Congregations and other organizations in the system (seminaries, etc.) are experimenting with different ways of engaging their communities with the good news of Jesus Christ. Often these new forms of engagement look very different from Sunday morning worship."[69] Elsdon explains further the complexity of problems facing our world today. These problems are not new, but congregations have not yet embraced the new solutions to solve these problems. Elsdon concludes, "There are people in the church tackling these wicked complex problems with innovative solutions."[70] A possible innovative solution is for the local church to have an increased willingness to mobilize Kingdom entrepreneurs. Kingdom entrepreneurs trained and focused on integral mission while carrying out Business as Mission initiatives may provide the type of transformation needed to turn around the decline in the North American church today.

[69] Mark Elsdon, *We Aren't Broke: Uncovering Hidden Resources for Mission and Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021), 25.

[70] Elsdon, 25.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The challenge of finding new ways to reach more people for Jesus Christ is not new. Neither is the challenge of how to embrace individuals who do not necessarily fit into traditional vocational ministry roles. There are biblical and historical examples available to help pastors and ministry leaders embrace the idea of Kingdom entrepreneurship. René Padilla writes, "The whole world is a mission field and every human need is an opportunity for missionary service. The local church is called to demonstrate the reality of the Kingdom of God among the kingdoms of this world, not only by what it says, but also by what it is and by what it does in response to the human needs on every side."[71] Many authors have written about how to carry out God's mission effectively, what it means to carry out the Great Commission, and how Christians should respond to the needs on the mission field all around them.

This chapter explores the research and literature connected to understanding, engaging, and mobilizing Kingdom entrepreneurs to carry out the mission of the church. Topics covered include mission, evangelism, outreach, church history, trends in Kingdom entrepreneurism, and recent initiatives. Literature from historical church writings, theological journals, modern-day church movement genres, Christian business books and journals, and website articles is used to explore the important keywords, language, and vocabulary related to Kingdom entrepreneurship.

An overview related to marketplace ministry, holistic and integral mission, and the current trends related to these topics provide an understanding of this topic today. To address overlapping issues between business and commerce and the church, the researcher dedicated content to defining Kingdom entrepreneur. This exploration is necessary to help with confusion

[71] Padilla, Toscano, and Juárez, 9.

between the theological use and implication of these words and the secular understanding of them.

Old and New Testament examples, starting with the God of creation and God's son, Jesus, explore the original entrepreneurs. A review of the mission of the church is followed by models and examples in church history through the early church fathers and historic church leaders. Current trends are reviewed, and finally, an analysis of the gaps in the literature is provided.

What Is a Kingdom Entrepreneur?

Much has been written about entrepreneurs, their skill sets, and their experiences in the world of business and commerce. The idea of entrepreneurship in ministry has started to gain traction. Many of the authors the researcher cited for this project developed their own definitions of who a Kingdom entrepreneur is and what a Kingdom entrepreneur does. The discovery reading on defining a Kingdom entrepreneur uncovered consistent themes. In his book *Called to Create*, Jordan Raynor writes, "…allow me to submit a new definition for the word entrepreneur: An entrepreneur is anyone who takes a risk to create something new for the good of others."[72] Michael Volland provides this definition: "Entrepreneur defined—A visionary who, in partnership with God and others, challenges the status quo by energetically creating and innovating in order to shape something of kingdom value."[73] Volland continues, "Next, when entrepreneurs engage in entrepreneurial activity, they do so with an aim. 'Something' needs to result from their efforts, and it should be of some value to others. In the context of Christian

[72] Raynor, 13.

[73] Michael Volland, *The Minister as Entrepreneur: Leading and Growing the Church in an Age of Rapid Change* (London, England: SPCK Publishing, 2015), 32.

ministry I felt that this was best expressed as 'Kingdom value,' meaning that in some way the efforts of the entrepreneur contribute to the furtherance of God's coming kingdom of justice, provision, wholeness, peace and reconciliation."[74] Raynor and Volland both take a mission approach to defining Kingdom entrepreneurs and the work these entrepreneurs do.

The use of the word entrepreneur in ministry settings may lead some to think the church is meant to be run like a for-profit business focused solely on improving a financial bottom line. To address this concern, Michael Volland writes, "Of course, some entrepreneurs act in order to generate financial capital, but the work of the entrepreneur is not limited to the world of commerce. Entrepreneurs use their gifts and diverse environments including schools, hospitals and churches, and their efforts to generate social, artistic and spiritual capital."[75] Volland continues, "I suggest Christians who respond hesitantly or negatively to the language offered around entrepreneurship are likely to have less of an issue with entrepreneurship when it is conceived of as a cooperative, mutually supportive and noncompetitive approach to life and work (and all that this implies for Christian ministry and mission) rather than as a competitive, individualistic wealth creation."[76] Since there can be confusion related to income generation and financial support for mission, pastors and church leaders need to be clear in their understanding and application of these words.

In his journal article "Is Rural Enterprise God's Business?" Jerry Marshall writes, "There is a suspicion of enterprise and entrepreneurs in popular culture. Business is not presented favorably by Dickens, *Dallas*, or *Dilbert*. *The Apprentice* portrays a culture of greed and

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[74] Volland, 32.

[75] Volland, 1.

[76] Volland, 19.

individualism. *The Wolf of Wall Street* graphically illustrates the depths of moral vacuum. Much of the suspicion of enterprise arises from the confusion between economic thinking (on the mechanism of the marketplace and creation of wealth); and moral thinking (for example on the accumulation of wealth and the exploitation of power)."[77] The researcher found this to be a common area of concern in the literature. The researcher also found this to be a major theme among many of the authors attempting to define the terms entrepreneur and entrepreneurship in the Kingdom as a major point in their writing.

Both Raynor and Volland share insights in their writing about how entrepreneurs view themselves in the Kingdom. Raynor writes, "As entrepreneurs, we have a unique opportunity to join God in the work of creating followers of Christ."[78] Volland adds to this idea further: "Entrepreneurs in ministry do what they do because they are following Jesus Christ and seeking to make a difference for him in the world."[79] Raynor and Volland, along with other authors, intentionally make the distinction that Kingdom entrepreneurs are different from those in secular business. The writings indicate that this distinction often comes from people's understanding of purpose and reasoning for why they feel called to serve God in the marketplace. The research results in Chapter Four will test this theory.

There are risks for entrepreneurs in ministry, specifically for pastors. Volland points out that "there is the risk that the entrepreneurial minister will be responsible for starting initiatives that the congregation are unwilling or unable to support, or that result in the minister being

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[77] Jerry Marshall, "Is Rural Enterprise God's Business?" *Rural Theology* 14, no. 2 (July 2, 2016): 83.

[78] Raynor, 171.

[79] Volland, 33.

viewed by the institution as difficult, eccentric or otherwise problematic."[80] Being an entrepreneur in ministry is not easy. Some entrepreneurs, specifically pastors, may find more challenges in carrying out their entrepreneurial ideas. Many of the authors reviewed continue to build on the theme of understanding what Kingdom entrepreneurship is to avoid these challenges.

Risk-taking and the present-day church's tendency to avoid taking risks are addressed in the literature. Jerry Marshall reminds readers of the role of entrepreneurial risk in the early church. "The church is enriched by entrepreneurs. The early church was a risk-taking church: Stephen, Philip, and Peter boldly proclaimed the gospel to new groups; Paul embarked on dangerous missionary journeys; members of the church sold their possessions, sharing all they had. As the church has developed as an institution, we have become in the main risk-averse."[81] The example of the church engaging with people in communities and in the marketplace was a risk for the early church, and it remains a challenge for many local churches today.

Marshall continues to build on the idea that the local church should be actively engaging in the business community. "The church therefore has a responsibility to envision and engage the business community, recognizing that business is a vocation, an anointed ministry, just as much as any other. It is God's business, and the benefits of greater engagement work both ways."[82]

Henry Kaestner has a similar concept relating to the idea of Kingdom entrepreneurs. Kaestner refers to these individuals as faith-driven entrepreneurs in his book of the same name. Kaestner writes, "Entrepreneurship provides a place where you get to commune with God

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[80] Volland, 37.

[81] Marshall, 88.

[82] Marshall, 85.

through the creative process. It provides a way through which you can love God and love others."[83] Kaestner continues, "Entrepreneurship is a legitimate pursuit that, when done well, brings honor and glory to our entrepreneurial God."[84] This enforces the concept of God as the original Kingdom Entrepreneur and Creator and God's call for us to create and do new things in his name.

Other sources reviewed provide examples of Kingdom entrepreneurs in other social and spiritual settings. The Fresh Expressions[85] movement produced a resource for rural churches to consider entrepreneurial approaches to revitalization. Other literature details how spiritual entrepreneurs play a role in bringing faith-based initiatives into government-funded programs specifically related to faith-based prison systems. While these resources provide encouraging case studies of how specific entities connected with churches and faith-based organizations turn around or revitalize organizations, they also contribute to the confusing definitions and language connected to what a Kingdom entrepreneur is and does.

To summarize the use of entrepreneurial language in the mission of the church, the researcher found this quote from Michael Volland useful: "While the instinctive reaction of some Christians might be to steer clear of the world and its apparently worldly connotations, it is nevertheless true that we see many of the characteristics associated with entrepreneurship displayed in Christians who helped bring about imaginative change in communities and churches. I believe that entrepreneurship is a gift of God to his church and at the church in the

[83] Kaestner, 12.

[84] Kaestner, 12.

[85] Fresh Expressions is a Christian movement that began in the United Kingdom in the early 2000s as a response to declining church attendance and a desire to reach new people for Christ. The movement emphasizes creating new forms of Christian community, a fresh expression of church, designed to meet the needs and interests of people not already involved in a traditional church.

communities it seeks to serve and would gain a great deal if this gift were better understood and indeed encouraged."[86]

Biblical Examples

God as Creator, Entrepreneur

In his book *Apostolic Imagination*, J.D. Payne writes, "In the beginning, God establishes time and space and reveals himself as an apostolic God. He is the initial sender and bears his own message. God sends himself into his creation. He comes to Adam and Eve and speaks with them (Gen 3). God sends himself to walk with them in the garden. After the fall, he sends himself to bring a message of hope in view of judgment."[87] In a different book, Payne put it this way: "The story of the Bible begins with a God who steps out of infinity and eternity and creates the finite (Gen 1:5) in time (Gen 1:14). Though the writer does not reveal the divine motives for such actions, God moves to accomplish this act and develop the results. From the beginning, God is intimately involved with the creation process as his Spirit broods over the waters like a hen waiting for an egg to hatch (Gen 1:2)."[88] Payne provides a good summary of the evidence supporting the idea of God as a creative entrepreneur.

In his article on rural enterprise, Jerry Marshall provides a similar description of God as a creative entrepreneur. Marshall writes, "The first description of God in scripture is that of creator. The key quality of an entrepreneur, from the above definitions, is someone who

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[86] Volland, 2.

[87] J.D. Payne, *Apostolic Imagination: Recovering a Biblical Vision for the Church's Mission Today* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2022), 115.

[88] J.D. Payne, *Theology of Mission: A Concise Biblical Theology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2022), 10.

habitually and/or energetically creates, someone who builds something new rather than develops an existing project. God's intention at creation was that we could create with him."[89] The literature consistently solidifies the concept of God as a creator. However, connecting the creation story to the idea that God was acting as an entrepreneur as he created is a concept that has appeared more frequently in recent years.

In *The Minister as Entrepreneur,* Michael Volland writes, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and gave human beings a mandate to multiply and spread out over the earth and to steward his creation: essentially to build something of *kingdom* or *recognized* value."[90] Further, Volland writes, "The narrative of scripture points to God's intention that those whom he has created should collaborate with him, over time and across nations, in building things of recognized, kingdom and therefore eternal value."[91] Volland's view continues to build on the theme of how the apostolic God created and then commissioned those he created to continue to build and take care of his creation. God's creativity did not stop in the garden. Volland continues with this important insight about the ongoing creativity of God:

> God's creativity is not just seen at the initial act of creation but continues to be evident throughout the story of Scripture, both in his interactions with individuals[92] and the nation of Israel, and in the incarnation of Jesus, including his life, teaching and miracles. We may argue that God's creativity, marked by his consistency in acting in unprecedented and 'game-changing ways,' is most profoundly and disturbingly evident in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead; a foretaste of the age to come and God's new creation (Revelation 21). Since his being and his doing are inseparable, God *is* creativity;

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[89] Marshall, 84.

[90] Volland, 59.

[91] Volland, 59.

[92] Volland shares four examples in his footnotes of these individuals: Noah (Genesis 9), Abram (Genesis 12), Moses (Exodus 3), and the Apostle Paul (Acts 9). Volland, 55.

> he created, he creates and he goes on creating. The creativity of God will go on surprising us since it will always be unprecedented.[93]

The Apostolic Creator God has never stopped modeling for us how to do new things. This key theme emerges from the literature specific to individuals providing an important rationale for Kingdom entrepreneurs to carry out the mission they do beyond the work of the local church. Kingdom entrepreneurs cannot help but create new things, as they have been created in the image of a God who consistently creates new things in his Kingdom.

God as Creator created entrepreneurs. However, this concept is often overlooked in the church as somehow not being biblical. Volland continues to build on the theme of biblical entrepreneurs:

> Entrepreneurs have always been found among the people of God. Men and women with entrepreneurial gifts are present in the Bible and throughout church history. In predictable times, when the Church appears to be strong and affluent (never a great thing for the Church), the particular set of gifts possessed by the entrepreneurs in our midst are all too often ignored, discouraged or even repressed. During such times entrepreneurs appear to fade into the background. But in a challenging and unpredictable age like our own, it is important that the entrepreneurs among the people of God are given every encouragement to minister out of their God-given gifts.[94]

Volland makes a critical point that aligns with the research findings presented in Chapter One. It is a critical and unpredictable time for the local church. Volland's writing, along with that of others, suggests that now is the time for the local church to embrace Kingdom entrepreneurs and understand just how biblical it is to do so.

The Old and New Testaments provide examples of Kingdom entrepreneurship. "The Bible is full of entrepreneurs in the broadest sense, many specifically engaged in entrepreneurial

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[93] Volland, 55.

[94] Volland, 3.

economic activity. Examples include Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Nehemiah, and Job."[95] Michael Volland further explains his understanding of why these individuals are considered entrepreneurs, saying that "…these characters display entrepreneurial qualities: they take risks, face challenges, spot opportunities, find innovative solutions to problems, challenge the status quo, make a difference and build something of recognized value."[96]

In the New Testament, Lydia,[97] the Apostle Paul, and those Paul trained as church planters are examples of Kingdom entrepreneurs. Lydia was a dealer of purple cloth and was also known for taking care of a large household that provided for others. "Lydia was joined by others in supporting the mission of the church. Lydia, Mary, and Nympha were independent patrons who hosted churches in their homes. Lydia's ministry was in the marketplace. This provided a platform for her and others to make connections and build relationships that supported the work of God. They also introduced Paul to people in their social circles, thereby facilitating the continued spread of the gospel into the upper echelons of society. Some patrons gave of their resources to support the social services carried out by members of the Christian community: caring for the sick people, visiting those in prison, helping the poor."[98]

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[95] Marshall, 84.

[96] Volland, 60. Volland also adds Nimrod, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Ehud, Gideon, Ruth, Abigail, Elijah, Elisha, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the wife of noble character as those he considers to be entrepreneurs in the Bible.

[97] Leanne M. Dzubinski and Anneke H. Stasson, *Women in the Mission of the Church: Their Opportunities and Obstacles throughout Christian History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2021), 18. The early church depended on patrons like Lydia, who is named in Acts 16. Patrons were people of means who used their wealth and influence for the mission of the church. In the early church, women as well as men were patrons, and some of these wealthy women opened up their homes so the communities of Christians could worship there.

[98] Dzubinski and Stasson, 19.

The Apostle Paul

The Apostle Paul[99] and early church planters were tentmakers[100] providing access to the necessary resources needed to advance their Kingdom mission.[101] This tent making strategy was used to financially underwrite and support missionary work. The concept itself provides historical and theological distinctions for how we understand the work and efforts of Kingdom entrepreneurs today. J.D. Payne writes about the significant need for tent making in the marketplace. "Tentmaking, bivocational, and covocational ministries need to be encouraged and supported. Ministry success needs to be reconsidered to accommodate apostolic teams who choose to serve in such capacities. In many areas of the world, apostolic teams need to be in the marketplace."[102] The tent making strategy is an important missionary funding strategy. While often this can be used as a defense to simply provide money to supplement ministry, one can easily argue it was also part of Paul's strategy to be in the marketplace doing Kingdom work. Many authors have written extensively on this topic and the important role it plays in the Kingdom. The idea of tent making is touched on in the following section related to stewardship.

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[99] Rundle and Steffen, 42. The archetypal model of a Kingdom professional is the Apostle Paul. It is safe to say that his only desire in life was to preach the Gospel and see churches spring up in the spiritually driest places. That was his motive—his passion calling, if you will. His strategy, however, was unconventional, at least by today's standards. From all indications and Scripture, Paul worked a great deal. He apparently did not think of his work as a distraction from ministry; otherwise, he would have dropped it without a second thought. After all, he gave the strongest defense in the Bible for supporting missionaries and pastors. So, why did he work? A careful study of his letters reveals that working was a central part of his mission strategy. Spreading the Gospel for free added credibility to his message and served as a model for his converts to follow. Demonstrating that missions is the responsibility of all Christians was arguably the single most brilliant part of his strategy and the reason why his churches spread so rapidly.

[100] Chris White, "The Father's Business Person: The Shift to Tentmaking Missions Strategy" (DMin dissertation, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA, May 1, 2012): 5.

[101] White, 30.

[102] Payne, *Apostolic Imagination*, 175.

Literature specifically written about the Apostle Paul reveals the significant role he played as an entrepreneur in the New Testament. Jordan Raynor affirms this. "The apostle Paul provides a model for us to follow as we seek to create disciples through our own entrepreneurial endeavors, living out the gospel by loving people and building genuine relationships, speaking the gospel with words, and teaching the Word to fellow believers so that they might become more like Christ."[103] J.D. Payne further explains that not only is Paul interested in the financial support that comes from working in the marketplace, but that this engagement is significant to growing God's Kingdom. "In his letter to the Philippians, Paul reveals his excitement that others are preaching the gospel, and his command to the church is to follow in this fashion. Paul begins the letter reminding them of their 'partnership in the gospel' (Phil 1:5). While this is a reference to a financial contribution (4:15-18), it is ultimately about engaging with the apostle in kingdom advancement."[104] Paul is not just making money from his work, he is also intentionally using his work as a platform to share the Gospel, and he is modeling this for others.

According to René Padilla, the Apostle Paul is also a biblical example of carrying out integral mission. Padilla writes, "It is precisely here, faced with multiple challenges of integral mission, that we see the need to create community and help the church to grow into its fullness of life in Christ. The foundation of this construction work, the resources available, and some practical examples are clearly and explicitly set out in the teaching and practice of the apostles, especially Paul of Tarsus, who occupies a key position in the exercise of mission in the New Testament."[105]

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[103] Raynor, 175.

[104] Payne, *Theology of Mission*, 121.

[105] Padilla and Yamamori, 129.

Theology of Mission

A significant amount of literature has been written about the mission[106] of the church. The researcher reviewed literature from authors on missiology, discipleship, evangelism, and the church's role in the world. J.D. Payne writes, "If God is an apostolic God, then the manifestation of his mission in the world will have practical implications on the actions of his people in the world. This includes coming to a greater understanding and application of what Jesus modeled and what was reproduced in his disciples and church."[107]

As René Padilla observes, "Christian discipleship is understood as a missionary lifestyle—the active participation in the realization of God's plan for human existence, and the creation, revealed in Jesus Christ—to which the whole church and each of its members have been called, expresses, in a word, the essence of the church's mission."[108]

There are no limits to mission in the Kingdom of God[109]. This theme is ongoing throughout the literature reviewed by the researcher. René Padilla writes, "When the church limits its mission to the speaking of the gospel, it diminishes the mission to which it was called in Jesus Christ, which is nothing less than mercy, compassion, solidarity, activity, liberation, and

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[106] Ott, 2. The researcher is using the following from Craig Ott to define mission: "I'm using the term 'mission' in the sense of the overall purpose for which God sends the church into the world. I am not speaking of the tasks that missionaries sent out by the church are to fulfill, which I understand as being related but more limited than what the mission of a local church includes. The word 'mission' stems from the Latin term for 'sending.' God himself is a sending God, a missionary God, who sent prophets and angels as his messengers and who ultimately sent his Son as agent of his redemptive purposes in the world. Today he sends the church in the power of the Spirit as his people to further his mission of redemption and restoration."

[107] Payne, *Theology of Mission*, 149.

[108] Padilla and Yamamori, 28.

[109] Ott, 31. Craig Ott shares this about defining the Kingdom of God: "To be clear, the expression of kingdom of God is merely a way of expressing the rule of God. As we have seen, the kingdom is there where Jesus is king exercising his loving lordship, where the powers of evil are being overthrown, where the effects of the fall are being overturned, and where all things are being made new."

the restoration of people, families, and society. Just as there are no limits to God's care for his creation, so there should be no limits to the mission the church carries out in God's world."[110]

In *The Dynamics of Christian Mission: History through a Missiological Perspective*, Paul Pierson writes this about mission and the Kingdom of God:

> The biblical concept of the kingdom helps our understanding and practice of mission in a number of ways. First, it reminds us that to be a follower of Jesus is to be a citizen of the kingdom, and that should shape our values and priorities in life. It brings us to a lifelong journey of discovery and obedience that takes us far beyond our concern for personal salvation, the free gift of God, to a life of joyful response to his grace. Secondly, because the kingdom has entered history in Jesus Christ, he and his power are available to his people in their lives and ministries. He is not an absent Lord! Thirdly, as citizens of the kingdom, we not only seek to live according to its values in our personal lives, but we want our societies to express its values.[111]

As the church considers how to mobilize Kingdom entrepreneurs, this is a key objective.

David Bosch writes this about mission: "Christian mission gives expression to the dynamic relationship between God and the world, particularly as this was portrayed, first, in the story of the covenant people of Israel and then, supremely, in the birth, life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth."[112] Bosch continues to write about evangelism and mission. "Mission includes evangelism as one of its essential dimensions. Evangelism is the proclamation of salvation in Christ of those who do not believe in him, calling them to repentance and conversion, announcing forgiveness of sin, and inviting them to become living members of Christ's earthly community to begin a life of service to others in the power of the Holy Spirit."[113]

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[110] Padilla and Yamamori, 171.

[111] Pierson, 351.

[112] David Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 9.

[113] Bosch, 11.

Padilla affirms this and adds, "He sends his church to do many things. Their totality is the Christian mission. Of these things evangelism has its unique importance. But healing, teaching, baptizing, liberating, protesting, working for peace and justice, feeding the hungry, reconciling those at variance, are all essential parts of mission, as we see it in the New Testament."[114]

To meet the challenge of the church today, according to Padilla, "We need to recapture the multifaceted nature of the ministry and recover its place within the church's witnessing vocation. We must recognize that as the gift of the Spirit and mission, the ministry cannot be bound to the needs of the past historical situations, nor to the limited missiological concepts of past generations. As God's redemptive mission is oriented to the multiple situations of the human family and is, therefore, multidimensional, so the ministry is oriented to the changing situations of life and must have, accordingly, multidimensional manifestations."[115]

Michael Volland echoes this call for a new redemptive approach that fully engages Kingdom entrepreneurs in mission outside of traditional church ministry. "Many years of involvement in, and reflection on, mission and ministry have led me to believe that today, the church's faithful and effective response to Jesus and the Great Commission requires the contribution of entrepreneurs."[116]

In the book *Christian Social Innovation: Renewing Wesleyan Witness,* Gregory Jones states, "It is crucial for the church's own internal integrity and witness that we rediscover a vision for social innovation and entrepreneurship. We need to recover this witness not so we might be relevant, but rather as an intrinsic part of our witness to the God who we believe is

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[114] Padilla, *The New Face of Evangelicalism*, 71.

[115] Padilla, *The New Face of Evangelicalism*, 157.

[116] Volland, 2.

making all things new by the power of the Holy Spirit. Ironically, the best way we can become relevant is not by focusing on how to be relevant, but by rather rediscovering and renewing our own mission and purpose."[117]

Closely connected to the theme of mission is an understanding of what it means to be missional. Mark L. Russell makes this observation about the terms missional and entrepreneur in the Kingdom:

> An emerging term in the church today that reflects my deeply held belief that all followers of Christ can and should be on mission with God is missional. Being missional is about living in a state of being that is at the center of God's mission wherever you are. Every Christian, every leader, and every church should be missional. A person who lives on mission and starts up a business(es) in order to live out that mission is a missional entrepreneur.[118]

This definition provides the much-needed connection between what it means to be missional and how Christians carry out their calling using their entrepreneurial gifts.

Church History

One of the earliest examples of a Kingdom entrepreneur, beyond those mentioned in Scripture, is Basil the Great. Born around AD 330, Basil was the bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. He was a great defender of Trinitarian theology and well-known for his fiery temper.[119] Basil established a sound framework for monastic life, reformed liturgy, and championed charity.[120] In AD 368, during a famine, Basil distributed all of his wealth to the

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[117] Jones, 8.

[118] Mark Russell, *The Missional Entrepreneur: Principles and Practices for Business as Mission* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope Publishers, 2010), 22.

[119] Jimmy Akin, *The Fathers Know Best: Your Essential Guide to the Teachings of the Early Church*, 1st ed. (San Diego: Catholic Answers, 2010), 56.

[120] Marcellino D'Ambrosio, *When the Church Was Young: Voices of the Early Fathers* (Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, 2014), 191.

poor. At the same time, he used church funds to start a soup kitchen.[121] During this time, Basil observed many of those with wealth doing very little to help and gave what is known as the "Sermon to the Rich." Basil preached to his peers:

> You refuse to give on the pretext that you haven't got enough for your own need, but while your tongue makes excuses, your hand convicts you. That ring shining on your finger silently declares you to be a liar. How many debtors could be released from prison with one of those rings? How many shivering people could be clothed from only one of your wardrobes and yet you turn the poor away empty-handed?[122]

In the fourth century, Basil the Great's Basiliad was the first known example of a social entrepreneur implementing a visionary initiative. This entrepreneurial endeavor, also referred to as Basil's New City, led to the establishment of numerous mission-driven entrepreneurial ventures aimed at addressing societal issues and meeting the needs of those communities.

Early monastic communities, such as the one established by Basil the Great, offer a blueprint for other Christian communities to follow. These communities demonstrate how faith, work, and social community can be integrated to live out the principles of Christianity. They provide a practical example of how to live a Christian life by combining spiritual formation, much-needed labor, and social interest engagement. One such example is the Celtic Christian movement. In his book *The Celtic Way of Evangelism*, George Hunter explains the movement:

> There are two ways (at least) in which these unusual communities produced an unusual approach to the living out of Christianity, compared to the Roman form. First, the monastic communities produced a less individualistic and more community-oriented approach to the Christian life. This affected the way in which—in parish churches, communities, tribes, and families—the people supported each other, pulled together, prayed for each other, worked out their salvation together, and lived out the Christian life together. Every person had multiple role models for living as a Christian and, in a more

[121] D'Ambrosio, 184.

[122] D'Ambrosio, 184.

> profound and pervasive sense than on the continent, Irish Christians knew what it meant to be a Christian family or tribe.[123]

The Celtic Christian movement relied on Christians serving in various capacities to take care of the community's needs beyond their spiritual well-being. This community is an early model of Kingdom entrepreneurship.

The monastic movement and its implications for Kingdom transformation are explored further by authors Michael Beck and Tyler Kleeberger in their book *Fresh Expressions of the Rural Church*. Beck and Kleeberger write, "The monastic orders claimed that spiritual formation and reflection should be balanced by action. From their meager estates, the aesthetic monks saw prayer, liturgical worship, and meditative silence as their occupation. However, their introspection was matched by an outward pursuit of real, tactile, and beneficial service to society. Their experience of God's goodness and love led to the demonstration of God's goodness and love in the world around them."[124]

Beck and Kleeberger further make the case that it is not enough to pray and contemplate the challenges of the times, but action is required that brings innovative solutions and transformational change. "The monasteries aimed to bring life, healing, and hope to earth, economic flourishing, and the sociological structures of human communities. Contemplation was combined with action. Their work needed formative prayer, and their prayer needed practical work."[125]

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[123] George G. Hunter, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity Can Reach the West—Again* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 30.

[124] Michael Adam Beck and Tyler Kleeberger, *Fresh Expressions of the Rural Church*, 1st ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2022), 93.

[125] Beck and Kleeberger, 93.

Martin Luther and John Wesley

Martin Luther and John Wesley both valued the significance of work and of communities actively sharing the Gospel while using their vocations, skills, and resources to address social issues. These communities focused their attention on carrying out Kingdom work while they lived, worshipped, prayed, and worked together. Luther and Wesley focused on the concepts of work and vocation rather than on the more common words used today for these concepts, such as entrepreneur, marketplace, and business. "One of Luther's most culturally influential accomplishments was to overcome the monastic reduction of *vocatio* to a calling focused on a particular kind of religious life. He came to hold two interrelated beliefs about Christian vocation: (1) *all* Christians (not only monks) have a vocation, and (2) *every type of work* performed by Christians (not only religious activity) can be a vocation."[126]

As Gene Edward Veith notes, Luther believed that through our work God could and should be glorified:

> What is distinctive about Luther's approach is that instead of seeing vocation as a matter of what we should do—what we must do as a Christian worker or a Christian citizen or a Christian parent—Luther emphasizes what God does in and through our vocations. That is to say, for Luther, vocation is not just a matter of Law, rather, above all, vocation is a matter of Gospel, a manifestation of God's action, not our own.[127]

Gustaf Wingren and Carl Rasmussen share Luther's understanding of work and vocation as connection and cooperation with God:

> Man's work with external things as tools in various vocations and stations is in truth his co-operation with God. In the church, man uses the Word and the sacraments. In government he uses the sword and other weapons. In the economic field, children are fed and nurtured through outward means. Such created goods, intended to serve life, are reason, the mind, the senses, and all the powers of body and soul. When there is

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[126] Volf, 105.

[127] Gene Edward Veith, *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002), 23.

> something to be done, whatever it be, man is to make use of all these powers, just as he uses an ax and saw to cut down a tree, and does not try to bring the tree down with his nose or a straw.[128]

Luther's writings about vocation fit the theme of using all of the resources God has provided to the church to carry out mission and vocation. Beck and Kleeberger remind us of the importance of Luther today, quoting Luther: "Indeed, all Christians are priests and all priests are Christian. Luther went on to convey the sacredness of all work: every occupation has its own honor before God. Ordinary work is a divine vocation of calling. In our daily work, no matter how important or mundane, we serve God by serving the neighbor, and we also participate in God's ongoing providence for the human race."[129]

Clive Murray Norris said of John Wesley, "He simultaneously both preached and practiced simplicity of life and a focus on heavenly rather than earthly treasure; but he ran his movement in many ways on business lines, founded a number of social enterprises, and enjoyed the company and support of wealthy businesspeople."[130] Wesley presented his interest in business in his sermon "The More Excellent Way."

> In what spirit do you go through your business? In the spirit of the world, or in the spirit of Christ? If you act in the spirit of Christ you carry the end you first proposed through all of your work from first to last. You do everything in the spirit of sacrifice, giving up your will to the Will of God, and continually aiming, not at ease, pleasure, or riches; not at anything this short enduring world can give; but merely at the glory of God. Now can anyone deny that this is the most excellent way of pursuing worldly business?[131]

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[128] Gustaf Wingren and Carl C. Rasmussen, *Luther on Vocation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004), 136.

[129] Beck and Kleeberger, 113.

[130] Luk Bouckaert and Steven C. van den Heuvel, eds., *Servant Leadership, Social Entrepreneurship and the Will to Serve: Spiritual Foundations and Business Applications* (London: Palgrave Macmillan Cham, 2021), 379.

[131] Bouckaert and van den Heuvel, 381.

Wesley was known as a prophet and charismatic leader, seeking to advance the Kingdom of God. He was creative and knew the value of a diverse relationship network. "In the emerging industrial revolution of the 18th century, Wesley was leveraging the power of the third place. He sparked an emotional revolution, a renewal movement of the church. Today, a similar movement is coming alive in the field again."[132] This theme from Wesley appears again in a current trend known as social innovation. Social innovation will be defined and explored in the following section.

Trends

Given the challenges facing the North American church, there is a desire to find new ways to reach more people for Jesus Christ and for the local church to extend beyond the walls of a traditional facility and congregation. There is an increase in new movements focused on evangelism and outreach. In the 1980s and 1990s, the church growth movement[133] generated research and analysis of successful strategies to help the local church become more effective at carrying out the Great Commission. C. Peter Wagner wrote this about the need for those with apostolic gifts to become more involved in social transformation for the sake of reaching lost people:

> During the 1990s the idea that the kingdom of God is not confined to the four walls of the local church began to take hold strongly among Christian leaders. We began to take our prayer, 'Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' more seriously than we had in the past. We believed that not only did God desire to save the

[132] Beck and Kleeberger, 32.

[133] The church growth movement focuses on increasing the size and impact of the Christian church. It emphasizes the use of church growth principles, outreach and evangelism strategies aimed at attracting new members and retaining existing ones. There is an emphasis on measuring and evaluating the success of these efforts through various metrics, such as attendance, membership, and conversions.

> lost and bring them into our churches, but that He also desired to change the world we live in for the better.[134]

Wagner describes the ideas of city-taking and city-reaching, which quickly became a movement of apostles called to community transformation, ultimately leading to social transformation.[135] Wagner writes, "Social transformation includes all of the other terms, but it is broader. It encompasses spiritual transformation (both church growth and public morality), economic transformation, educational transformation, and governmental transformation. This can be applied to neighborhoods, cities, regions, and nations."[136] Wagner began to refer to individuals called to this type of social transformation as marketplace apostles. The marketplace and social entrepreneur/social transformation language is parallel language to what is used in BAM.

BAM introduced new concepts and strategies based on bringing biblical principles of work and mission to the forefront of social transformation. C. Neal Johnson writes, "Although BAM can be a powerful tool for effecting economic transformation of a community, it is so much more at its heart. It is a holistic mission strategy, carrying the love and gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to a lost and hurting world through the vehicle of business and the relationships created in that enterprise."[137] In his comprehensive book on the BAM Movement, Neil Johnson explains:

> In BAM, the emphasis is on mission as transforming community through business with an intentionality that Jesus is made, known, and countered or followed. This approach implies a holistic mission in which there is conscious evangelistic engagement with the

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[134] C. Peter Wagner, "Apostles for Social Transformation," *Journal of the American Society for Church Growth* 13, no. 2 (2002): 27.

[135] Wagner, "Apostles for Social Transformation," 27.

[136] Wagner, "Apostles for Social Transformation," 1.

[137] Johnson and Rundle, 38.

> business world as a place where the Lordship of Christ and the kingdom of God is hoped for and worked out in the decisions, culture, structures, and systems of commercial life, the business of eternal living.[138]

This approach emphasizes that the movement is not simply about Christian business owners being good at making money, but that they are called to use their business endeavors to carry out their mission and transform the world around them.

Johnson continues, "Therein lies the key to BAM. It is so much more than a potentially powerful business development and community economic transformation strategy because it brings eternal hope and healing along with temporal prosperity."[139] Other writings from the Lausanne Movement conference papers and books on this topic follow the same theme as Johnson's:

> While BAM has significant historical roots within the broader church and its mission ventures, that is only in the recent past that it has assumed a life of its own as a specific mission strategy. The fact that its first appearance at a Lausanne Conference was not until 2004 attests loudly to its recent new visibility. In addition to the unique characteristics that define BAM, in its modern state, six deserve special comment: BAM is a domestic and international, long-term, holistic, incarnational, contextually appropriate, empowering and real ministry to people in need.[140]

These characteristics are important for defining BAM and making the positive case for BAM to be part of a key Kingdom strategy for the local church to engage to meet the challenges facing Christianity in North America.

This connection to BAM and the local church is an important observation. In his book *The Missional Entrepreneur,* Mark L. Russell writes, "I believe more and more followers of Christ are realizing that God calls us to be salt and light and to be on mission with him

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[138] Johnson and Rundle, 38.

[139] Johnson and Rundle, 38.

[140] Johnson and Rundle, 39.

everywhere. This includes the marketplace. Even though there has been an ongoing recognition throughout church history that Christians are called to do this, there is an upsurge in activity in recent years that makes one wonder what God is up to?"[141] Russell makes a case for urgency for pastors and ministry leaders to embrace the new and creative ways Christians can take the Great Commission out into the world. Russell continues:

> In the future, people will not be content nor should they be in living a fractured life of church on Sunday and employment throughout the week. If the church fails to act, its ability to impact society and transform lives will significantly decrease. However, if we develop empowering frameworks that help people integrate their faith with their jobs, then we are likely to not only see more people interested in our faith, but also a more accurate and compelling outworking of the ideas of the faith in the routines of life.[142]

Russell makes the strong case again for embracing the concept of BAM and marketplace mission to help the church transform cultures and communities.

The Business as Mission Movement contributed significantly to understanding the concept of the Great Commission and, most significantly, to defining Kingdom entrepreneurs. Based on their research, Tetsunao Yamamori and Kenneth Eldred provide this definition of a Kingdom entrepreneur within BAM:

> Kingdom entrepreneurs are *authentic* businesspeople with proven competence in at least one area of business administration. They are spiritually gifted much like traditional missionaries, but are called and equipped to use their gifts in a business context. Kingdom entrepreneurs have a genuine desire to see communities of faith spring up in the spiritually driest of places and are willing to live and work in these places to make that happen. Rather than perceiving the business as a distraction from their ministry, kingdom entrepreneurs recognize it as a necessary context for their incarnational outreach. The daily struggles—meeting deadlines, satisfying customers, being victimized by corruption—are precisely the things that enable kingdom entrepreneurs to model discipleship on a daily basis.[143]

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[141] Russell, 23.

[142] Russell, 25.

[143] Tetsunao Yamamori and Kenneth A. Eldred, eds., *On Kingdom Business: Transforming Missions through Entrepreneurial Strategies* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), 229.

This definition is the most comprehensive and specific to the term Kingdom entrepreneur as it relates to BAM. Yamamori and Eldred combine the research of Johnson and Rundle to create their own definition.

One of the challenges with embracing the idea of Kingdom entrepreneurs comes in the area of understanding the language and vocabulary used to describe these ministry initiatives. Samuel Lee in his book *Faith in the Marketplace* provides helpful clarity on these key terms and their use. Samuel Lee refers to the definition provided by Max Weber and the Protestant ethic to define an entrepreneur. "In the spirit of capitalism, an entrepreneur is defined as a person who gets nothing out of his wealth, his accomplishments for himself, except the irrational sense of having done his job well and the chances of overcoming traditionalism, i.e., a willingness to try new approaches."[144] Lee also defines an entrepreneur as a visionary who challenges the status quo by energetically creating something of Kingdom value.[145]

Lee defines the marketplace as where people get their income, self-identity, social context, and sense of purpose. It is also a setting where relationships are formed, and people exchange value with one another. In this study, the marketplace is used as a broad term to describe the network of relationships whereby people exchange value with one another.[146] The marketplace is also defined as a place where people find purpose. These definitions provided by Lee fit a theme throughout the literature on the topic of entrepreneurs and the marketplace. The definitions provided by Lee and other authors provide clarity for pastors and ministry leaders as they discover how to best engage with entrepreneurs.

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[144] Lee and Moon, 13.

[145] Lee and Moon, 13.

[146] Lee and Moon, 14.

Ben Ward's journal article on the implications of defining the Kingdom of God in the BAM businesses poses important questions about BAM and the culture of this movement as part of a broader concept of social entrepreneurship. Ward's questions include how to best understand the spiritual and Kingdom objectives of BAM, how the objectives are measured, and what evidence there is that this type of holistic ministry brings about the economic uplift and Great Commission impact BAM experts believe can take place.[147] Ward summarizes the BAM Movement pulling from authors such as Stuart Hamilton, Kenneth Eldred, Mark Russell, Wayne Grudem, Neal Johnson, and Steve Rundle. Many of those same authors are quoted throughout this research.

Equally, it is important to explore the body of work that questions and challenges the future of BAM and this type of movement in the local church. Questions arise in the area of the value of Christian leaders learning about and being trained in this concept. Joseph Childs in his article "The Future of BAM in the Academy" writes, "It is generally agreed now that the purpose of a BAM organization is to create a sustainable profit-making firm that has companion purposes to meet social and spiritual needs. The other-than-profit purposes of BAM are both *kerygmatic*—the proclamation of the gospel—and *missional*—the meeting of tangible social and material needs of a target market."[148] Childs makes the case that a both/and approach to learning about BAM is important for understanding how a hybrid business and mission organization can be both profitable and mission-focused.

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[147] Ben Ward, "Thy Kingdom Come in BAM as It Is in Heaven: Implications on Defining the Kingdom of God in BAM Businesses," *Religions* 12, no. 557 (July 1, 2021): 2.

[148] R. Joseph Childs, "The Future of BAM in the Academy: A Response to Rundle and Quatro," *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business* 15, no. 1 (2012): 88.

Others question the biblical basis for BAM. Christopher Brown and David Bronkema describe BAM through the lens of development. “In addition to placing great emphasis and time on defining BAM, the other literature also shares a commonality in arguing that the Bible supports and encourages business endeavors, and specifically Business as Mission. Invariably, with most authors citing the same examples and verses, the focus is on the Apostle Paul, the examples of Joseph, Daniel, and Jesus and their combination of work and ministry, and a number of Old Testament and New Testament figures engaged in commerce.”[149] For those wondering about the biblical basis for Kingdom entrepreneurship, Bronkema and Brown provide example after example of this idea throughout the Bible.

The authors continue, “The main argument is that while God honors work, and therefore business, the western world has built a wall between the sacred and the secular, leading to secular work, business work, not being honored. The result is that people feel that being a full-time Christian worker, defined as a pastor and missionary, for example, is the highest calling for a Christian.”[150] They continue to share that “being a full-time business person is a calling equal to that of a pastor or a missionary. The real issue is to ensure that the sacred aspects of that calling inform the actions of the secular world.”[151] This reinforces the theme that work in the marketplace can be sacred and should inform and transform our business culture.

Intentional tent making often comes to mind when one thinks of a Christian working in a marketplace setting. There are important distinctions to be made between tent making and a marketplace apostle or Kingdom entrepreneur. Many authors share the point of view that tent

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[149] David Bronkema and Christopher M. Brown, “Business as Mission Through the Lens of Development,” *Transformation* 26, no. 2 (2009): 84.

[150] Bronkema and Brown, 84.

[151] Bronkema and Brown, 84.

making and those carrying out Business as Mission are not the same. For many in ministry, tent making plays a very specific role in how they generate income for themselves. Jack T. Davison, an overseas missionary, explains the distinction in tent making this way: "My experience concurs with Johnson and Rundle's claim that many long-term missionaries view tent making as a necessary evil, usually only undertaken as a means of obtaining a visa for residing in a foreign country."[152] Davison goes on to share that tent making is more often being done as a bare minimum job to provide for the missionary, not as a platform for outreach and evangelism or to carry out mission.[153] In the context of BAM, tent making refers to the idea of people using business or professional skills to create a sustainable business to support themselves as they are carrying out some type of missionary effort. This approach to missions and ministry is typically used in areas where traditional forms of missionary work may be restricted or less effective.[154]

Redemptive Entrepreneurship

The literature review reveals the use of several different terms related to the concept of Kingdom entrepreneurs and marketplace apostles. Redemptive entrepreneurship[155] is one of these key phrases. Praxis Labs, an organization with a mission to advance redemptive entrepreneurship,[156] has written a series of books to help Kingdom entrepreneurs. Andy Crouch,

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[152] Jack T. Davison, "The Continuity Mindset for Christian Mission," *Great Commission Research Journal* 14, no. 1 (March 15, 2022): 10.

[153] Davison, 10.

[154] Lee and Moon, 15.

[155] The term "redemptive entrepreneurship" was used at a gathering of faith-based entrepreneurs, funders, and thought leaders at the UnFamous 2019 conference in Seattle to try to describe this emerging movement. The term is also used by Praxis Labs, an incubator for faith-based social entrepreneurs. Other terms are often used in a related manner, such as "faith-based social enterprise," "social business," "social entrepreneurship," etc. Elsdon, 8.

[156] Praxis Labs' mission is "advancing redemptive entrepreneurship: supporting founders, funders, and innovators motivated by their faith to address the major issues of our time." Praxislabs.org.

one of the founders of Praxis Labs, writes, "We believe that redemptive entrepreneurship is profoundly 'disruptive innovation'—a way to bring the upside-down reality of the kingdom of God to the world."[157] Crouch defines the concept of redemptive entrepreneurship as "building creative restoration through sacrifice into the world through our vocations and organizations."[158] In addition to the definitions provided by Praxis Labs, Mark Elsdon provides this explanation of the role of redemptive entrepreneurs:

> Redemptive entrepreneurs are working to solve some of the most pressing wicked problems of today. And they are using creative expressions of social enterprise, both inside and outside of the church, to do so. Congregations are serving young entrepreneurs by converting fellowship halls to coworking spaces—drawing people into community who never attend a worship service. They are organizing co-op grocery stores to address food deserts and their neighborhoods in a sustainable way. They are putting tiny houses on underutilized church properties in order to provide homes for homeless neighbors. They are creating wine tasting venues, lawn care services, and fair trade stores. But these redemptive innovations require capital funding in order to get off the ground, and at a different scale than the traditional grant or donor funding approach of the past.[159]

Craig Ott affirms the concept this way: "Thus in one way or another, in big and small ways, all of God's people are to be agents of transformation and redemption in the various relationships and spheres of influence in which he has placed them: in families and neighborhoods, at workplaces and at leisure places."[160] Redemptive entrepreneurs are an important aspect of bringing about transformational change to a congregation. They can be a model of what it means to be a witness in the world, following Craig Ott's observation that, "the

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[157] Andy Crouch and Dave Blanchard, *The Redemptive Business: A Playbook for Leaders* (Stanford, CA: Praxis Labs, 2018), 24.

[158] Crouch and Blanchard, 23.

[159] Elsdon, 25.

[160] Ott, 35.

whole life of the church should be characterized by witness to the kingdom of God and the transformative power of the gospel of Jesus Christ."[161]

Social Innovation

Christian social innovation is a recent term being used in the literature about Kingdom entrepreneurship and ministry. In his book *Christian Social Innovation: Renewing Wesleyan Witness*, Gregory Jones defines Christian social innovation.

> Christian social innovation describes a way of life in relationship with God that focuses on building and transforming institutions that nurture generative solutions to wicked social problems and is shaped by intersections of mindsets and practices of blessing, hope, forgiveness, friendship, imagination, and improvisation. These mindsets and practices are crucial to holding together both positive commitments that inspire and sustain social innovation and the realistic understanding that often leads to cynicism and despair. And, while they can be distinguished as ideas, they are deeply interrelated in a Christian way of life.[162]

Jones's definition addresses both the positive and negative aspects of introducing innovative thinking to the local church. Jones provides a more succinct definition of Christian social innovation here: "Christian social innovation involves bringing the rich resources of the Christian faith to bear on the mindsets, practices, and traits of social innovation."[163] As congregations consider the needs of the communities around them and how to engage Kingdom entrepreneurs to help meet those needs, understanding Christian social innovation will be important. By being in the marketplace where significant relationships are formed and self-purpose is found, Kingdom entrepreneurs, in collaboration with a local church, may find themselves perfectly positioned to share the Gospel and make disciples.

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[161] Ott, 35.

[162] Jones, 13.

[163] Jones, 4.

Mark Elsdon addresses social innovation as it relates to the church taking its mission beyond the walls of church buildings and current programming. “Individuals and communities are longing for different expressions of lived faith that move beyond the traditional programs of churches. Traditional church programs are often no longer engaging people, nor are they helping people engage the world. We are facing serious crises such as climate change, racial injustice, opioid addiction, income inequality, and more. How are we going to tackle these ‘wicked problems’ with innovative solutions through new expressions of the church in the world?”[164] Elsdon clearly states the challenge today of the church moving beyond its traditions and mobilizing members in ways that meet the changing needs and challenges of the world. Elsdon brings to light an important question: How is the local congregation going to transform its thinking about mission and change in innovative ways to bring change to the world it is trying to reach?

Christian social innovation also has an impact on the financial and funding systems that mobilizing Kingdom entrepreneurs may be able to improve. According to Mark Elsdon, “Churches and church-related institutions (seminaries, colleges, etc.) are struggling with an economic model that is increasingly coming up short in funding mission, especially the kind of mission that addresses the wicked problems we want to solve. The way we have funded mission and ministry in the past is no longer working. How will we generate sustainable forms of revenue to support mission?”[165]

All of these authors provide present-day responses to the social and economic challenges that are woven into the larger issues facing churches today. As Gregory Jones writes:

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[164] Elsdon, 7.

[165] Elsdon, 7.

> In addition to creating patterns that welcome people, as well as intimate gatherings that help people go deeper, we also need to focus on the wider ecosystem that nurtures Christian formation. At its best, Christian social innovation depends on intrinsic partnerships of diverse institutions that support the formation of a broad Christian vision and help people discover and learn practical wisdom. Those institutions include schools, camps, publishing houses, health clinics, retirement homes, initiatives to help children (and adults) learn marketable skills that become sustainable, coffee shops, entrepreneurial businesses, and varieties of skunkworks incubating new innovations.[166]

Mark Elsdon echoes this: "Even though the church has sometimes led important social movements in the past, we are well behind the curve in modern impact investing and social enterprise. Less than 3% of congregations have established separate social enterprises."[167] Understanding Christian social innovation as it relates to mobilizing Kingdom entrepreneurs may improve this statistic.

Jones also addresses the issue of the risk-averse church and social innovation. Jones writes, "If we are to live faithfully and effectively into the future in a spirit of Christian social innovation empowered by the Holy Spirit, we need to be willing to take risks. This includes attending to the destabilizing forces in the wider culture, as well as asking questions about why we are not reaching the 'unchurched' and 'dechurched' around us. This requires imagination and 'fresh eyes' to see new possibilities, rather than being content with what we already know and are used to doing."[168] The Apostle Paul addresses this very issue in his letter to the Romans. Paul writes in Romans 12:2, "Do not conform 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."[169] Paul's instructions are still critical today as the local church

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[166] Jones, 11.

[167] Elsdon, 28.

[168] Jones, 70.

[169] Romans 12:2 [NIV].

continues to decline. Christians must renew their minds, be open to new ideas, and have a willingness to take risks under the power of the Holy Spirit.

Stewardship

Other reviewed literature related to entrepreneurism and innovation considered the role of stewardship, financial issues and the use of resources, and the training of pastors. In his book, *The Coming Revolution in Church Economics: Why Tithes and Offerrings Are No Longer Enough and What You Can Do about It*, Mark DeYmaz shares insights into the need for churches to use creative thinking to solve financial and stewardship challenges. Steve Rundle's book about economic justice, *Economic Justice in a Flat World: Christian Perspectives on Globalization*, builds on his earlier writing from the Business as Mission Movement to address global economic issues and social justice.

J.D. Payne considers financial stewardship an important factor in the church. Payne believes that apostolic imagination is necessary today to find new ways to fund not only local church ministry but also church plants and new mission-focused initiatives in the U.S. Payne writes, "North American financial structures are not built from an apostolic imagination. In order for the church to consider funding and sending apostolic teams into such contexts, radical changes need to be made to this long-held model."[170] The current model of relying on offerings and special gifts from the congregation will no longer be enough to support the necessary mission work.

[170] Payne, *Apostolic Imagination*, 75.

Training

The researcher reviewed literature on the training available to pastors and ministry leaders related to engaging entrepreneurial ideas in ministry. As noted previously, changing training models was a concern Lesslie Newbigin brought forth related to pastors engaging with those in the church with specialized gifts that could be used outside traditional ministry settings. Newbigin writes, "It seems clear that ministerial training as currently conceived is still far too much training for the pastoral care of the existing congregation, and far too little oriented toward the missionary calling to claim the whole of public life for Christ in his kingdom."[171] Mark Elsdon explains the gaps regarding training available to ministry leaders: "Individuals and church-related institutions interested in engaging in redemptive entrepreneurship are also lacking the knowledge, expertise, and training required to be successful in launching social enterprises. Seminary training still largely assumes a classic model of the preaching pastor whose primary form of ministry is Sunday worship services and pastoral care. Denominational leaders are typically drawn from the ranks of clergy and come into their work with similar training."[172] The researcher discovered several programs and cohort models for Kingdom entrepreneurs to learn how to implement entrepreneurial ideas, but little information on how seminaries are adapting their curriculum to equip pastors to work with Kingdom entrepreneurs.

Capitalism

The book *The Economy of Desire* by Daniel M. Bell Jr. affirms the need for Christians to have a better understanding of economics and the role capitalism plays in shaping our Kingdom

[171] Newbigin, 231.

[172] Elsdon, 95.

ministry efforts.[173] As congregations consider embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs and their ideas, Christians must seek to understand the power and motivation that comes from being too focused on making money rather than on doing good things for God and for his people. Congregations must consider engaging with individuals carrying out entrepreneurial initiatives to ensure the motives of the individual focus on serving where God is calling to advance his mission over making money. Bell writes, "When Christians contemplate our life's labors, we do not rightly think in terms of how our interest may be maximized or in terms of what we *want* to do. Rather, our work is a matter of vocation, of calling. We are called to work for the common good. Therefore, our various roles and jobs ought to be describable/narratable in terms of service to the common good (1 Cor. 12:7)."[174] Instead of focusing on how much money can be made from a Kingdom entrepreneur's idea, the first question should be: "Is God calling us to do this?" The second question for leaders who understand integral mission becomes: "How much mission can be done?" It is important for those considering themselves to be Kingdom entrepreneurs to evaluate their work and their motives in light of how the world has changed. Bell writes:

> Churches are now run like businesses, with ministers proclaiming themselves 'CEOs' and corporations offering contributions in exchange for advertising space. Schools are corporate-sponsored training camps for producers and consumers. Athletic events are saturated with corporate logos and viewed by the participants as merely a means to find financial gain in the form of endorsements. Public media and public libraries face extinction. The body is just one more commodity—the revelers of Mardi Gras remind us. Even marriage, children, and the elderly are subjected to the routine ruthless calculus of economic rationality. In all these ways and more, pastoral power in service of economy has become virtually omnipresent, conforming desire to the capitalist axiomatic even as we proclaim that we are free.[175]

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[173] Daniel M. Bell, *The Economy of Desire: Christianity and Capitalism in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012).

[174] Bell, 165.

[175] Bell, 77.

Kathryn Tanner's book *Christianity and the New Spirit of Capitalism* pushed back against the writings of Max Weber by suggesting that now is the time to reconsider our approach to capitalism and the Christian's role in work and business.[176]

Theology of Work

There is a large body of literature and research available on the topic of Christians at work[177] and sharing faith in the workplace. This body of literature is most often referred to as the theology of work. This is an important area of faith and spiritual formation. Books such as *Make Work Matter* by Dr. Michaela O'Donnell[178] and *Every Good Endeavor* by Timothy Keller and Katherine Leary Alsdorf[179] outline how to take Christian faith formation more boldly into workplace settings. Other organizations provide website resources on this topic. Examples of the resources in this area include the Theology of Work Project, www.theologyofwork.org; the Institute for Faith, Work & Economics, tifwe.org; and the Theology of Business Institute, www.theologyofbusiness.com. All of these websites and organizations provide resources, tools, and assessments for Christian business owners to disciple their employees and coworkers in biblical, Christ-centered standards for business. However, those resources do not extend into creating or launching a BAM or marketplace apostolic initiatives.

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[176] Kathryn Tanner, *Christianity and the New Spirit of Capitalism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019).

[177] Volf, 10. Volf defines work this way: "Work is honest, purposeful, and methodologically specified social activity whose primary goal is the creation of products or states of affairs that can satisfy the needs of working individuals or their co-creatures, or (if primarily an end in itself) activity that is necessary in order for acting individuals to satisfy their needs apart from the need for the activity itself."

[178] Michaela O'Donnell, *Make Work Matter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2021).

[179] Timothy Keller and Katherine Leary Alsdorf, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work* (New York, NY: Dutton, 2012).

Gaps in Recent Writings

There are significant gaps in the literature on the topic of Kingdom entrepreneurs. What is lacking is a well-defined set of terms, language, and vocabulary that is consistent throughout the various trends and movements. Many of the terms used provide general, and in some cases murky, definitions. There is an overlap in the use of words between sacred and secular spheres. This may become a roadblock to pastors and ministry leaders embracing many of these concepts.

The most significant gap in the literature on this topic relates to the purpose and goal of this research project. "Burgeoning literature about social entrepreneurship barely mentions the church or other faith-based institutions, and when it does they often are described as part of the broken institutional landscape."[180] There is very little written about how a local church can embrace marketplace apostles and Kingdom entrepreneurs as they create, launch, and multiply Kingdom and community efforts that bring about social transformation, influencing culture, community, commerce, and the local church. There is little written about how Kingdom entrepreneurs take the Great Commission beyond the walls of the local church in collaboration with the local church.

Summary

A pastor or ministry leader who embraces the idea of engaging with Kingdom entrepreneurs will have to do their own study and research on the many aspects connected with the subject. They will need an understanding of God as the original entrepreneur. God as Creator is easy to understand, but how often have we thought of God as an entrepreneur who created new things for his mission? The same is true for understanding the entrepreneurship of Jesus's

[180] Jones, 6.

ministry. Jesus carried out almost all of his ministry in community spaces and in the marketplace. Pastors and ministry leaders should also take an interest in those key biblical figures who carried out ministry with an entrepreneurial mindset.

The early church fathers as well as historical figures in key eras contributed to the growth of the church through entrepreneurial endeavors. The church has also struggled with this balance of Kingdom and entrepreneurship in modern times as it began to face evangelism and outreach challenges. The church today faces increasing difficulties in reaching lost people and carrying out the Great Commission. Learning more about movements such as Business as Mission can be a solution to help with these challenges. Pastors and ministry leaders should also look to models of integral mission to learn more about how to embrace these ideas. As pastors and ministry leaders wrestle with these new concepts, they must be aware of their role in approaching both the sacred and the secular aspects of these initiatives. They must come to understand the importance and value of utilizing the gifts of those with entrepreneurial ideas in their congregations.

Chapter Three

Research Methods

Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this project is to explore the power of Kingdom entrepreneurs to carry out faith-based initiatives in the marketplace: to be and make disciples, transform lives, impact communities, and expand the Kingdom of God. Research in this project attempts to discover the common entrepreneurial experiences that occur through successful faith-based and marketplace endeavors. The project researches the role entrepreneurs play in helping meet the challenges facing local churches today while meeting felt needs in the community and guide pastors and ministry leaders toward potential creative solutions in meeting the needs of the communities they are called to reach. The research question for this project is: How does the local church embrace Kingdom entrepreneurs to achieve the Great Commission?

Methodology and Research Design

The research design for this project utilizes the qualitative methods approach in a natural (field) setting as defined by John W. Creswell.[181] A qualitative research design process was created to perform inductive and deductive data analysis. This project also includes elements of an emergent qualitative design as questions, sites, and individuals studied shift once the researcher enters the field to launch the qualitative research process. The diagram below shows the research design.

[181] Creswell, 4.

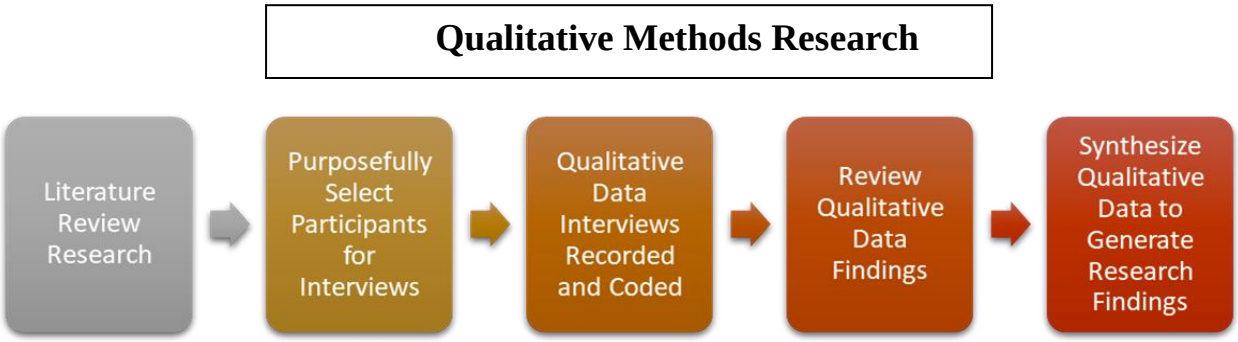

Figure 1. Qualitative methods research design

The Researcher's Role

The authors of *The Craft of Research* address the role of the researcher: "When you do research, you learn something that others don't know. So when you report it, you must think of your reader as someone who doesn't know it *but needs to* and yourself as someone who will *give her reason to want to know it*."[182] On the subject of reporting the research, the authors continue, "You take a step toward more significant research when you can say to readers not just *'Here are some facts that should interest you,'* but *'These facts will help you do something to solve a problem you care about*.'"[183]

Further, the authors share that researchers "confront practical problems whose solutions require research into the facts of the matter, first to understand the problem, then to figure out how to solve it."[184] The researcher followed this advice in the construction of the research project design, through a systematic approach to collecting qualitative data and in reporting practical possible next steps and solutions to the identified problem.

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[182] Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. FitzGerald, *The Craft of Research*, 4th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 18.

[183] Booth et al, 19.

[184] Booth et al, 19.

The researcher conducted all interviews; gathered, reviewed, and organized the existing research on the research topic; and processed and analyzed all of the interview data. The researcher has experience with processing and analyzing data in nonacademic settings but relied heavily on established academic research and design resources to shape the research design and approach for this project. The researcher utilized two external proofreaders as technical editors and a team of academically trained advisors as content editors to create the research report.

Human Subjects Protection

A full Institutional Review Board (IRB) review was conducted for this project. The IRB reviewed and approved the research method to ensure all ethical research guidelines and standards were being met by the researcher.[185] If for any reason a participant could not participate in their one-on-one interview, the option was available to write a 1,500-word summary of their entrepreneurial project. None of the participants chose that option. All participants voluntarily chose to participate without compensation.

All interview participants were provided with a data collection form and an informed consent form.[186] Both forms were required to be completed before the interview took place. Participation in the research interview process was voluntary. Participants could withdraw from the research study at any time. The initial form collected the following general background information on each participant:

[185] See Appendix B for IRB approval.

[186] See Appendix "C" for the data form and consent form used.

- First and last name
- Contact information and preferred method of contact
- Option to choose to remain anonymous (no participant chose this option)
- Denomination/association/network/church affiliation
- Pastoral experience
- Spiritual gifts knowledge
- Ministry activity
- Brief description of the ministry initiative

One participant completed the data collection form and informed consent form, but then asked the researcher for time to review the forms with her leadership and legal team. This participant had recently signed legal and financial agreements related to the sale of her ministry story to a media company, and she wanted extra time to confirm there would be no conflict in participating in this research project.

Research interviews took place between October 2022 and January 2023. All interview forms have been marked confidential. All recordings and transcriptions have been assigned numbers to identify the interviews. This numerical system protects the identity of the participants in the report-writing process.

Prior to the interview, the potential risks of the study were communicated in writing to the participants. Subjects could encounter spiritual, emotional, and mental stress during their interviews as they shared about their faith and entrepreneurial efforts. The researcher created a confidential and comfortable environment for the subjects to be interviewed to help reduce any potential stress. If at any time the researcher deemed it necessary, the interview could be paused

or terminated. To help the participants get to know more about the researcher, the researcher provided biographical information and a photo prior to the interview.

Sample and Population

There were twenty-three interview subjects. Additional background support information for the project was generated from an extensive literature review. Based on the literature and background reading, the researcher created a profile of the type of individual to be interviewed. Subjects interviewed had a Christian ministry connection to a local church, a local mission or ministry, or a parachurch ministry. They may have also self-identified as entrepreneurs in the marketplace. They could have worked or served in for-profit or not-for-profit entities. There are models and examples of similar types of entrepreneurial projects that provided the basis for identifying individuals to interview. Subjects interviewed had a Christian ministry connection to a local church, a local mission or ministry, or a parachurch ministry. They may have also self-identified as entrepreneurs in the marketplace. They could have worked or served in for-profit or not-for-profit entities.

Instrumentation

The same set of questions was asked of all interview participants. The questions were broken into categories to allow the researcher to better organize the interviews into segments specific to the purpose of the research project. The researcher did not provide the questions prior to the interview. No participant requested to see the questions before the interview. The complete list of research interview questions follows:

Background

1. How would you describe the work you do? (not the work of the organization)
2. What made you decide to do _____? (Insert whatever the specific business/nonprofit/project is.)
3. How would you describe the work of the whole organization?

Theology

1. What influence do God, Scripture, and theology have on your work?
2. Would you consider your work a job or a calling; why?
3. What is the role of the Christian entrepreneur in the Kingdom?
4. What does it mean to you/your organization that Christ has called us to a ministry of service?
5. How does the work you do bear witness to Jesus Christ?

Mission/Vision/Purpose

1. How do you describe the mission of your organization?
2. How do you describe fulfilling your mission?
3. What is the role or place of Matthew 28:18-20, the Great Commission, in your organization? ("Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'")
4. What type of impact do you hope your efforts will bring about in the communities you serve or are located in?

5. How important is making a difference in the community to you?
6. How important is it to influence or make a difference in the culture of the world today?

Church/Ministry/Kingdom

1. Where do you see or experience the Kingdom of God or God at work in your organization?
2. How are you building or expanding this?
3. How does the local church connect to your work?

Financial/Stewardship

1. How important is making a profit, making money, to you personally?
2. How important is making a profit to your organization/project?
3. What does good stewardship look like in your organization?
4. How important is it that your organization influences commerce and business standards? Influences your church?

Closing Question

What else would be helpful to know?

Data Collection

All of the participants were informed before the interview that the interview would be recorded. In-person interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and a voice recording app on the researcher's mobile phone. Interviews taking place via Zoom were audio and video recorded. The researcher took handwritten notes during both the in-person and Zoom interviews. Prior to each interview, the researcher read through each participant's data collection form to ensure participants met the criteria for the research project.

All interviews were transcribed using an automated transcription service to generate the first transcription. The researcher read the initial transcription and compared it to the handwritten notes. If the automatically generated transcription did not provide a clear and accurate representation of the interview recording, the researcher had the transcription produced by a paid human transcriptionist. Two interviews required this method of transcription to be used, one due to the strong language dialect of the participant and the second because of a poor Internet connection that made it difficult to hear at certain points during that specific interview.

Data Analysis and Data Display

The researcher coded all interviews and transcription data using a combination of longhand coding and an online software program. The researcher followed the coding system defined in the book *Qualitative Data Analysis*. As defined by the authors, "Codes are labels that assign symbolic meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. Codes are attached to data chunks of varying size and can take the form of a straightforward, descriptive label or a more evocative and complex one."[187]

The researcher used first and second cycle coding methods. From *Qualitative Data Analysis*, "First cycle coding methods are codes initially assigned to the data chunks. Second cycle coding messages generally work with the resulting first cycle codes themselves."[188] The following types of coding were used within this project:

In vivo coding: Using words or short phrases from the participant's own language in the day to record as codes.

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[187] Johnny Saldaña, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2016), 71.

[188] Saldaña, 73.

Descriptive coding: Assigns labels to data to summarize in a word or short phrase, most often a noun—the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data.

Emotion coding: Labels the emotions recalled or experienced by the participant or inferred by the resource or researcher about the participant.

Causation coding: Used for discerning motives, belief systems, worldviews, processes, recent histories, interrelationships, and the complexity of influences and effects on human actions and phenomena.

Sub coding: A second-order tag assigned after a primary code to detail or enrich the entry.[189]

Delimitations

Given the vast number of challenges facing the North American church today in the area of effective outreach and evangelism, leading to numerous strategies to meet those challenges, the researcher understood the importance of narrowing down the research approach for this project. Many active Christians own or manage businesses or carry out some leadership responsibilities in the for-profit business sector while promoting their Christian faith and values. Many for-profit companies have Christian core values. It is important to distinguish that this project is not part of the faith at work or Christians in the workplace body of research. Those initiatives are important, but they do not fit the criteria for this project.

Churches that have created extension strategies for providing worship services, Bible studies, and small groups in public meeting spaces are not included in this research. Those initiatives are important for raising the visibility of a local church, but they are not included in

[189] Saldaña, 74-80.

this study, as they do not have a financial or Business as Mission component. Churches with day cares, preschools, or early childhood development centers are not included in this research project. The outreach mission, financial funding, and business models for those entities are not always clear. Both the extension strategy and early childhood development strategy would not be considered entrepreneurial or fit the purpose of this research.

Researcher Bias

The researcher has experience in both the private for-profit business sector and in the nonprofit organization and ministry sectors. The researcher has also served as a consultant to churches and as a ministry coach to pastors and church staff team members. This past experience meant the researcher had to be intentional about not bringing any personal or professional bias into the project. The researcher was careful not to make any assumptions about the participants and their organizations or about the church and ministry relationships they shared during the interview process. The researcher also has experience in conducting one-on-one interviews as part of the consultation process. The researcher was careful not to approach the research interviews with the same style and method used during those consultation/coaching interviews. The researcher made every effort to stay focused and disciplined in asking the research interview questions.

Summary

The research method and design created for this project allowed the researcher to create a systematic approach to gathering the data needed for this type of qualitative research. This systematic approach allowed the researcher to remain focused and disciplined for the purpose of the project. A well-documented system helped the researcher overcome researcher bias. The

researcher kept the interview questions available during all interviews, allowing for focused and useful data to be gathered without drifting into other areas of mission and ministry related to outreach strategies and evangelism. The research, along with the literature review, produced clarity for the researcher to be able to look for specific research data to make an informed analysis and answer the central research question. Those results are outlined in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

Research Results

As the North American church continues to face numerical decline and fewer Christians can identify the goal of the Great Commission, there is an increasing need to engage new platforms for outreach and evangelism. This has been a long-standing challenge facing the church as outlined in the Lausanne Covenant over forty years ago. The challenge to take the whole Gospel to the whole world increases the need to embrace Christians with entrepreneurial skills and creative thinking to create, lead, and serve in new ways.

The purpose of this project is to explore the role Kingdom entrepreneurs play in carrying out the Great Commission beyond the normal ministry activities of an established congregation. Through qualitative methods research, the researcher attempts to address the question: How does the local church embrace Kingdom entrepreneurs to achieve the Great Commission? The research results are reported in this chapter, along with summaries of common themes and patterns identified by the researcher from twenty-three individual interviews.

Data Collection Analysis and Procedure

A total of twenty-three interviews were conducted by one researcher. Of the twenty-three interviews, nine individual interviews were conducted in person and fourteen individual interviews were conducted via Zoom online meeting. All twenty-three interviews were recorded using two recording methods to ensure there would be a backup if there were any technical issues or equipment failures. All audio recordings were saved to a secured network server and backed up in a secured cloud-based program.

The audio recordings were transcribed using a software program that converts audio files to written transcripts. The researcher printed each transcript and reviewed the automated

transcription for accuracy to determine that the quality of the transcription would be sufficient for data analysis and coding and to determine if a human being would be needed to provide a transcription of the audio file. In all but two interviews, the researcher found that the automated voice-to-text transcription was sufficient. Two interviews were transcribed by a transcriptionist.

Once the researcher had the audio files transcribed into a document file, the researcher went through each file to format the file and prepare it to be uploaded into the data analysis and coding software used by the researcher. This particular software required a certain type of formatting, line breaks, and page breaks for the software to work most effectively. While this added additional time to the project, it provided an efficient way to organize the coding process.

The researcher uploaded the documents containing the interview transcription to begin the coding process. The researcher predetermined a list of twenty codes to be used to start the coding process. The initial codes were generated from the interview questions and categories. The researcher read through each interview transcript and applied those initial codes to those documents as the first phase of coding. The researcher used color-coded comment notes in the software to code and organize quotes and responses within the established interview question categories.

The researcher then read through each transcribed interview a second time for the purpose of in vivo coding to look for how participants used their own words in response to interview questions.

The researcher went through each interview a third time to look for any new words that may have needed to be added to the code list. This included looking for any new descriptive, emotional, relational, or theory and specific context and culture-type responses that were not included in the researcher's list.

The researcher then went back through each interview and read through the interview detail again to apply any new codes to each interview. The software program allowed the researcher to build networks and groups based on codes. The researcher used this discipline to identify patterns and associations in the responses. Based on the second and third phases of reading and coding, an additional thirty codes were added to the code list. In total, fifty codes were used by the researcher to analyze the data in this project.

The software program provided a feature for capturing similar quotes that could be networked and grouped together, as well as word frequencies and concepts based on codes. These features and functions of the program allowed the researcher to identify patterns and themes throughout the entire project and break them down into specific groups of information, providing results from those interviewed.

Participants' Demographic Profile

Prior to each interview, the participant completed a set of data collection and consent forms approved by the Internal Review Board (IRB). The data collection form was designed to capture basic contact information, Christian ministry background, current Christian ministry involvement, and a brief description of the participants' business, nonprofit, or ministry initiatives. The following is a summary of the demographics of the twenty-three participants interviewed and the information they voluntarily provided on the data collection form.

The participants were asked to self-identify their denomination or church affiliation. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of participants. The twenty-three participants represented a cross-section of denominations, networks, and church associations. Seven identified themselves as Lutheran with the following breakdown: four represented the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS), two represented Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC), and one was

from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Seven identified themselves as non-denominational. Two identified as Baptist but did not indicate a specific Baptist network affiliation.

The remaining participants identified themselves as being affiliated with one of the following: Catholic, Church of God General Conference, Evangelical Free Church in America, Independent, Missionary Church, United Methodist Church, or Wesleyan Church.

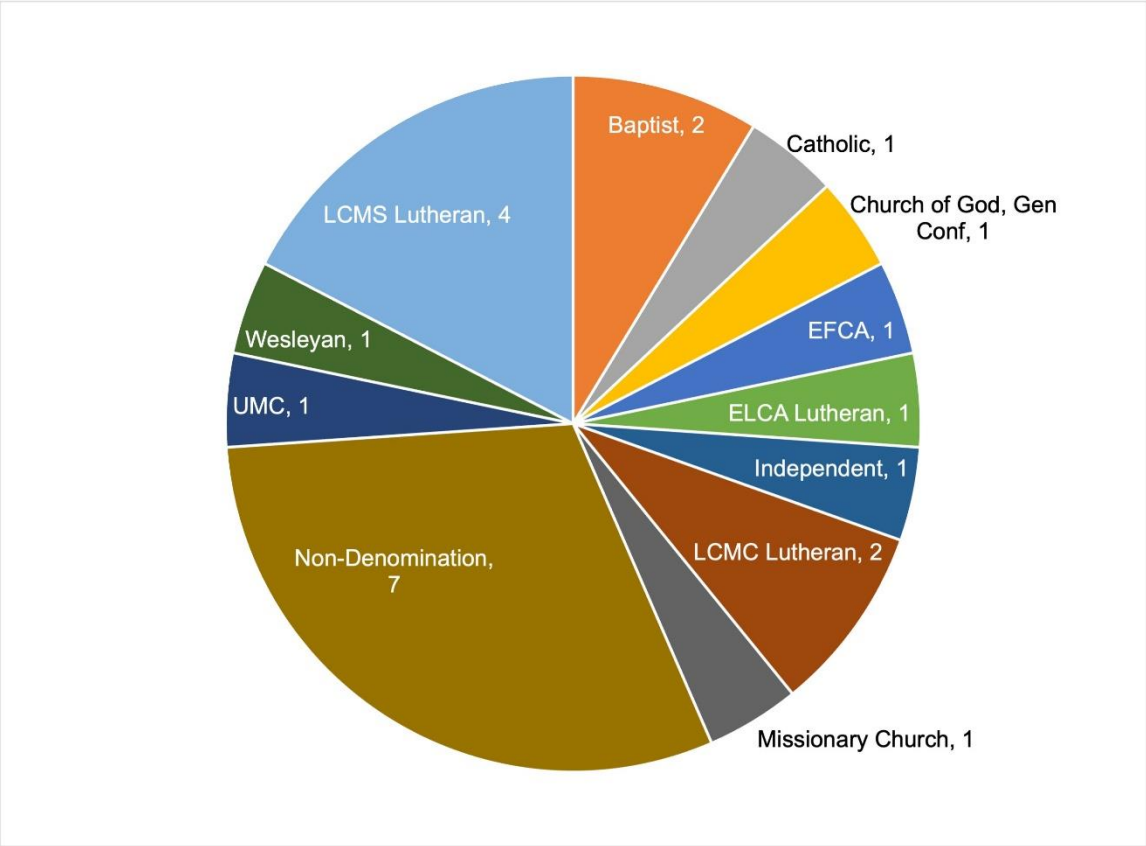

Figure 2. Denomination breakdown for participants

Of the twenty-three participants, sixteen had served as a pastor or paid or unpaid church staff team member. Seven of those interviewed had never served as a pastor or in a paid or volunteer staff role at a church. Seven of those interviewed were serving at the time of the interview as pastors of churches.

Of the twenty-three interviewed, twenty-two responded they knew their spiritual gifts. The data collection form provided participants with an area to list their spiritual gifts as they were known to them. No formal spiritual gifts survey assessment was given to the participants.

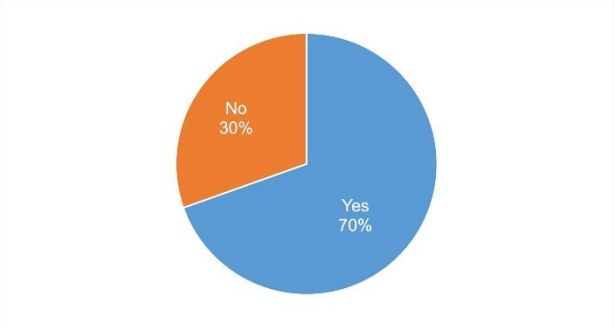

Figure 3. Served as pastor or church staff in the past

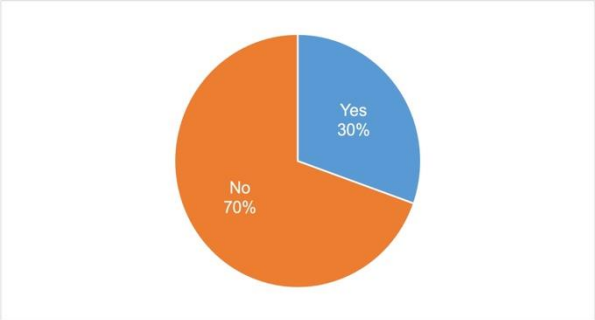

Figure 4. Currently serving as a pastor

The participants described in their own words the spiritual gifts they self-identified as having. Participants could list as few or as many gifts as they chose. The majority of participants listed more than one gift. The researcher noted that while it is a very subjective approach, it was also helpful information to have as participants began to share the stories of their work and ministry.

The top four gifts listed by participants were apostle, leadership, teaching, and faith. The most frequently listed gift was that of apostle, with sixteen of the twenty-two participants listing that as one of their gifts. The gift of leadership was next, with ten people listing that as one of their gifts. Faith and teaching closely followed, with six people each listing those gifts. Prophecy/prophet, knowledge, and giving were the fourth most listed gifts. Evangelism, administration, and wisdom were the fifth most listed. Each of the following gifts appeared at

least one time from participants: discernment, shepherd, hospitality, serving, mercy, encouragement, and tongues.

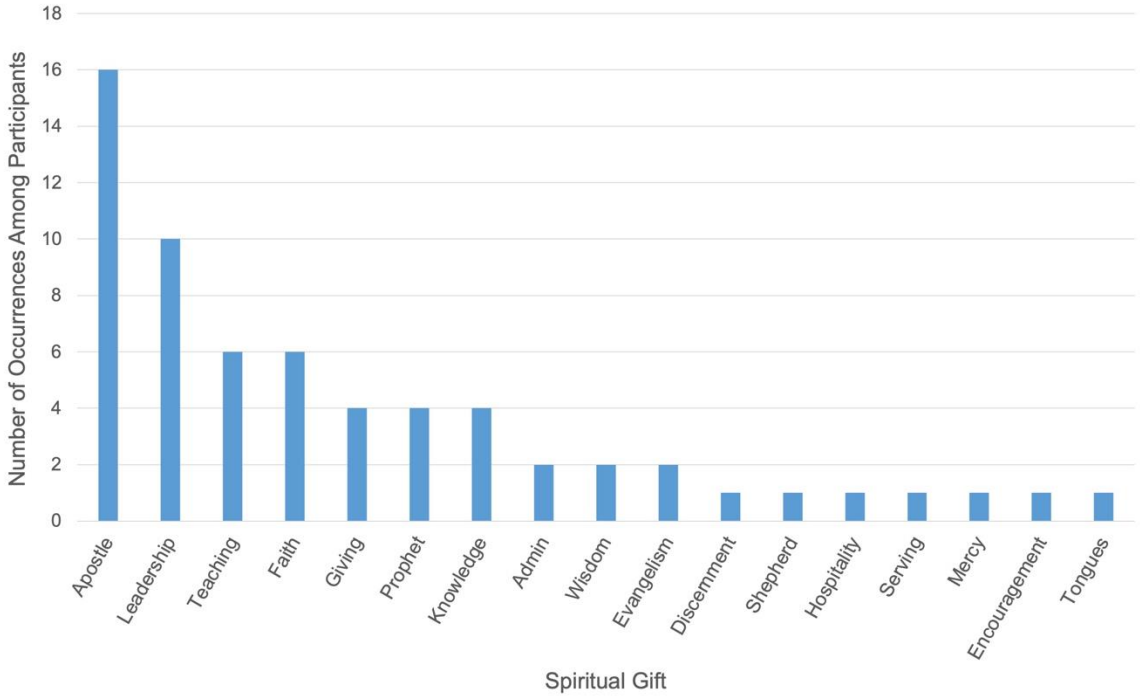

Figure 5. Participants' self-identified spiritual gifts

All twenty-three people interviewed responded that they were active at that time in a small group or Bible study. All twenty-three participants shared a small description of their organization's vision and mission on the data collection form.

Interview Responses by Category

Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher created a set of standard questions to be asked of each participant. The questions were grouped into categories to help with the flow of the interview and to keep the researcher and participants focused on the topic and questions. The categorized questions were approved by the Internal Review Board (IRB). The interview questions were not sent to the participant prior to the interview. The interview categories are as follows:

Background information—allowing participants to describe their work

Theology—allowing participants to explain how theology shapes and influences their work

Mission, Vision, Purpose—allowing participants to share their vision, the role of the Great Commission in that vision, and the purpose of their work

Church, Ministry, Kingdom—allowing participants to share how their work impacts and influences the Kingdom

Financial, Stewardship—allowing participants to share their thoughts on money, profit, and influence in the marketplace

A closing, open-ended question allowed participants to share any other information they felt would be important for the researcher to know about their entrepreneurial work. In some interviews, to gain more clarity in the response from the participant, the researcher asked follow-up questions. All of the responses from all of the participants were then analyzed following the coding process noted above. The summary results are as follows.

Background

The researcher started each interview by asking the participants to describe the work that they did and what caused them to decide to do that type of work. Participants described their work using titles such as business owner, nonprofit director, executive director, pastor, entrepreneur, and chief operating officer. One participant referred to themselves as a recovering missionary and closeted entrepreneur and another as a community cultivator. A common pattern in the answer to this question was a significant story in each participant's life that led them to the work they do today.

The researcher asked each participant to describe the work of their organization. Of the twenty-three participants, five represented coffee shops, and one was a coffee roaster. The five coffee shops were nonprofit organizations, and the coffee roaster was a for-profit company. Participants represented nine total nonprofit entities and eight for-profit entities, and six participants had a nonprofit and church combined structure.

Participants serving in the nonprofit sector described being involved in the areas of counseling and recovery, food pantry and food distribution, outreach and support to immigrants, a community marketplace (beyond food), a community development foundation, restaurant owner, and outreach support to families in need. A common overall theme for these participants was the desire to do something good in the community by meeting a need they personally felt was going unmet. A secondary theme that emerged was that the participants had some type of life experience or skill set they felt would help them in their desire to carry out their initiative.

Participants in the eight for-profit companies represented a brewery, a large-scale construction development company, a small construction company, two marketing companies, a multimedia production company, and two business consulting companies. Each of these for-profit entities was described as having a direct mission focus or connection that met a felt need in the community, as well as provided a service or product that generated income to help meet that mission focus and need. A common theme among seven of these participants was the desire that their company mission would include helping their employees, community, and other local Christian ministries beyond tithing from company profits. The theme of intentionality emerged in this group of participants.

Participants described their work as having a purpose to serve others. They expressed their desire to be witnesses for Christ as they carried out their work. This was a common theme across the nonprofit and for-profit entities.

None of the participants described their work using the terms Business as Mission or integral or holistic mission. However, as participants described their work in their own words, connections to both Business as Mission and integral mission could be made.

Theology

The researcher asked each participant to describe the influence God, Scripture, and their personal theology had on the work they do. All participants shared similar sentiments about the importance of God to their work. One participant was overcome with emotion as they described the role God played in the development and growth of their organization and their efforts to reach and serve others in their community. One participant stated, "My faith forms and informs the way I run my business, the way I treat people, and how we serve people."[190]

The researcher asked participants to share if they considered their work a job or a calling. All twenty-three participants' first statements in response to this question centered on calling. In addition to that response, eight participants also shared they felt their efforts were a combination of job and calling due to the nature of their work and how other people saw them in their roles in their organization. Participants who noted their work as both a job and a calling had ownership and executive leadership roles in their organizations. None of the participants who were serving as pastors identified their work either as a pastor or organization leader as a job.

[190] Participant D14, interview by researcher, online via Zoom video chat, October 27, 2022.

Each participant was asked what they considered the role of the Christian entrepreneur to be in God's Kingdom. All of the participants who were serving as pastors considered themselves to be entrepreneurs, and the term entrepreneurial pastor was used throughout their interviews to describe their roles in the Kingdom. The pastors also used the term apostolic to describe their ideas. One pastor shared their belief that being a Christian entrepreneur meant using the apostolic gifts they had been given to carry out God's mission wherever God called them. Many of these participants also shared they had feelings that they could not help but carry out what they considered to be apostolic and entrepreneurial ideas even within the churches they served. However, just as Michael Volland shared, this approach was not always an easy one for a pastor.

There was a general response from participants that a Christian entrepreneur was a person active in their faith, active in the community, and active in the marketplace. No participants responded by connecting the role of a Christian entrepreneur to the work of a local church. One participant responded emphatically, "We really want to be a blessing to the community. There are too many places where God is pushed out of communities. We want to change that."[191] This was a common theme among participants. They felt their role as an entrepreneur was to be serving outside of their local church relationship.

Two closing questions in this category focused on what it meant to the participants that Christ called his followers to a ministry of service, and they were asked to describe how their work bore witness to Jesus Christ and this service.

Participants shared consistently that serving others was more than just providing a customer or client an acceptable level of service based on their products or service offerings. A common pattern in responses was that bearing witness to Christ and service was connected to

[191] Participant D20, interview by researcher, Ohio, January 17, 2023.

servant leadership. They shared that serving others in their organizations meant focusing on building relationships and modeling Jesus in key moments of those relationships, and for those with public spaces, those spaces would be places that would outwardly show the love of Christ. "We make it clear to all of our team that you are going to be trained to make people feel significant and that they matter to us and they matter to God."[192] Another participant responded this way: "We don't have a lot of crosses on the walls and things like that. We say if you cannot tell that we are Christians when you walk in the building by what we do, we need to work on that. We need to work on our discipleship and spiritual formation in our team."[193]

Mission, Vision, Purpose

In the category of mission, vision, and purpose, the researcher asked each participant to describe the mission of their organization and to describe what fulfilling that mission looked like to them.

A common pattern in responses to this question included them having an impact and making a difference in a community, serving others, helping others, and showing the love of Christ to others in a transformational way. None of the participants responded that the focus of their mission was to make money or a profit. All of those directly connected to a nonprofit, and church specifically, referred to their activities as a form of ministry. Four of the participants used the term holistic to describe their mission.

Directly connected to the research question, each participant was asked to describe the role of Matthew 28:19-20, the Great Commission, in their organization. One participant, a pastor,

[192] Participant D19, interview by researcher, Michigan, October 27, 2022.

[193] Participant D17, interview by researcher, Ohio, January 19, 2023.

responded, “The church cannot make disciples by just preaching at them. We’ve failed at that. Our coffee shop created a natural platform for relationships and connections to happen. That’s where we really see discipleship taking hold in people.”[194] For this question, there was a consistent response that the role of the Great Commission was not only important to each participant, but that it was also something that played a role in both the internal and external workings of the organizations. For many of the participants, there was a strong association between making disciples in their organizations and using their work as a platform to carry out the Great Commission to those they come into contact with through their work. The word platform was used by eight of the participants as they described how their organization built relationships that could lead to discipleship.

One participant, the owner of a for-profit company, struggled to answer this question. This participant shared that this challenge came from a lack of understanding about what it meant to make disciples. This participant was visibly uncomfortable attempting to answer this question. This connects to the Barna research on the number of Christians who cannot identify the goal of the Great Commission. The research in this project confirmed that to be the case with this one participant.

The researcher asked each participant to describe how their efforts influenced and impacted the communities they served and impacted the local church and to describe what difference they saw their organizations making in each of those areas. The researcher asked follow-up questions to clarify how important the concepts of influence and impact were in the areas of commerce, church, and community.

[194] Participant D19, interview by researcher, Michigan, October 27, 2022.

This set of questions brought the most varying responses among participants. Participants indicated a significant interest in having influence and impact and doing some good for their communities. Those in the for-profit sector were slightly more interested in their efforts being models of Christlike behavior in the area of commerce than were those in the nonprofit sector. The themes of wanting to do good things and make a difference were repeated in this question as in earlier questions.

A key finding from this set of questions was that very few of the participants felt their work had a significant impact or influence in a local church. Only two of the participants who were serving as pastors shared how their entrepreneurial efforts outside their normal ministry activities seemed to be making a difference in the life of their local congregation.

Church, Ministry, Kingdom

In the category of church, ministry, and Kingdom, the researcher asked each participant where they saw or experienced the Kingdom of God in their organization. A follow-up question asked each participant to explain how they were building or expanding this for a greater Kingdom impact.

Participants responded that many of them had a strong culture of prayer and spiritual practices among their teams. One participant put it this way: "We start our day with a devotion, and then we really look for opportunities that God brings our way each day to impact the Kingdom for him."[195] Spiritual practices were important to all of the participants as a way to connect with God about how to carry out their work in the Kingdom. All of the participants were active in a small group or Bible study.

[195] Participant D15, interview by researcher, Michigan, December 10, 2022.

Prayer was a significant spiritual aspect of the work of each participant's organization. Participants shared stories of how they were able to pray with people for their needs and issues they were facing and considered this to be important in how they served their clients and customers. Participants with public spaces such as coffee shops, food pantries, and the brewpub stated these spiritual practices were an important way for their teams to see God at work.

One participant responded, "In a way we created our own mission field because this was the intersection of secular and sacred, happening right here at the brewery."[196] This was a common theme throughout the stories the participants shared about how their efforts led them to times when they could pray with people and have important relationship-building conversations about God and faith.

Participants were then asked to describe the connection their organization had to a local church. This question needed follow-up clarity, as many participants described their personal connection to their own churches rather than referring to the work of their organizations.

One participant responded, "In our work, we talk about the difference between building a church and cultivating communities, and they are two different things. We're really good at the principles of building churches, but we're not good at cultivating community. That is where we see a disconnect and where we struggle with our local church connections. They are more interested in building on what they have; we are more interested in transforming lives and communities."[197]

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[196] Participant D18, interview by researcher, online via Zoom video chat, November 3, 2022.

[197] Participant D13, interview by researcher, online via Zoom video chat, November 19, 2022.

Financial Stewardship

The researcher asked each participant a series of questions related to stewardship in their organization. The researcher did not ask for specific financial information, but asked questions about the importance of making a profit, making money personally, and what good stewardship looked like in their organizations.

On the importance of making money and making a profit, one participant shared, "I believe Jesus is not going to be happy if someone has a million dollars to give or a denomination has a billion dollars to give when he comes back. Jesus is going to be asking, 'How many people did you serve? How many people did you save?' That's where we need to have our focus as we carry out our mission in the marketplace."[198] None of the participants said that making money for themselves was of dominant importance. All of the participants recognized that income was important in order to keep the mission of their organizations moving forward the way they believed God intended them to.

A final question in this category asked how important it was to the participants for their organizations to be models to influence commerce and business standards. One participant stated it was more important for their work to influence the local church in the area of stewardship, specifically in the area of financial giving. "We're quickly moving toward a time where the church will not be able to live on tithes, offerings, and monetary gifts coming from within. The church is going to have to move away from fundraising as its main source of income or it won't survive."[199] This was a key observation from this participant, given the low level of involvement and connection the participant's organization had with a local church.

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[198] Participant D15, interview by researcher, Michigan, December 10, 2022.

[199] Participant D16, interview by researcher, online via Zoom video chat, November 8, 2023.

Another participant stated, "The church is perhaps going to need to look at ways of maintaining its nonprofit status, clergy status, and so forth while seeking other pathways for income other than the tithing of its members. Both churches and pastors are going to have to become more business savvy, utilize the business minds of its people, and ask those who are entrepreneurs, 'How might we reposition our ministry to create some aspect of outreach or mission so that it becomes both a mission field and a path to income?'"[200]

Emerging Themes

In addition to addressing the research question, there were three emerging themes the researcher identified through the interview analysis. The researcher discovered, as the project evolved, that several other aspects of research could be done. As indicated in Chapter Two, there is a growing interest in the idea of Kingdom entrepreneurs and their role in transforming communities and transforming the role of local churches in the community. The results of this research suggest the need for ongoing exploration of the role of Kingdom entrepreneurs in congregations. Chapter Five provides insights into possible next steps for this exploration and best practices that could follow this research.

Understanding Kingdom Entrepreneurs

The first theme emerging from the research is understanding Kingdom entrepreneurs and how they view themselves and their efforts in the Kingdom. The twenty-three participants in this research project met the definition of a Kingdom entrepreneur as defined in Chapter Two. The responses to the interview questions provided enough information for the researcher to draw that conclusion. There was a challenge in directly connecting each of the participants to Business as

[200] Participant D18, interview by researcher, online via Zoom video chat, November 3, 2022.

Mission and integral mission. However, each participant did demonstrate that their efforts had generalized connections to each concept.

The research results show that Kingdom entrepreneurs serve from a place of calling. They believe what they are doing is answering God's call to live a certain way and serve in a certain way in the Kingdom. Kingdom entrepreneurs in this study believed they had certain gifts and identified those gifts as a key reason for doing the work they do. There is significant proof that Kingdom entrepreneurs identify strongly as having apostolic, leadership, and creative qualities. This understanding is useful as churches consider how to engage these individuals in ministry efforts beyond normal ministry functions in a church.

The participants in this research largely felt there was no place for them in their churches and felt little connection between their work in the Kingdom and in the local church. All of the participants had some connection to churches for their own personal spiritual growth. All of the participants had some spiritual aspects that were important to their organization. However, there was the theme of a significant gap in how pastors and church leaders engaged with these Kingdom entrepreneurs.

Kingdom Entrepreneurship as a Platform for the Great Commission

A second theme coming from the research is the role of the entrepreneur in carrying out the Great Commission. The role of Kingdom entrepreneurs and the Great Commission is significant to the research question and the current state of the North American church. All but one of the participants were able to explain how their roles as entrepreneurs in the Kingdom connected to the Great Commission. This is a significant theme and central to helping churches address the challenges stated in Chapter One.

Throughout the interviews, participants shared how important it was to them to be making disciples not only within their organizations, but also that their organizations be platforms for the Great Commission. Kingdom entrepreneurs who participated in this study had developed not only a nonprofit or for-profit company, but saw those entities as mechanisms for sharing the Gospel, building relationships, and meeting the needs of the people they served.

Opportunities for the Local Church

A third theme emerging from the research is the significant opportunity available to congregations to embrace engaging Kingdom entrepreneurs. The research interviews showed that few of the participants had engaged directly with local churches. However, responses from the participants showed a common theme in the belief that congregations should become more engaged in understanding how those with entrepreneurial gifts can help them.

Participants acknowledged the challenges facing the church in the area of growth, effectiveness, financial stewardship, and stability. A general feeling from the participants was that congregations should be doing more to engage in entrepreneurial efforts. Embracing entrepreneurial thinking is a missed opportunity in the church today.

Themes Addressing the Research Question

This project began with introducing the current research about the decline of the local church and the challenges associated with outreach, evangelism, and understanding how to carry out the Great Commission in a changing world. That led to this question: How does the local church embrace Kingdom entrepreneurs to achieve the Great Commission? Two sub-questions follow: What are the characteristics of Kingdom entrepreneurs, and what are the best practices for a local church seeking to collaborate with or support Kingdom entrepreneurs? Chapter Five

will suggest the best practices for pastors and church leaders to follow as part of the summary of the research.

A central theme to embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs involves not just identifying who they are, but also understanding how to creatively use the gifts and calling God has given to those individuals to create platforms for discipleship, outreach, and evangelism, while keeping in mind that these platforms will not fit within the standard infrastructure of a local church. From the research, this means pastors and ministry leaders need to find ways to get to know those already in their congregations and go beyond asking them to volunteer to do work already centered on church ministry.

Pastors and ministry leaders would benefit from learning more about Business as Mission and integral mission. Entrepreneurial efforts may not be identified specifically as BAM or integral mission, but pastors and ministry leaders would do well in having a much better understanding of recognizing these efforts when they see or hear about them from their members.

To better understand the characteristics and qualities of Kingdom entrepreneurs, pastors, and church leaders may need to review their theological understanding of the role of apostles and how important creativity is to carry out God's mission. Many of the participants in this research project self-identified as apostles or as having some type of apostolic gift mix. They also identified themselves as being creative and willing to take on a level of risk to carry out something they felt God was calling them to do in their work. Based on the research findings,

these individuals could be referred to as apostolic-leader-creators[201] given their self-identified characteristics.

Summary

How the local church embraces and engages Kingdom entrepreneurs will be significant to change the trends of decline currently impacting Christianity in the United States. The research results presented in this chapter reveal there are individuals already establishing entrepreneurial platforms that carry out the Great Commission in settings beyond the local church. These entrepreneurial platforms take the shape of coffee shops, brewpubs, restaurants, food pantries, community markets, and businesses that provide services to the community and consumers.

The research reveals the local church is largely overlooking these entities as platforms for carrying out the Great Commission. The research also reveals a disconnect between the local church and those with apostolic-leader-creator characteristics. Chapter Five will explore the best practices for pastors and ministry leaders to overcome these challenges.

[201] Apostolic-leader-creator is a term generated by the researcher to describe the characteristics of a Kingdom entrepreneur. This is based off the number of times each of these words was used by research participants to describe themselves. This term is based on self-identification without the use of any type of spiritual gifts survey or other personality assessment tool.

Chapter Five

Conclusions

Congregations continue to be challenged with declining worship attendance, declining membership, and declining evangelistic impact in their communities. This project was born out of a desire to encourage pastors and congregations to consider embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs to help address this decline. Concerns about effective evangelism and the advancement of the Great Commission have been cause for concern among Christian leaders since the early seventies. The 1974 Lausanne Congress sought to address many challenges related to evangelism. Lausanne became a significant turning point for recognizing that the global church needed to take action. The past efforts to address the challenges and concerns about taking the whole Gospel to the whole world provided the foundation for creating new evangelistic platforms and outreach mechanisms.

There is no one complete or perfect solution to the challenges facing the church in the U.S. Accordingly, the researcher chose to focus this investigation on one possible approach to address the challenge: How could local congregations embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs bring about creative and transformational ministry? Could entrepreneurial approaches help a congregation carry out the Great Commission? Could embracing individuals with a certain set of skills or interests in mission turn around the decline facing many churches today? This led to the research question: How does the local church embrace Kingdom entrepreneurs to achieve the Great Commission? A focus on the theology of mission and, specifically, the Great Commission emerged as the central theological theme for the research project.

Two initiatives emerged following the Lausanne Congress: integral mission and Business as Mission (BAM). Both initiatives have inspired Christians to rethink how to carry out mission,

evangelism, and discipleship in their communities. As explained in Chapter Two integral mission emphasizes a holistic approach to meeting the needs of individuals. Integral mission combines evangelism and social justice while meeting the physical and spiritual needs of individuals in a number of settings. Business as Mission focuses on carrying out mission and sharing the gospel through sustainable entrepreneurial business initiatives.

These initiatives seek to incorporate creativity, social action, and entrepreneurial approaches to effectively carry out the Great Commission in a changing world. Integral mission and BAM encourage Christians to think beyond the physical walls of church buildings, beyond the confines of the standard institutional structure of the church, and look for opportunities to serve and share the Gospel in new ways and in new spaces.

The research explored how Kingdom entrepreneurs put into practice the concepts of integral mission and BAM in their organizations as they serve their communities and make disciples. The desired outcome is to encourage pastors and church leaders to engage Kingdom entrepreneurs and encourage congregations to think more creatively about carrying out holistic mission and the Great Commission in community spaces. The research findings and best practices in this chapter are provided to encourage pastors and congregations to further explore how embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs can help their church carry out the Great Commission.

The literature review in Chapter Two evaluates the available information on the topic of Kingdom entrepreneurs, theology of mission, evangelism, outreach, Kingdom entrepreneurs in church history, and stewardship. Biblical and historical models and examples of Kingdom entrepreneurs provide a theological framework for the idea of entrepreneurs in Christian mission. The literature review provides background and support to define commonly used words and phrases connected to entrepreneurs in the marketplace. Due to the overlap with secular

applications, this became an important aspect of the project. In the very early stages of researching the topic of Kingdom entrepreneurs, it became clear that significant work would be required to properly and theologically address concerns about using business and secular language when referring to the mission of the church. The literature and background research reveal a number of areas for potential future research and study. Those areas are summarized later in this chapter.

Using a qualitative method design, the researcher gathered data through firsthand field accounts and stories from those who consider themselves to be Kingdom entrepreneurs. The interview questions were divided into specific categories, allowing the interviews to focus on the areas of investigation that included theology, mission, church connection, Kingdom connection, and stewardship practices. A total of twenty-three individuals participated in confidential, one-on-one recorded interviews. Responses from participants were analyzed and coded by the researcher. This concluding chapter provides a summary of the research findings, recommended initial best practices, and areas of further research identified by the researcher based on the findings.

Summary of Findings

Response to the Research Question

This project attempted to answer the question: How does the local church embrace Kingdom entrepreneurs to achieve the Great Commission? Background research shows the ongoing decline in Christianity and an increasing number of Christians unaware of the Great Commission. The research in this project shows that churches generally do not embrace Kingdom entrepreneurs, neglecting a valuable resource and offering little support to those

striving to fulfill the Great Commission beyond established traditional church contexts. The concept of congregations engaging with Kingdom entrepreneurs is relatively new, and further extensive research, like this project, is needed to bridge the gap in understanding how engaging Kingdom entrepreneurs would benefit the local church.

The research results offer insights into two crucial aspects of the project: describing the characteristics of Kingdom entrepreneurs and identifying initial best practices for collaboration between congregations and Kingdom entrepreneurs. These insights and best practices are provided with the hope that they will equip congregations and Kingdom entrepreneurs to initiate discussions and begin working together toward embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial thinking to effectively carry out the Great Commission.

Characteristics of Kingdom Entrepreneurs

One significant challenge in the project was the lack of agreed-upon language and vocabulary associated with Kingdom entrepreneurs. The researcher encountered confusing resource material and experienced significant obstacles in finding clear definitions of entrepreneurship that would translate from the secular business world into the world of theology, missiology, and evangelism. Rather than add to the murkiness of the issue by creating a completely new or different term, the researcher chose to carefully consider the most current and relevant research on the topic and move forward using the term Kingdom entrepreneur. The researcher applied the definition that closely aligns with the research of Steve Rundle, shared in Chapter One, and the definitions provided by Michael Volland and Jordan Raynor in Chapter Two.

Based on the literature review and background research, the researcher created a set of criteria to identify Kingdom entrepreneurs and sought volunteers willing to be interviewed for

the project. Specifically, these individuals created or launched some type of entrepreneurial initiative or project that met some aspect of integral mission and BAM as described in Chapter One. The researcher conducted twenty-three interviews with individuals that met the research participant criteria.

A data collection form was used to gather basic information from the participants. In addition to basic contact details, the data form gathered information about the education level, ministry background, and ministry involvement of each participant. The researcher allowed each participant to self-identify their spiritual gifts. The researcher did not use a formalized spiritual gifts survey tool, but chose to allow the participants to simply share if they knew their spiritual gifts and what they understood their gifts to be.

The data form asked participants if they had ever served as a pastor, if they had been part of a paid or unpaid church staff team, and if they were currently in a regular Bible study or small group. The data form also asked participants to describe the vision, mission, and purpose of their entrepreneurial endeavor. The researcher then conducted one-on-one interviews using a set of questions organized by categories. The researcher analyzed this data and the coded interview transcripts to determine the common characteristics among the twenty-three participants. This approach to data collection and interviews provided valuable information for the project.

The data collected from the participants revealed the following five common characteristics among the Kingdom entrepreneurs in this study:

1. *Apostolic-leader-creator*[202] *qualities:* From the research interviews, the data shows those interviewed agreed with Jordan Raynor and Michael Volland[203], considering themselves to be visionaries called to do something good for God in his Kingdom. They considered themselves to be results driven and creative. The gifts of apostle and leader rose to the top of the self-identified spiritual gifts listed by participants. This is in line with the writing of C. Peter Wagner that many of the apostolic ministry efforts taking place in communities are being done by those with this type of gift mix. Wagner observes, "It is more than likely that God has already placed true apostles throughout the marketplace."[204] Wagner continues, "I believe there are apostles of finance, technology, medicine, industry, education, the military, government, law, communications, business, transportation, nuclear science, agriculture and a hundred other segments of society."[205]
2. *Importance of community impact:* Participants desired to have a broader impact and influence in their communities. While those interviewed would most likely not put themselves in the same category of influence as Basil, Luther, and Wesley, they did share the same level of commitment to community transformation, service, and contributing to the overall betterment of society. Interview participants also aligned with the observation of Craig Ott from Chapter One. Ott suggests a key distinctive for Christians carrying out mission is: "the transformational influence the believers and congregations have upon the people and communities around them, largely outside the church."[206] Participants saw themselves as individuals having influence in their communities and among those around them, largely outside their congregational connections.
3. *Kingdom calling:* All of the participants likened their efforts to a calling to serve others in the Kingdom. Words such as job, work, and employee were used by participants to describe some aspects of their entrepreneurial initiative. This was mainly due to the need to meet the requirement of running a business or nonprofit that operates in a secular space. A general sentiment from those interviewed who were not serving as pastors was that not everyone is called by God to be a pastor, but all are called to carry out the Great Commission. All of the participants shared they felt called to their work and saw their work as a mission to serve people in the Kingdom. This aligns with Miroslav Volf's

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[202] The research results revealed this pattern of words used repeatedly by participants as they described themselves. Apostle-leader-creator reflects the results of the self-identified gifts participants shared on the data collection form and throughout the interviews.

[203] Jordan Raynor and Michael Volland offer definitions of what an entrepreneur is and does. Chapter Two covers these definitions in detail. Raynor summarizes an entrepreneur as, "anyone who takes a risk to create something new for the good of others," (Raynor, 14). Michael Volland provides this definition of an entrepreneur: "A visionary who, in partnership with God and others, challenges the status quo by energetically creating and innovating in order to shape something of kingdom value." (Volland, 32). Participants identified with both of these definitions as they described their efforts and the work they do in their entrepreneurial endeavors.

[204] Wagner, *Apostles and Prophets*, 55.

[205] Wagner, *Apostles and Prophets*, 55.

[206] Ott, 5.

observation that all people of God have a calling, gifts, and talents given to them by God to serve the world.[207]

4. *Missional*[208] *mindset:* Similar to Kingdom calling above, interview participants shared a strong desire to use their businesses or organizations as platforms to share the Gospel and to disciple others. For those in the study, being focused on the Great Commission while serving their communities was essential to their work. Doing good and advancing God's Kingdom was more important than making money. All participants reflected a strong mission focus that came through in how they spoke about their initiatives. Participants aligned with the focus of mission put forth by David Bosch. They considered themselves to be "people who are involved in creating new relationships among themselves and in society at large and, in doing this, bearing witness to the lordship of Jesus Christ."[209] This missional mindset also reflects the writing of Paul Pierson, who says that as followers of Jesus in God's Kingdom, our understanding and practice of mission shape our values and priorities in life.[210]
5. *Balanced approach to stewardship and risk*: The participants all shared their desire to have a balanced approach to finances and to be good stewards of the finances of their organizations. Making money was not the main goal for these participants as much as making the most of the gifts God had given to them was. An interesting finding for the researcher is that five of the twenty-three participants interviewed referred to the parable of the third servant in Matthew 25:14-30.[211]

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[207] Volf, 124.

[208] Russell, 22. As defined in Chapter Two, the researcher is applying the definition of missional provided by Mark Russell: "Being missional is about living in a state of being that is at the center of God's mission wherever you are. Every Christian, every leader, and every church should be missional."

[209] Bosch, 171.

[210] Pierson, 351.

[211] "The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)," Theology of Work Project, accessed June 5, 2023, https://www.theologyofwork.org/new-testament/matthew/living-in-the-new-kingdom-matthew-18-25/the-parable-of-the-talents-matthew-2514-30/. The researcher is using the following explanation of this parable as it closely aligns with the meaning and explanation provided by the interview participants who referred to this parable. The meaning of the parable extends beyond financial investments. God has given each person a variety of gifts, and he expects us to employ those gifts in his service. It is not acceptable merely to put those gifts on a closet shelf and ignore them. Like the three servants, we do not have gifts of the same degree. The return God expects of us is commensurate with the gifts we have been given. More pointedly for the workplace, putting capital at risk in pursuit of earning a return is commended. Sometimes Christians speak as if growth, productivity, and return on investment were unholy to God. But this parable overturns that notion. We should invest our skills and abilities, but also our wealth and the resources made available to us at work, all for the affairs of God's Kingdom. The point of the parable is that we are to use whatever we have been given for God's purposes.

Kingdom Entrepreneurs and the Great Commission

The Kingdom entrepreneurs participating in this research project referred to their businesses as platforms created to provide services or meet needs while also sharing the Gospel with others with whom they came in contact. Participants reported that the Great Commission played a significant role in how they operated their organizations. The data from the entrepreneurs interviewed revealed the participants are applying concepts related to integral mission and Business as Mission, even if they did not refer to these two concepts specifically.

Those interviewed align with Padilla in recognizing the apostolic nature of taking the mission of the church into the whole world. These individuals reported that carrying out their mission as a calling and the Great Commission were important aspects of their work that they could not just ignore. Just as Steve Rundle describes, the research data shows Kingdom entrepreneurs do not simply value the work they do, but put a high value on that work being a platform for drawing people closer to God.

Participants described the ways in which both one-on-one and group discipleship take place among their teams of employees and volunteers. Those participants with projects in marketplace settings such as coffee shops, restaurants, breweries, and food markets shared that their employee training process includes training in evangelism and relationship-building skills. This allowed for relationships to be started as employees served clients or customers beyond simply serving them a coffee or craft beer.

Kingdom Entrepreneurs and the Local Congregation

The interview data shows a significant gap in connection between the Kingdom entrepreneurs and their own congregations. The interview responses reveal that the local congregation often had a minor role in directly supporting or collaborating with the Kingdom

entrepreneurs in their specific initiatives. All twenty-three entrepreneurs considered themselves to be active Christians, active in Bible study, and regular in worship. However, participants felt they had little support from their own congregation in their entrepreneurial endeavors. Participants reported having local church connections and valued those relationships, but those connections were not from the participant's congregation.

Many of the participants shared that they did not feel that their pastors understood their work or efforts. Participants currently serving as pastors recognized the value of embracing entrepreneurial ideas and considered themselves to be entrepreneurs. This is not the case for all pastors. As reported in the next section pastors having an understanding of their entrepreneurial qualities and interest is an important best practice in building the relationship between Kingdom entrepreneurs and the congregation.

Many participants expressed feeling like their congregation viewed them as Christians who own their own businesses, not yet seeing them as Christians on a mission with their businesses to help the Kingdom. Others also shared that they believed their business background and experience were only valued if that experience could be applied or put to use inside the church serving on an already established ministry committee.

Others shared examples in which they were asked to take on a key leadership role, such as president or chairperson of their council or as a head elder, simply because they owned a successful business. They did not feel there was a place for their entrepreneurial ideas in their own churches. If congregations are going to embrace Kingdom entrepreneurs, this type of thinking must change. Kingdom entrepreneurs can help address the challenges facing local churches today, but they will not do so serving in an assigned or allocated role given to them by

the congregation to maintain the church. Kingdom entrepreneurs flourish when focused on carrying out mission beyond the established church context.

Kingdom entrepreneurs were concerned that the concept of embracing entrepreneurs and their creative approaches and ideas to address some of the biggest challenges facing the local church today is largely misunderstood. Significant effort would be required for congregations to embrace how marketplace ministry or BAM would benefit a church. This aligns with the observations from Michael Volland about the negative connotation that terms such as entrepreneur and marketplace ministry carry. From the Kingdom entrepreneurs' perspective, congregations would benefit from additional teaching and training on the topic of embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs. Collaborating with Kingdom entrepreneurs has the potential to help solve some of the most challenging issues facing congregations and the potential to reverse the trends of decline that are repeatedly experienced.

Best Practices from Research Findings

The following best practices are based on the common themes and patterns observed by the researcher through background research, literature review, and participant interviews. This is not a comprehensive listing of all of the best practices for a pastor or congregation. Other practices will be needed and developed as pastors and congregations discern their next steps in embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs.

Best Practices for Pastors and Congregations

Embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs in the local congregation has broad implications for pastors and congregations. From the research, pastors should consider the two areas of self-awareness and discipleship as they approach embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs to help their

churches reach more people. Kingdom entrepreneurs have the potential to impact several areas of church ministry and mission. Outreach, evangelism, discipleship, and stewardship ministries benefit from embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs.

Self-Awareness

The pastors participating in the research interviews self-identified as entrepreneurs, creative thinkers, and risk-takers. They also self-identified as having the dominant gifts of apostle and/or leader. This was a key finding from the research. That does not mean that pastors who do not have those qualities cannot engage with Kingdom entrepreneurs in their congregations or take on entrepreneurial projects. It does signal the importance of pastors having self-awareness about their gifts and skills in ministry. Having this type of self-awareness, whether pastors consider themselves to be entrepreneurs or not, could determine how pastors embrace the entrepreneurs who are within the congregation.

For pastors who identify as entrepreneurs, embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs in their congregations may come naturally. Pastors may find a strong desire to join with others in the congregation with the similar characteristics mentioned above to carry out integral mission in creative ways in the community. The concepts of integral mission and BAM may be easier for pastors with this type of gift mix to embrace as both align with their predispositions toward risk-taking, creativity, and innovation to reach more people for Jesus.

However, for those pastors who do not identify with these traits, initially embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs and integrating an integral mission focus into an entrepreneurial idea may be a challenge. This is why self-awareness for pastors is key, as this type of gifting in ministry calls for a different approach to Kingdom entrepreneurs. Pastors who do not have this gift mix or natural interest may simply choose to become supporters, supporting and encouraging

Kingdom entrepreneurs in their congregations. They may be better at connecting Kingdom entrepreneurs with resources, creating platforms for them to utilize their gifts, and encouraging their entrepreneurial activities rather than leading the initiative themselves.

Pastors could leverage their unique positions by establishing collaborations and partnerships that could benefit Kingdom entrepreneurs in the community. They could work with local businesses, other churches, or nonprofit organizations to provide resources or platforms for Kingdom entrepreneurs to showcase and develop their skills. Even if they do not consider themselves to be entrepreneurs, pastors have an important part to play in embracing entrepreneurs to help their churches.

Discipleship

To increase the effectiveness toward embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs, pastors may consider additional training and workshops to educate their congregations about Kingdom entrepreneurs. Additional training may increase the knowledge needed to encourage the congregation to think about mission and clear up any misunderstanding about the role Kingdom entrepreneurs have in advancing the Great Commission. Such training would increase receptivity and potentially lead to more discipleship opportunities taking place outside the church with the Kingdom entrepreneurs already connected to the congregation[212].

[212] There are numerous Christian training organizations that provide outreach and evangelism training. The researcher is recommending that congregations look for training that specifically aids in understanding Kingdom entrepreneurs, integral mission, and Business as Mission. One such training option comes from the Lausanne Congress and the original Business as Mission initiative. More information on this training can be found at www.businessasmission.com. Other organizations providing training for congregations in this area include FiveTwo (www.fivetwo.com) and Creo (www.creoventures.com). Both FiveTwo and Creo provide congregations with training on understanding and embracing creative mission strategies to help a church determine how engaging Kingdom entrepreneurs may be a good fit for their discipleship strategy.

Another discipleship practice could be to recognize and celebrate Kingdom entrepreneurs in the congregation. Recognizing Kingdom entrepreneur efforts can inspire others within the congregation and lead to a more creative atmosphere among those in the congregation who may have ideas that would help their church, yet they have been hesitant to bring them forward. This practice not only encourages Kingdom entrepreneurship, but promotes a sense of unity and creativity in the congregation while fostering the missional mindset needed to carry out the Great Commission in the community.

Embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs in the congregation may require pastors to utilize their self-awareness and relational discipling to better understand how God is calling or leading a congregation to further effectively explore entrepreneurial options. Regardless of whether pastors identify as entrepreneurs themselves, they have the potential to encourage and nurture Kingdom entrepreneurs within their congregation. Their role is not to become entrepreneurs, but to understand and embrace this entrepreneurial spirit, making their congregation a space where integral mission and entrepreneurship can thrive through discipleship.

Embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs to help the congregation carry out the Great Commission should not be an attempt to force pastors into becoming entrepreneurs. Rather, the pastor's leadership and role become more about creating an environment where a Kingdom entrepreneur can lead effective initiatives focused on the Great Commission. Pastors, regardless of how they self-identify, have an essential role to play in how a congregation embraces Kingdom entrepreneurs. By having a strong self-awareness of their own gifts and skills, pastors can determine the best strategies to effectively embrace Kingdom entrepreneurs.

Congregation Assessment

Congregations should take steps to understand the current state of their outreach, evangelism, discipleship, and stewardship efforts. They should consider evaluating specific details and demographics of their membership and key ministry areas in light of the available research on church statistics and religious decline in North America shared in Chapter One. It could prove valuable for a congregation to know its comparative status in areas of membership, worship attendance, spiritual formation practices, and stewardship in light of recent research being done across the North American church.

Congregations may also want to evaluate their current approaches to discipling. If the current approach focuses only on activities taking place inside the church context, congregations should assess what changes might need to be made to transform the internally focused approach. In *Loving the City*, Tim Keller made this observation about how churches carry out the Great Commission:

> Traditional evangelical churches tend to emphasize personal piety and rarely help believers understand how to maintain and apply their Christian beliefs and practice in the worlds of the arts, business, scholarship, and government. Many churches do not know how to disciple members without essentially pulling them out of their vocations and inviting them to become heavily involved in church activities. In other words, Christian discipleship is interpreted as consisting largely of activities done in the evening or on the weekend.[213]

Congregations should assess if their current discipleship strategies are internally focused on those who already consider themselves members of the congregation. If that is the case, steps should be taken to implement new practices to train and equip members to better understand the

[213] Timothy Keller, *Loving the City: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 166.

Great Commission as a mission activity that takes place largely outside the current activities of the church, as Keller suggests.

Embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs may not be the best strategy for every congregation. The researcher recommends congregations go through some form of assessment[214] as a best practices approach and a first step to considering if pursuing the concept of embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs is something God is calling their congregation to consider.

Gifts and Skills Awareness

Similar to the congregational assessment above, congregations may want to gain a better understanding of the spiritual gifts and other skills already existing among their members. As the research revealed, those who consider themselves to be Kingdom entrepreneurs have the spiritual gifts of apostle and leader. It would be a best practice for a congregation to know if those gifts are already within the congregation.

Awareness of the entire gift mix and skill set[215] of congregations would aid in determining the next steps for embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs and creative projects. Those

[214] For this type of congregational assessment pastors and church leaders may want to use an outside consulting and coaching organization that specializes in helping churches understand church health. As previously mentioned FiveTwo and Creo could provide this type of assessment. Additional assessment resources include, Leadership.church (https://leadership.church/), Church Growth Network (https://www.churchgrowthnetwork.com/) and Church Doctor Ministries (https://churchdoctorministries.com) with which the researcher is affiliated. Other specialized support for assessment can also be found through Kingdom Dreams Initiative (https://www.kingdomdreamsinitiative.com/). Congregations may also find this type of assessment support from their denomination.

[215] There are a number of assessment tools available to congregations interested in learning more about their existing spiritual gifts, skills, and talents. One of the Kingdom entrepreneur coaching services explored by the researcher shared that they have modified the Harrison Job Success Analysis (https://www.harrisonassessments.com/) for assessing the likelihood of success for individuals and congregations to launch and lead successful faith based start-ups. Additional sources for this type of assessment can be found at the Theology of Business Institute (https://www.theologyofbusiness.com/assessments/) and the ministry profile tool called LivStyle (http://findyourlivstyle.com/). Church Doctor Ministries (https://churchdoctorministries.com) with which the researcher is affiliated provides congregations with a spiritual gifts assessment and training material to identify the spiritual gifts profile of a congregation.

with other gifts and skills beyond that of apostle and leader may be able and willing to assist with or contribute to a Kingdom initiative. Other gifts and skills such as administration, hospitality, service, and other knowledge-based skills could be beneficial to the launch and sustainability of such Kingdom projects. From the research, it would be a helpful practice for congregations to know their spiritual gifts and skills makeup as they consider moving forward into an entrepreneurial experiment or partnership.

Additional training may help congregations to better understand the mission and purpose of the local church and the role of Christians within it, as well as enable them to take a biblical approach to spiritual gifts and learn how God uniquely places resources and gifts within congregations to carry out the Great Commission. Outreach training[216] and increased awareness about integral mission would be a good practice in creating avenues for sharing ideas and encouraging partnerships and collaborations in the community beyond normal ministry activities.

Community Engagement

Not every town in the U.S. needs a Kingdom entrepreneur platform that takes the shape of a coffee shop. However, as outlined in the Lausanne Covenant, every Christian should have an interest in actively seeking out new ways to evangelize communities. Increasing community engagement by embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs provides congregations with options and unique opportunities, as Timothy Tennent suggests in Chapter One, to be living witnesses of the Gospel. As congregations learn more about integral mission and Business as Mission as options

[216] Faith Driven Entrepreneur (https://www.faithdrivenentrepreneur.org/best-from-the-movement) provides a comprehensive listing for Kingdom entrepreneurs and congregations to use to discover Business as Mission and entrepreneur outreach training resources. The Church4Today initiative (https://www.church4today.com) provides assessment and analysis tools for congregations to effectively integrate integral mission with BAM.

to take the whole Gospel to the whole world, they should consider how well they know the needs of the communities they are called to serve and reach.

Congregations should evaluate their relationships with key community leaders from numerous sectors. Doing so could provide valuable information about local needs. The data from the participant interviews shows Kingdom entrepreneurs have a strong desire to see their efforts make a difference in their communities. They achieve this by building relationships and collaborations with those in the community and networking with other Kingdom- and mission-minded individuals. The data confirms that Kingdom entrepreneurs care about more than making a profit. They want to know their efforts are making a difference in the Kingdom. Building relationships that increase engagement between the congregation and the community is a key best practice for congregations.

Congregational leaders and parishioners should develop a regular practice of meeting with civic leaders, school superintendents and teachers, law enforcement agencies, and those engaged in social services to gain an understanding of the needs of the community.[217] Pastors need not be the only ones developing these community relationships. With this knowledge base, congregational leaders and parishioners can apply what they learned from the assessments mentioned above and discern where or how implementing a pioneering initiative led by a Kingdom entrepreneur can best serve the community. Along with fostering the missional

[217] The Alban Institute (https://alban.org/) provides community and congregation asset mapping resources to assist congregations in this process. The Christian Community Development Association (https://ccda.org/) also provides resources to congregations for the purpose of assessing and developing community ministry and identifying how to develop key relationships in the community. Congregations may also find this type of resource available to them through their denomination or local community organizations such as the local chamber of commerce or economic development foundations.

mindset mentioned earlier, strengthening the relationships between the congregation and the community would bring about effective integral mission in the community.

Best Practices for Collaborative Efforts

Mutual Understanding of Integral Mission

A key to encouraging collaboration is establishing a mutual understanding of integral mission among the pastor, congregation, and Kingdom entrepreneurs. This shared understanding of mission would provide a strong theological foundation for exploring a collaborative project with a Kingdom entrepreneur that could meet the needs of the community as the congregation carries out the Great Commission in the community. This would reduce the frustration or confusion as to why a congregation would join an entrepreneurial initiative. By establishing this shared understanding of integral mission, collaboration becomes more purposeful and effective. As described by Lesslie Newbiggin, some in the congregation may even find themselves being the frontier groups for new initiatives, becoming "Christians working in the same sectors of public life, meeting to thrash out the controversial issues of their business and profession in light of their faith."[218] René Padilla summarizes the need this way: "The most effective way of fulfilling Christian mission is not what Christians say or do, but the fellowship they live out in terms of mutual loving, surrender and care."[219]

This mutual understanding of mission has an impact on stewardship in the area of financial stability for the church. Rather than doing a project for the sake of making money,

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[218] Newbigin, 230.

[219] Padilla, *What Is Integral Mission?* 35.

congregations collaborating with Kingdom entrepreneurs are on a joint mission to make disciples.

Ongoing Engagement

To further encourage collaboration, pastors and ministry leaders should actively seek opportunities to connect with Kingdom entrepreneurs within their congregations and engage in regular conversations about their initiatives. This could involve inviting Kingdom entrepreneurs to speak or share their experiences with the congregation or even creating opportunities for congregations to become involved.

By increasing engagement, congregations become more aware of the Kingdom entrepreneurs among them and have the opportunity to build stronger relationships that could lead to future collaboration. Kingdom entrepreneurs will no longer feel siloed or feel that there is no place for them in their churches. Congregations would have a better understanding of how to blend integral mission and BAM to help meet the challenges they face in a meaningful way.

Communicating Impact

Clear and consistent communication regarding the impact of collaborative efforts is crucial for encouraging collaboration. As collaborative efforts start to take shape, congregations and Kingdom entrepreneurs should regularly share updates and stories about the positive results occurring in their joint initiatives. This could involve sharing stories of life transformation, people served, and community successes. As Gregory Jones suggests, the local church has turned inwardly focused mostly out of fear. As a congregation starts to share the stories of impact and transformation coming from collaborations with Kingdom entrepreneurs, these stories may offer

more hope for the future of the congregation. Focusing on the hope provided by embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs can help overcome these fears.

By effectively communicating the tangible impact of collaboration, churches can inspire their members and entrepreneurs to continue working together for the greater good. Increased communication can also help the congregation overcome the potentially negative pushback that might be experienced from introducing the BAM concepts.

Form Strong Collaborations

One of the most important best practices is to take the step of actually forming collaborations. Neither congregations nor Kingdom entrepreneurs should feel a sense of disconnect or isolation, as research suggests. Kingdom entrepreneurs who actively seek out opportunities to collaborate and partner with congregations, other Christian ministries, and mission-driven marketplace projects or initiatives can break down barriers and create a culture of collaboration. By embracing collaboration and taking tangible steps to form partnerships, both entities can create a powerful force for advancing the Kingdom.

Encouraging collaboration between Christian churches and Kingdom entrepreneurs requires a proactive approach that fosters mutual understanding, ongoing engagement, effective communication, and the actual formation of collaborations. By implementing these best practices, churches can leverage the skills and resources of entrepreneurs, while entrepreneurs can find a supportive community to further their mission. Together, they can create transformative and impactful initiatives that extend the reach of the Gospel and promote discipleship beyond traditional congregational settings.

Further Recommended Research

Through the background research, literature review, and participant interviews, the researcher learned the topic of Kingdom entrepreneurs and the Great Commission is quite broad. There are a number of different avenues and areas of research left untouched in this project. The researcher identified the following as key areas of need for further research.

Creating Standardized and Accepted Language

Those interested in furthering the research on this topic should take care in creating new words or phrases that may continue to contribute to the lack of clarity and understanding, particularly with vocabulary that overlaps with secular applications. As the concept of Kingdom entrepreneurship gains recognition and relevance, there is a significant need for further research to be done to provide a comprehensive definition of who Kingdom entrepreneurs are and what they do in the Kingdom.

There is a need for clarity and consistency for the term Kingdom entrepreneur. There is ambiguity and inconsistency in the term. Other terms such as spiritual entrepreneur, Kingdom pioneer, and faith-driven entrepreneur add to the confusion. Further research could establish a clear and consistent definition, ensuring that the term is understood when used within the context of the marketplace and ministry.

Understanding the characteristics of Kingdom entrepreneurs is crucial for identifying and supporting their unique needs and challenges. Research into the motivations, mindsets, and skill sets that set them apart from secular entrepreneurs could shed more light on how their faith impacts their entrepreneurial endeavors. While this project touched on a short list of characteristics, more formal research should be done in this area.

Since the efforts of Kingdom entrepreneurs cross over the sectors of church, marketplace, and community, more research is needed to best communicate the underlying theological meaning. Great care should be taken to ensure the theological meaning is clear. In-depth research can explore the theological understanding of Kingdom entrepreneurs, examining how biblical principles shape their values, decision-making processes, and approaches to business. Chapter Two begins with exploring God as the original entrepreneur and other biblical examples of Kingdom entrepreneurs. Further focused research into the ministry of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Jesus, Paul, Lydia, and others could help connect entrepreneurial thinking and integral mission to address the challenges facing the local church today.

By utilizing distinct terminology, Kingdom entrepreneurs can differentiate themselves from secular applications of entrepreneurship. This differentiation helps them maintain their spiritual focus and distinguish their mission from profit-driven endeavors.

Pastoral Training and Seminary Education

More research is needed concerning the role seminaries and Bible colleges have in training Christians with a calling to carry out the Great Commission in creative and entrepreneurial ways. Not every person called to ministry is called to be a pastor. This realization leads to many more questions about the role seminaries and Bible colleges have in training Christians and equipping those called to serve in ministry beyond the congregational church setting.

A few seminaries have added curriculum on the topic of BAM[220], and the idea of entrepreneurial ministry is gaining more momentum. There are many questions about whether this type of training is necessary or whether seminaries are equipped to provide this type of training. Are there opportunities for seminaries to create curriculum and training for those with entrepreneurial gifts beyond missions and church planting courses of study? How will seminaries help pastors reimagine their role in ministry beyond traditional pastoral duties? Can a seminary compete with schools offering MBAs? Should they even try?

Preaching, pastoral care, and teaching are essential. Could pastors also be trained in Kingdom entrepreneurship to embrace a more holistic approach to ministry? By instilling this mindset, seminaries could empower pastors to become catalysts for change as they lead their congregations in making disciples and turning the tide of decline.

Further study could be done if Bible colleges and Christian universities could be uniquely positioned to train graduates to foster Christian innovation and entrepreneurship while also intentionally collaborating with local congregations. By equipping students with business and marketplace ministry skills, as well as a current understanding of religious trends, could these academic institutions train Christians to navigate the challenges facing the local church today? Could additional training and understanding of Kingdom entrepreneurs enable pastors to identify needs within their communities, develop innovative solutions, and leverage resources effectively?

[220] Seminaries currently including some type of entrepreneurial or Business as Mission training in their curriculum include Asbury Theological Seminary (https://asburyseminary.edu), Biola University (https://www.biola.edu), and Fuller Theological Seminary (https://www.fuller.edu). In 2023 Winebrenner Theological Seminary (https://www.winebrenner.edu) in partnership with Creo, offered a pioneering ministry class. The researcher is currently a student at Winebrenner Theological Seminary.

As the data shows, the traditional models of ministry in place in many congregations today often put limitations on Kingdom entrepreneurs that hinder their impact. Further research could explore how seminaries can train pastors to overcome these limitations. By teaching pastors principles of BAM and marketplace mission, seminaries could enable them to build viable and impactful ministries that extend the reach of the Great Commission. An additional area of research in this area could include how to effectively shift congregations to training and equipping staff teams to use integral mission and BAM to help their specific ministry areas grow.

More research is needed to explore the need for seminaries to train and equip pastors as Kingdom entrepreneurs. The seminary the researcher attends is exploring this, but it remains unclear how to best incorporate this type of training into the current curriculum. Seminaries will play a vital role in developing an entrepreneurial mindset among pastors, fostering innovation, and equipping them to navigate cultural shifts.

Support for Kingdom Entrepreneurs

During the background research and literature review, the researcher learned of organizations that have been created to help Kingdom entrepreneurs. More research could be done to assess the effectiveness of these organizations and to uncover best practices, strategies, and innovative approaches that have proven successful in supporting Kingdom entrepreneurs and their efforts. By identifying the effective practices of these organizations, aspiring Kingdom entrepreneurs can learn from existing models and apply them in their own endeavors.

Research in this area can facilitate the creation of platforms and resources for sharing knowledge and assistance in connecting Kingdom entrepreneurs, enabling them to learn from one another, share experiences, and collaborate on projects that advance the Great Commission.

Kingdom entrepreneurs would also be well served to get support from outside entities. Tim Keller wrote,

> To be a Christian in business, then, means much more than just being honest or not sleeping with your coworkers. It even means more than personal evangelism or holding Bible study at the office. Rather, it means thinking out the implications of the gospel worldview and God's purpose for your whole work life—and for the whole of the organization under your influence.[221]

When effective support organizations come alongside Kingdom entrepreneurs, they can help fill in the gaps local congregations may not be able to fill. This could reduce the risk of Kingdom-sized failures for the entrepreneur.

Ethical and Financial Questions

Kingdom entrepreneurs often face ethical and financial dilemmas that arise from the tension between making a profit and upholding biblical values. Congregations face similar ethical and theological tensions about how to manage finances, stewardship, and whether it is appropriate for a local church to engage in actual different models that generate income.

Further research is recommended to explore the ethical challenges faced by Kingdom entrepreneurs and congregations. This research would provide insights into how both entities navigate the unique financial challenges that may arise while staying true to their faith and mission.

One of the more fascinating research findings was the reference to the parable of the three servants. As mentioned above, five of the twenty-three entrepreneurs interviewed shared the personal connection they had to this parable and expressed their desire not to become like the third servant. A more comprehensive study on this third servant aspect of Kingdom

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[221] Keller, *Every Good Endeavor*, 168.

entrepreneurs and stewardship could reveal important results about how a congregation views the gifts and resources God provides to the members of the congregation and the local church as a whole body.

Measurable Metrics and Success

While Kingdom entrepreneurs aim to make a significant impact on individuals and communities, there is a need for more expanded research to evaluate and measure their actual impact and success in achieving the Great Commission. While there are stories of impact, there is very little data that defines and measures what success looks like for a Kingdom entrepreneur. More research could establish standard metrics and measurements that would help Kingdom entrepreneurs and congregations evaluate their collaborative efforts. By conducting more studies, researchers can assess the effectiveness of entrepreneurship in fulfilling the Great Commission, addressing social issues, and bringing about positive change.

Conclusion

Food for Thought

Due to the qualitative nature of the project, the researcher collected a number of different stories from the participant interviews. Two stories stood out to the researcher, as they proved to be excellent examples of the importance of embracing Kingdom entrepreneurs. These two stories shared by interview participants paint a picture of why and how it is important to discover ways to embrace those with Kingdom entrepreneur ideas.

One participant shared the following story about their experience as they wrestled with entrepreneurial gifting and ministry opportunities available to them in their church. The participant shared their experience this way:

> Our church has a large food pantry. Several hundred people in our community are served through the pantry each month. The pantry takes up a lot of space in our church. We have an entire building on our campus dedicated to storage for supplies and food needed to operate the pantry. It takes several volunteers and a paid staff member to keep track of the food distribution and logistics for the pantry. I volunteered to help with the pantry. I believed this would be a good way for me to minister to others as I served, pray with people, and maybe help more people understand what it means to have faith in Jesus Christ. It also seemed like a good way for our church to make a difference in our community. I very quickly learned that I was not going to be able to do any of those things. Because of government funding and rules, we were not allowed to pray with people or talk about Jesus. I asked a few of our leaders how many people joined our church because of having a food pantry. The answer was none. Their response was that they never really saw the pantry as anything more than handing out food, and that was a good thing to do. That didn't seem right to me, and I went to my pastor. Having a creative marketing background from running my own marketing agency, I offered several ideas to my pastor about how our church might engage more with the people getting food and look further into how our church might help them with the idea that we could eventually share the Gospel, maybe even expand the church's ministry with the families coming to the pantry. My pastor explained the church was already doing enough with the food pantry, but that since I owned my own marketing agency, I should run for church council or help the church secretary with the church newsletter. I stopped helping at the food pantry and began looking for other ways I could help people in the community and share my love of Jesus with them. There was no mission taking place in all the activity at the pantry or in my church, and that seemed wrong to me. I left my church shortly after that.[222]

Another interview participant who leads a Christian nonprofit shared a very different story on the related topic of food and community ministry:

> I help lead a nonprofit that is filled with creative and pioneering thinkers. In March 2020, the pandemic shut down so many things. Many people lost access to the social services and programs they had come to rely on for food security. A few of us saw this need and gathered with a group of community leaders to discuss how to meet the increasing need for food among the poorer families in our area. We were told it would take eight to ten weeks for food distribution plans to be put in place to help these families. Recognizing the need was immediate and critical, we decided to find our own way to meet the needs of those families without waiting on government assistance. We developed and launched a community grocery store. We created collaborative relationships with food suppliers, produce growers, and other key organizations to keep a steady supply of fresh and healthy food and personal goods available to those in need. We partnered with local churches to get volunteers to help keep the shelves stocked and help with the pickup of supplies and fresh inventory. In addition to having access to food, the families also had access to important resources provided by our organization. One of these resources, a

[222] Participant D14, interview by researcher, online via Zoom video chat, October 27, 2022

> weekly Bible study, started to really grow. Soon the families connected to the grocery and the Bible study groups asked if there was a church they could attend for worship. They had been learning about worship in their Bible study groups. Because of the pandemic restrictions, there were not many churches that could take on adding that many people to their worship gatherings. It had never really been part of our mission to plant a church. But we knew that so much ministry was happening and so many people were being served; we felt God calling us to plant a church inside the space we used for the grocery. The first worship started with almost 150 people in attendance. Now we have over 600 people meeting for worship and almost 1,000 people being served through the community grocery spaces located throughout our city. We have strong relationships with our local churches, not only providing volunteers for the grocery, but also serving and helping with the church plants. It's become an important ministry partnership that only God could have worked out.[223]

In the first story, a gifted entrepreneur saw an opportunity to use their gifts and skills to help their church become more effective in evangelism and discipleship, only to be redirected in such a way that was of no interest to them. In the second story, a group of entrepreneurs saw a need, took action to meet that need, and ended up planting a church. Both individuals saw the need for a holistic response to a community need. Each of these participants has similar gifts and ministry training and experience. Both saw the opportunity to do more ministry. One left their church discouraged. The other was able to use their gifts and develop not only a new ministry that is meeting the physical needs of others, but a platform that contributes to their spiritual growth and discipleship. If the pastor and congregation in the first story had as part of their mission focus to embrace Kingdom entrepreneurs and their ideas, the researcher wonders how differently that story may have ended and how many more people may know Jesus today.

The Future of Kingdom Entrepreneurs Beyond the Walls of the Church

As the research project concludes in 2023, more research continues to be released citing increasing concerns about the diminishing state of the local church and Christianity as a

[223] Participant D22, interview by researcher, online via Teams video chat, December 11, 2022

movement in the U.S. Even more challenges for Christianity are on the horizon. Another presidential election, economic instability, and significant issues concerning social justice and equality are continuing to gain attention inside and outside of the local church. A 2023 research report by PRRI states this about the present state of the North American church:

> The religious landscape of the United States has changed dramatically in the past few decades as the country has become more demographically diverse, more Americans than ever have disaffiliated with organized religion, and religious leaders have faced a cultural milieu increasingly polarized along racial and political lines. Churches are also transitioning back to in-person services following the COVID-19 pandemic and dealing with ongoing ripple effects from other major events, including national protests for racial justice, a divisive 2020 presidential election that resulted in a deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, and renewed state legislative battles over reproductive and LGBTQ rights.[224]

The challenges facing congregations are not getting easier or simpler to solve. They are, in fact, getting more complicated and difficult to solve. Tim Keller was right when he said,

> A looming crisis for all American evangelical churches is that they cannot thrive outside of the shrinking enclaves of conservative and traditional people and culture. We have not created the new ministry and communication and church models that will flourish and grow in the coming post-Christian, very secular Western world. Our vision should be to develop campus ministries, new churches, Christian education/discipleship systems that are effective in those fields in North America.[225]

As all of these issues continue to shape and influence the world, questions continue to be raised about what the future may hold for pastors, and their congregations. Some view this as a time of growing threat, while others see a time of great opportunity. Mark Elsdon provides this summary observation to close his book *We Aren't Broke*:

> Membership and giving may have declined, but God has not declined. God's love, God's justice, God's care for all of creation is as strong as it has always been. God is at work in the world right now with all of what we have and despite all of what we perceive to be missing. And God invites us to join in planting and cultivating God's garden. There is no

[224] "Religion and Congregations in a Time of Social and Political Upheaval." Accessed May 21, 2023. https://www.prri.org/research/religion-and-congregations-in-a-time-of-social-and-political-upheaval/.

[225] Timothy Keller, Keller, "Minutes of the Thirty-First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America," June 2003, 333.

> better time for us to dream big and take some risks. The needs are great, the opportunities, even greater. And the resources are there. We are at a moment when the church can sit on the sidelines and watch this work happening around us as we fade into the background. Or we can jump in and lead with all the theological, human, and capital resources at our disposal. Let us imagine a different future and get to work.[226]

In today's rapidly changing world, Christian churches and Kingdom entrepreneurs are presented with unique opportunities to collaborate and work together toward a common mission: the Great Commission. The research in this project affirms Michael Volland's writing:

> I do not suggest that all Christians should adopt an entrepreneurial approach to ministry, or that entrepreneurial ministers are the one-stop solution for the challenges currently faced by the church. I would argue, however, that both lay and ordained entrepreneurial ministers are present in the church, that they are able to make a positive difference, as we, the people of God, seek to engage in ministry and mission.[227]

But how does a congregation embrace Kingdom entrepreneurs to carry out the Great Commission? The researcher in this project offers this answer.

A congregation can embrace Kingdom entrepreneurs to carry out the Great Commission through:

1. An increased self-awareness not only of the current state of the challenges facing the North American church, but also an awareness and assessment of the specific challenges and opportunities in a local congregation,
2. An awareness and understanding of the gifts, skills, and abilities God has already placed in a congregation to carry out mission beyond the established church context,
3. An increased understanding of what entrepreneurial mission is, communicated in theologically grounded language, and

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[226] Elsdon, 166.

[227] Volland, 116.

4. An intentional focus on collaboration and creatively pursuing holistic ministry in community spaces.

By fostering collaboration, both Kingdom entrepreneurs and congregations can benefit from increased opportunities to expand their impact beyond traditional congregational settings to carry out the Great Commission. As the research shows, there is a great need to begin to address the challenges facing the local church today. The research in this report affirms René Padilla and Tetsunao Yamamori's observation:

> There is a need for teachers and communicators of biblical truth with the creative skills to make themselves understood inside and outside the church, who can use not only verbal communication, but also art, drama, music. There is a need for activists and servants to help bring to the needy the resources that the church either has or can't access, people with administrative and entrepreneurial talent, or with simple faithfulness in the practical task of service.[228]

Congregations cannot lose sight of these important needs. To reverse the downward trends and address the challenges facing the growth and the advancement of Christianity in North America we must remember these words from Tim Keller, "Since the lordship of Christ should be brought to bear on every area of life – economics and business, government and politics, literature and art, journalism and the media, science and law and education – Christians should be laboring to transform culture to (literally) change the world."[229] Through collaborative efforts Kingdom entrepreneurs and Christian congregations can effectively carry out the Great Commission and change the world.

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[228] Padilla and Yamamori, 129.

[229] Keller, *Loving the City*, 210.

Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Proposal Recommendations

WINEBRENNER
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Institutional Review Board

Research Proposal Recommendations

Principal Researcher: Tracee Swank

Proposed Research Title: Embracing Spiritual Entrepreneurism to Achieve the Great Commission

Dear Tracee:

Congratulations! Upon review of your research proposal and related materials, the Winebrenner Institutional Review Board has approved your research proposal indicating that you may begin to implement your research procedures according to the timeline established by your and your research advisor.

We do recommend that you meet with your research advisor as we were confused by the disconnections between the stated purpose of your project and the proposed research questions. Although we noted the discrepancies, your plans to protect your human subjects and their information were acceptable, hence allowing for commencement of your project.

Once again, congratulations and best wishes upon implementing your research. May God grant you His wisdom, knowledge, understanding, strength, and persistence as you carry out this work. In all, may He be glorified.

Please contact me if you have any questions (iiames@winebrenner.edu).

Best wishes,

Mary S. Iiames

Dr. Mary Steiner Iiames

Winebrenner Theological Seminary Institutional Review Board Chair

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Date: June 1, 2022

Project title: Kingdom Entrepreneurs: Beyond the Church with the Church

Primary researcher: Tracee J. Swank

Introduction:

Recent research continues to show an increasing number of people in North America do not have a faith affiliation or relationship with a local church. Research also shows that pastors and ministry leaders are challenged with how to engage church members in using their gifts to reach lost people. There are however bright spots and areas where Christians are using their gifts and skills uniquely in the marketplace to reach people for Christ. This is currently being referred to as Kingdom entrepreneurism.

The research question for the basis of this project is this: How does the local church embrace Kingdom entrepreneurs to achieve The Great Commission?

Purpose of the research:

This project will explore the power Kingdom entrepreneurs have to carry out faith-based initiatives in the marketplace to transform lives, impact communities, and expand the Kingdom of God. Research will attempt to discover the common entrepreneurial experiences that exist in successful faith-based and marketplace endeavors. The project will explore the role Kingdom entrepreneurs play in helping meet the challenges facing local churches today to effectively carry out The Great Commission.

Description of research procedures:

General data collection and one on one interviews will be used in this qualitative research project. Confidential in-person interviews will be conducted and data from those interviews will be analyzed by the researcher. Recorded video interviews may also take place when meeting in person is not available.

Digital data files will be stored on the researcher's personal secured network for three years. Print materials will be stored in a locked storage cabinet for three years. After three years data will be removed from both the digital and print storage systems.

Time associated with research:

The project research will run from July 1, 2022, through January 1, 2023.

Potential risks:

The researcher anticipates that interview subjects may encounter spiritual, emotional, and mental stress during the interview as they share about their faith and entrepreneurial efforts. The researcher will create a confidential and comfortable environment for the subject to be interviewed to help reduce any potential stress. If at any time deemed necessary the interview may be paused or stopped. To get to know more about your researcher please read the biographical information at the end of this document.

Potential benefits:

Participants may feel a sense of satisfaction in participating in this research project knowing that others will learn from their experience. Pastors, churches, and ministry leaders will benefit from this research as they consider how some of these pioneering and entrepreneurial approaches may help their church become more effective.

Project alternatives to participation in the research:

Participants not available for the in-person interview may write a 1500-word summary of their entrepreneurial project to be reviewed by the researcher.

Confidentiality of data:

All data and information collected from the participant will only be used within the scope of the research project.

Interview participants will be assigned a tracking number that will be used to protect their anonymity during the research project.

Those having access to the research data will be the researcher, one transcriptionist, one proofreader, one project chair, one external reader, and one academic project advisor.

Digital and print files will be stored securely for three years and then destroyed.

Costs and/or compensation for participation:

There is no cost to participate for participating. There is no compensation available to the participant.

Contact persons: For more information concerning this research, please contact Tracee J. Swank at 419.346.8969.

If you believe that you may have suffered a research-related injury, contact Dr. Mary Iiames at 419-434-4200.

If you have further questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact Tracee J. Swank at 419.346.8969.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: Participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to participate or to withdraw at any time, for whatever reason. In the event that you do withdraw from this study, the information you have already provided will be kept in a confidential manner, unless you do not want any part of your information included in the study. In such cases, your information will be immediately destroyed. Lastly, if you choose to drop out of the study and/or remove your information, neither you nor the researcher will be penalized.

CONSENT: Federal regulations require precautionary measures to be taken to insure the protection of human subjects on physical, psychological, social, and other issues. This includes the use of "informed consent" procedures.

I, _____, (PRINTED NAME OF SUBJECT) have been adequately informed regarding the risks and benefits of participating in this research. My signature also indicates that I can change my mind and withdraw my consent to participate at any time without penalty. Any and all questions I had about my participation in this research have been fully answered. I understand I will receive a copy of this consent form for my records.

SUBJECT SIGNATURE:

_____

DATE: _____

I have witnessed the consent process and believe the subject has been fully informed, understands the research study, and has agreed to participate in the research.

WITNESS PRINTED NAME:

_____

WITNESS SIGNATURE:

_____

DATE: _____

Meet Your Researcher, Tracee J. Swank

Tracee J. Swank serves as the leader of Church Doctor Ministries and is a certified Church Doctor consultant, a Christian leadership coach, a certified Building a Story Brand/Marketing Made Simple Guide, and a Certified Business Made Simple Entrepreneur Coach.

Tracee is passionate about resourcing and empowering Christian leaders to help fulfill the Great Commission through coaching, consulting, and teaching. She leads the ministry staff team, trains and develops Church Doctor coaches and consultants, and oversees the advancement of the mission of the ministry.

Tracee has an undergraduate degree in organization development from the University of Toledo. She received a master's degree in theological studies and spiritual formation from Winebrenner Theological Seminary. Tracee is currently pursuing a Doctor of Ministry degree researching the role Kingdom entrepreneurship plays in the growth of churches, outreach ministries, and marketplace-mission-focused businesses.

Tracee lives in northwest Ohio with her husband, Matt, and their black lab, Beckett. In her free time, she enjoys cooking, gardening, Toledo Mud Hens baseball, and Ohio State Buckeye football.

Appendix C

Project Data Collection Form

Project Data Collection Form: Research Project for Tracee J.Swank

First Name:

Last Name:

Do you wish to remain anonymous? YES NO

Address:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Mobile Phone:

Email Address:

Preferred Method of Contact: (choose one)

direct mail email phone

Denomination/Association/Network Church Affiliation:

Have you have served as a pastor or paid member of a church staff team?

Yes or No

Do you know your spiritual gifts?

Yes or No

Are you active in Bible study, small groups, or other church ministry?

Yes or No

Please briefly describe your organization/non-profit or ministry initiative:

Appendix D

IRB Report Letter

From Tracee J. Swank

To: Dr. Helleman

From: Tracee J. Swank

cc:

Date: May 7, 2023

Re: IRB Report

Dear Dr. Helleman,

According to the Internal Review Board approval letter, I am not required to submit a final report about my research.

Please let me know if there are any questions or different input on this.

Thank you,

Tracee J. Swank

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