LEADING THE TRANSITION FROM A TRADITIONAL

ATTRACTION BASED MINISTRY MODEL TO A

MISSIONAL MODEL OF MINISTRY


A PROJECT REPORT

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

MARK H. YARGER


WINEBRENNER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FINDLAY, OHIO

JULY 2013

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WINEBRENNER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FINDLAY, OH

JULY 2013

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# ABBREVIATIONS

CGGC        Churches of God General Conference

EFCOG       Elizabethtown First Church of God

ERC         Eastern Regional Conference

MAP         Ministry Action Plan

SSJ         Spiritual Strategic Journey

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Findlay without her. Thanks to my daughter Chelsea and my son Micah for encouraging me to complete this project and for cheering me on. Thanks also goes out to Dennis and Julie Arndt for allowing me to crash and hang out with them overnight on my way to and from Findlay.

Lastly, thanks to my mother, the late Christine Yarger, who instilled a missional DNA in me before I ever knew of such a word as missional. Unfortunately she was not able to read the finished project. She was passionate about seeing people come to Christ and growing as disciples. It was from her I first heard about the sending God who sent his Son Jesus Christ for me.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify potential principles and examples from those principles for the Elizabethtown First Church of God making a successful transition from attractional to missional. The situation with Elizabethtown First Church of God is a mirror of the traditional church in the larger church context in America. The research has clearly shown this in Elizabethtown, the Churches of God General Conference, and all mainline denominations.

The Elizabethtown First Church of God, as many established churches, has historically operated from an attractional-based model of ministry that has become ineffective in reaching a rapidly changing culture. Nevertheless, the research does not indicate that all traditional churches are plateaued or in decline, as many continue to flourish with growing programs, attendances, and activities, though these are the exception.

This project is about Christians knowing the heart and mission of God. Cover to cover, the Word of God shows God as a sending God. God is a missionary. God sent his Son from heaven to earth. His Son sent his church into the entire world. Therefore this project is not about promoting a model or a program of outreach but about living out the life of Jesus in our families, churches, communities, and the world. It is about the church returning to its primitive roots and being the salt of the earth and the light of the world again. The author's purpose is to discover through the many sources of qualitative and

quantitative research what God is doing in churches that are making a difference. In the end, this project affirms that God's desire for the world has not changed. It has also affirmed his desire for his people was to allow him to change and transform them with his new wine of the Spirit.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

Pastor Jeff Rockey was thirty-four years old when he became pastor of the Tulip

First Church of God in the Great Lakes Region of the Churches of God General

Conference. The one hundred-year-old congregation was averaging approximately

twenty-five to thirty in its morning worship attendance at the time of his arrival. The

Tulip First Church of God is a rural church located four miles from the closest town of

Bloomfield, Indiana. Jeff, in a telephone interview with this researcher on October 26,

2010, described the church at the time of his arrival as extremely family-driven, past-and

inward-focused.

The worship service consisted of singing a hymn, preaching a sermon, singing

another hymn, and going home. That was his description of Tulip then but not now.

Fourteen years later, Pastor Jeff is now forty-eight years old and is still the pastor of the

Tulip Church of God. His description of that one hundred-year-old congregation has

changed dramatically. The church and its 185 worshippers now meet in a new building.

They now have a Christian school for kindergarten through twelfth grade. Tulip has

become known as the worship and music church of the community. Jeff reports being at

Tulip eight to nine years before the congregation became intentionally missional.

Fourteen years later they are now more outward-focused than inward-focused,

more people-oriented than program-oriented, and more community-conscious than

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building-conscious. How did this happen? Can what happened at Tulip happen in other places? This project intends to address those questions.

This researcher loves the traditional established church as well as serving as the pastor of an established church. More specifically, this researcher believes in the established church as God's transformational agent for the world, in spite of all its imperfections. The project is worth the effort that this researcher is putting forth because God does not have an alternative plan through which to transform the world.

**Context of the Problem**

In 2012, Elizabethtown First Church of God will observe its 175th anniversary as a congregation of the Churches of God, General Conference. This congregation has been labeled in the past by its peers in the community and the denomination as a once-prominent church. Jim Moss, Sr. identified it as "the premier white collar church in the conference that at one time sent people out to train others."[1] James Moss Sr. has been working with churches for over thirty years as a pastor, conference administrator, and independent consultant. As a consultant, Jim works across denominations to help churches and congregations deal with a variety of critical issues. Jim recently retired from the Eastern Regional Conference of the Churches of God where he worked since 1977.

Presently, Elizabethtown First Church of God is facing a fate similar to so many aging, established churches in America. Decades of frequent pastoral changes, ineffective leadership, and congregational conflicts have expedited its decline. In June 2008, this researcher accepted the congregation's call to serve as its fifty-fifth pastor. The call was

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[1]Pastor James Moss Sr., interview by researcher, Harrisburg, PA, December 7, 2010.

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accepted with the understanding of the challenge at hand and that renewal would require a definite work of God. Regarding aging churches George Bullard says, "Generally, the more aging the congregation, the longer it takes to produce lasting change."[2] Research shows that the further the congregation is in the lifecycle, the slower and more difficult it is for renewal.

Reggie McNeal's words from his book *Missional Renaissance* are not easy for a long-term pastor with a traditional attraction-based leadership style to read and accept:

> God is back, big time! And he is breaking out of the box that moderns tried to put him in. He's making his presence known beyond the confines of religion. He is showing up across all domains of culture. This means that people are not confining their search for God to traditional church settings. In addition, the pervasive mistrust of institutions characteristic of postmodern culture extends to institutional religion. Many people are conducting their search for spiritual vitality in the street, outside the church.[3]

Over the past year this researcher has had an increasing number of conversations with local pastors and church leaders about traditional churches' inability to reach their local communities. Pastors of many local churches may not admit it, but they have come to the realization that they have lost the ability to attract new non-churched people to church programs and events. This researcher has sensed that something has changed during the twenty-five years since the beginning of his ministry. At the outset of this research project, like so many local pastors and leaders, this researcher is unsure about the nature of the change and what ministry adjustments might be necessary. There have been few examples like Tulip to follow in order to navigate away from this seemingly backward momentum.

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[2]George Bullard Jr., *Pursuing the Full Kingdom Potential of Your Congregation* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), 88.

[3]Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scoreboard for the Church* (San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 2009), 12-13.

Understanding this challenge, the words from the prophetic book of Ezekiel chapter thirty-seven burdened this researcher's heart. "He asked me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' I said, 'O Sovereign LORD, you alone know.'"[4] This researcher believes these bones can live again! Research shows that the experts believe these bones can live again.

This research project is about Elizabethtown First Church of God's ongoing strategic spiritual journey from being a traditional attraction-based model of ministry to a more missional model. Chapter One serves as a blueprint describing how this research project will unfold in its pursuit of the ministry problem. This researcher will attempt to describe the context of the research problem in the broader church and historical context. In addition the research problem will be seen in its relationship to the current postmodern culture.

## Constantine Era

It may be surprising to some to discover that the origin of the problem in the American church today can, in the broadest sense, be traced back to three centuries after the birth of Christianity. Constantine became the emperor of Rome in AD 306 and was the most powerful person in his part of the world. His conversion to Christianity had far-reaching effects on the common practice of all present-day religions. Reggie McNeal, in his book *Missional Renaissance,* sets the context of today's problem of the American church within the historical era of the Constantinian world order. McNeal attributes the beginning of the problems of inward-focused and traditional attraction-based ministry to the Constantine Christian era. "After Constantine, Christianity became a clergy-

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[4]Ez. 37:3 [NIV].

dominated religion centered on designated places of worship."[5] Its effects, good and bad, are being felt in the church even today.

## The Second Great Awakening

The Second Great Awakening of the early 1800s is a second historical contextual factor for understanding the research problem. The revivalism may have become a two-edged sword for the North American church's effectiveness in the following two centuries. The methods of the Second Great Awakening were so passionate in central and western New York that it was identified as the "burnt over district." The term was coined by Charles Grandison Finney to describe areas that were overexposed to revivalist efforts.

The immediate impact of those revivals was evident by the crowds they drew and decisions for Christ that were made. It was not unusual for these meetings to last long into the night and continue for weeks at a time. The blessings of the Second Great Awakening also contributed to the downfall of the church, as it stubbornly adhered to its methods even after the time of effectiveness for these methods had passed.

## The North American Church Today

In his book *Pursuing the Full Kingdom Potential of your Congregation,* George Bullard expressed these thoughts on the state of the church in North America: "The number of plateaued and declining congregations throughout North America is at an all-time high." He reports that seventy-five to eighty percent of the American churches are in plateau or decline.[6] In his book *The American Church in Crisis,* David Olsen illustrated

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[5]McNeal, *Missional Renaissance*, 13.

the problem in the American church with statistics on decline in church attendance and the growing American population. Olsen's statistics indicate that decline in church attendance is most striking in the traditional mainline churches. His statistics show that only twenty-three percent of the American population attends church more than once a month.[7] Olsen's breakdown of participants has been included in figure 1.1.
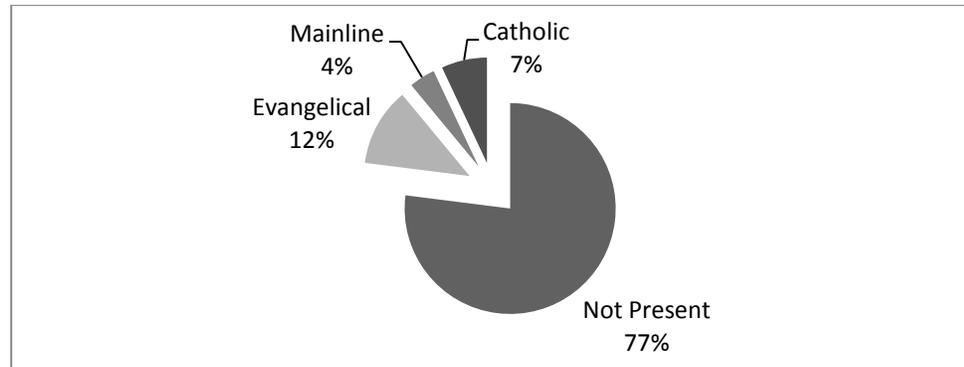


Figure 1.1. Church participants who attend more than once a month[8]

*The American Church in Crisis* magnifies the research problem further when it reports that the American population has grown at a robust rate. More than ninety-one million people lived in the United States in 2000 who did not live there sixteen years prior. At the same time the population has grown, no growth in church attendance has occurred.[9] It is a fact that while the U.S. population is growing at this brisk rate, attendance in mainline denominations is declining one to two percent annually.

Chuck Frank, Director of Church Planting and Evangelism for the Eastern Region of the Churches of God General Conference, recently shared some troubling statistics on

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[6]Bullard, *Pursuing*, 88.

[7]David Olsen, *American Church in Crisis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 29.

[8]Olsen, *American Church*, 28.

[9]Olsen, *American Church*, 38.

the current state of the church in America that confirm the sentiments of George Bullard and David Olsen. He reports that 3,500 churches in America close every year and eighty-five percent have plateaued or are declining.[10] He also reports that to match the population increase in this decade, more than 19,000 churches would need to be started.

The larger context of the research problem is seen in the introduction of Dan Kimball's work, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations*:

> While many of us have been preparing sermons and keeping busy with the internal affairs of our churches, something alarming has been happening on the outside. What once was perceived as a Christian nation with a Judeo-Christian worldview is quickly becoming a post-Christian, unchurched, unreached nation.[11]

*The Emerging Church* addresses the American church's ineffectiveness at reaching the emerging postmodern generation. The American church has failed to change its ministry approach to address the cultural change from modernism to postmodernism.

In the twentieth-century the number of Christians and churchgoers began to shrink. With this environment, churches began to market themselves to Christians, seeking to attract more "consumers" (who were already Christian) for their product. Reaching the lost and serving the community was forgotten or relegated to a small subsection of the church. Meanwhile, America became more and more unchurched. The postmodern culture of today makes it more challenging for the church to minister than any time in its history. Our changing culture is pleading with the church to update its way of doing ministry.

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[10]Chuck Frank, E-mail to researcher, August 24, 2010.

[11]Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 13-14.

The Denominational Context

The research problem can further be understood in the narrower denominational context. As Olsen reported, church attendance decline in the broader context, likewise statistics in the Churches of God were also troublesome in three areas: 1) Denominational membership dropped from 36,000 in 1970 to 34,638 in 1980, 2) Morning worship attendance had declined by 24,969 people by 1980 and, 3) Only five new church plants were begun during 1976-1980, the fewest in the history of the Churches of God.[12]

The loss of passion for church planting is described by James Moss Sr. in his book, *Returning to Our First Love* with the following statistics:

> In the process of this study, we discovered that during the late 1800s nearly 800 churches may have existed at one time. Five hundred and two churches existed as recently as 1918. But the count had diminished to 465 in 1925. By 1964, that had declined to 385. The decrease continued to 350 by 1983. Additional slippage brought the number to 346 by 1988. However, 352 churches existed as of May, 1994. [13]

Moss also adds that from 1925 to 1988, the denomination experienced a net loss of two and one-half churches annually.

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[12]Joe Miller, *Core Values for Growing More and Better Disciples* (N.P.: Churches of God General Conference, 2001), 8.

[13]James Moss Sr., *Returning to Our First Love* (Harrisburg, PA: Church Consultants, 1995), 6.
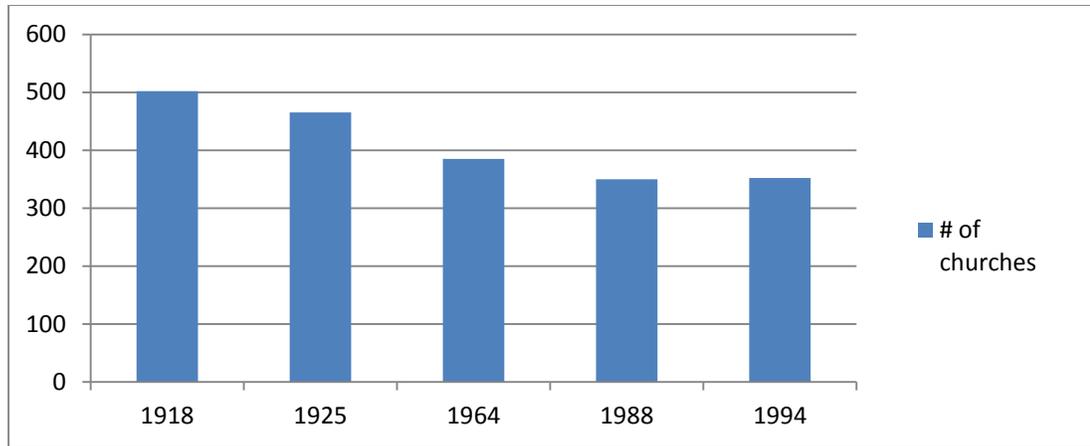
Figure 1.2. Number of churches in existence in the Churches of God General Conference, 1918-1994

In the decade of the 1990s the Churches of God General Conference denominational leadership went through an assessment with Robert Logan of Fuller Theological Seminary. During an administrative council meeting of the Churches of God, Logan pronounced a very gloomy outlook for the denomination. He informed the leadership that if renewal and revitalization did not soon occur with emphasis on church planting, the Churches of God would cease to exist as a viable contributor to the Kingdom of God.

This researcher interviewed Stephen Dunn, the president of the administrative council at the time regarding Robert Logan's comments at that meeting. After having assessed their statistics, organizational structure, mission, and other data, Logan called for them to repent of drifting away from their mission. He cited a cumbersome organizational structure as squeezing out the work of the Holy Spirit. Dunn noted other factors such as denominational turf wars and control factors as the causes for their condition at that time. The Churches of God had lost the first love of their founder John Winebrenner.

Moss comments in *Returning to Our First Love,* "In spite of our evangelical heritage, most conversions over the last forty years have been in the camping programs of the local conferences among children and youth. Few people confessed Christ in the everyday programs of our churches."[14] The condition of the Churches of God General Conference context was a macrocosm of what was going on in Elizabethtown First Church of God.

<div align="center">Local Church Context</div>

Lancaster County is a tourist attraction located in eastern Pennsylvania that has been a steadily expanding area for many years. Nevertheless, the religious piety has changed very little over the years, and the area has been labeled even today as the "Bible Belt." Amidst this area steeped in the religious piety of the Anabaptist, Mennonite, Brethren, and Amish, the Elizabethtown First Church of God sprang up.

The Elizabethtown First Church of God is located in the borough of Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania. The population of Elizabethtown according to the *2000 Demographics for the E-Town Region* is 11,887, which is a 19.4% increase over the 1990 census. Projections show a steady population increase for the next three decades. The race is 96.3 percent white with 26.8 percent of the residents employed in manufacturing.[15] These census trends show no economic or demographic factors for Elizabethtown First Church of God's decline. Elizabethtown's steady growth and stability is attributed to at least three sources of employment located there. The town is

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[14]Moss, 5.

[15]*2000 Demographics for E-Town Region,* obtained from Elizabethtown Chamber of Commerce, 2008.

the home of Elizabethtown College, Mars, Incorporated (a chocolate factory), and the

Masonic Village. The Elizabethtown Chief of Police was noted by this researcher as

saying that urban sprawl has begun to cause a shift in the local culture over the past five

years. He mentioned specifically the drug industry is having an impact on the community

and its standard of living.[16]

The beginning years of the Elizabethtown First Church of God were unique in

that it took an unusually long time before it was organized. There were eleven years that

lapsed from the time services were initiated until the church was officially organized.

This congregation is the fruit of the revivalist efforts of the Second Great Awakening,

pioneered by her denominational founder, John Winebrenner, and others in the 1830s. In

1837, the organization of the church took place, and there was a petition made to the local

eldership for a pastor.

The early history of this congregation is a story of apostolic zeal and

perseverance. In the 1840s, they saw growth as a result of an evangelistic team

conducting a protracted revival, which lasted several weeks and resulted in several other

revivals in the Elizabethtown area. Twelve believers were baptized during these revivals

and new members were added to the congregation. The congregation's perseverance was

further demonstrated by its practice of worshiping in school houses, homes, and halls in

its early beginning only to have to overcome a devastating event when the church

building was sold out from under them on April 30, 1853:

> The worship services were held in this sanctuary until April 30,
> 1853, when it was discovered by the congregation that they did not have
> the ownership rights. The land upon which the Church was built belonged
> to A. Breneman, and the deed had never been recorded. We do not know if

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[16]Elizabethtown Police Chief Jack Mentzer, interviewed by researcher, November 18, 2011.

> this was "Abraham" Breneman, a member of the congregation, or someone else with the same first name initial. In any case, Mr. Breneman advertised and sold the property to the United Brethren people.[17]

In 1924 and 1928, additional revivals broke out evidenced by conversions, baptisms, and memberships into the church. God's hand of blessing was on this congregation in many ways, whether leading it from a circuit to a single station to having its own pastor or leading it through numerous renovations and additions over the years.

The 1930s and 1940s were not without their challenges. The church's history reports the loss of 100 members over a fundamentalist split in 1930, as well as the tragedy of five families losing sons in World War II. They persevered over a forty-year period in which the church experienced twenty-five different pastoral changes. The membership reached its highest in 1973 with a total membership of 501.

The first decade of the twenty-first century has also presented many challenges for this congregation. In the time period of 2004 through 2008, this congregation has seen three full-time pastoral changes as well as two interim ministers. The Sunday morning yearly average worship attendance reached 170 in 2000 only to drop to an all-time low 101 in 2007 as indicated by figure 1.3. [18]

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[17]Pastor J. E. Lewis and Elizabethtown First Church of God Historical Committee, "Church History," First Church of God of Elizabethtown, http://www.etownfirstcog.org/church-history.htm [accessed August 12, 2010].

[18]Eastern Regional Conference of the Churches of God General Conference, *2009 Journal: Including the Minutes and Reports for the Tenth Annual Session Held at Doubling Gap Center,* Newville, PA, April 22-24, 2010, 163.
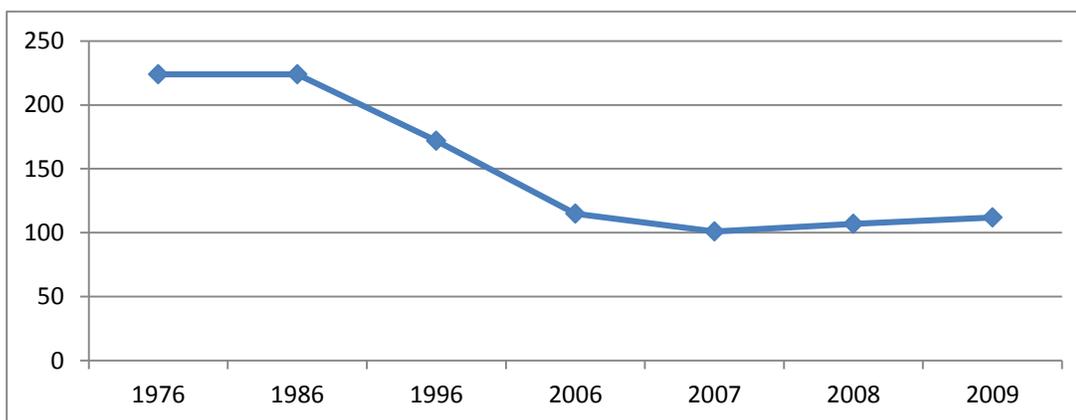
Figure 1.3 Average morning worship attendance at the Elizabethtown First Church of God, 1976-2009

During this decade the church experienced loss of members, and financial support as well as few conversions and baptisms. In spite of the challenges, God blessed the hard work and dedication of these people and enabled them to complete the "Because We Care Project" begun in 1999. The Because We Care campaign consisted of major renovations to the old fellowship hall, installation of central air conditioning, and an elevator to the basement. The goal for the project was set at $625,000.00. They received cash contributions and commitments in the amount of $425.000.00. The following is a document announcing the accomplishment of that goal:

> In December 1998, an ambitious project began within the church for major renovations to the church building. This project costing roughly $375,000 resulted in the church beginning a $250,000 step of faith. Over the past 10 years many activities, projects and plans were announced in order to bring down this indebtedness. As the work of Nehemiah of old faced many challenges so has ours. The purpose of this letter is two-fold. First of all, it is with great joy that we would like to report that our financial obligation to our mortgage as of October 9, 2008 has been reduced to ZERO. This has been accomplished through the sacrifices and generous giving of all our members and friends here at Elizabethtown First Church of God and we thank you. Acting on the recommendation of the Finance Committee and the direction of the Administrative Council of the First Church of God of Elizabethtown at the August

20, 2008 Administrative Council meeting to pay down the debt of the mortgage, actions were taken which enabled the mortgage to be paid off. [19]

The congregation celebrated the dissolving of the debt with a mortgage burning ceremony on February 1, 2009, during the morning worship services. It is evident that this congregation has had to overcome some seemingly insurmountable odds during its nearly 175 year tenure.

The Elizabethtown First Church of God now exists in a highly competitive church community. This researcher found fourteen established churches in Elizabethtown Borough and forty-one in the Elizabethtown Area School District. This does not include recent church plants or house churches.

As a consequence of these trends nationally and locally, churches that were once considered prominent have plateaued, closed, or declined. Churches that at one time burned with a vision and passion for the non-Christian, born out of the Second Great Awakening, are now just shells of their former selves.

## Statement of the Problem

In June 2008, this researcher partnered with the leadership of the Elizabethtown First Church of God to embark on an ongoing strategic spiritual journey to discern God's will for their congregation. Within the first six months of arrival to the ministry context, he conducted home focus groups. The purpose for these groups was to make observations and to obtain feedback from the congregation as to their perspectives of their congregational strengths, needs, and dreams. Feedback was organized, prioritized, and filed for future ministry reflections, plans and strategies.  In 2009, this researcher, with

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[19]First Church of God of Elizabethtown Finance Committee, letter to church congregation, October 21, 2008.

the assistance of Kevin Richardson, the Director of the Eastern Regional Conference of the Churches of God, engaged the congregation and its administrative council in a core values survey. Feedback from participants in the home focus groups and the surveys has shown the Elizabethtown First Church of God to be characterized as an inward-focused ministry.

These sources indicated that the congregation was focused on its facility and special events. This hypothesis of inward-focused ministry was made by this researcher not only by what was reported in these research samples but also by what was not reported. There was nothing mentioned in the core values surveys about reaching the un-churched or spiritual disciplines.

First of all this researcher broke down the active membership by age. Active membership is defined by those who attend regularly or contribute financially. Congregational records show 188 individuals either attend regularly or contribute financially to the church. Contributors include shut-ins or out-of-area members. The largest segment of the congregation is seventy-one and over as evidenced by other pertinent information to the research problem. This group of sixty-nine individuals makes up thirty-six percent of the congregation. If the top two categories are combined, the percentage of active membership increases to forty-eight percent of the congregation who are sixty-one or over.
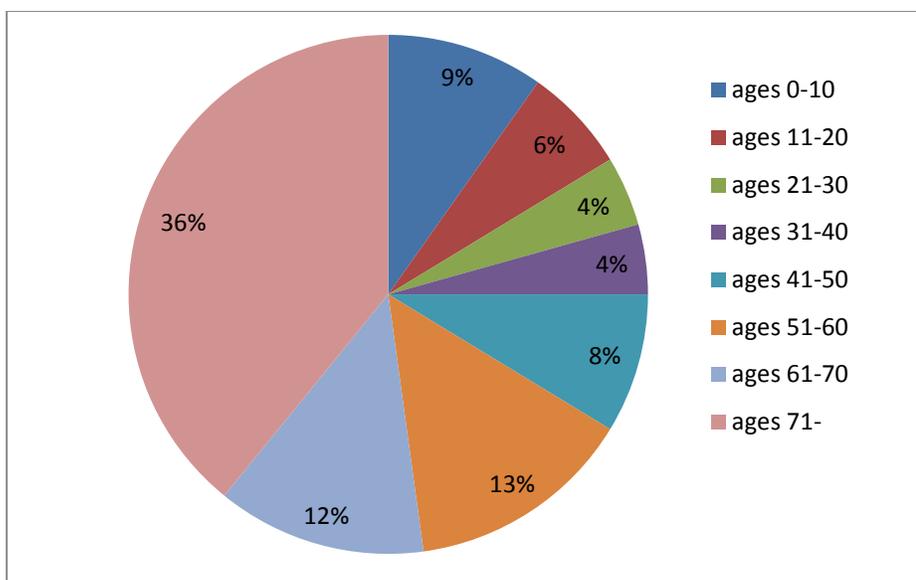
Figure 1.4. Active attendees by age

The aging factor and its effects upon the financial foundation of the church can be seen in figure 1.5. In 2010, there is a record of 122 individuals or families providing monetary contributions to the church. This number is a little misleading, because several congregants do not use envelopes and instead provide contributions through the plate offering where only dollar totals are tracked. Therefore with visitors and those not using envelopes, the actual total of those giving would probably be higher.

When graphing the age of the recorded contributors, a surprising statistic is revealed. Sixty-six percent of the financial contributors are age sixty-one or older, and fifty percent is over the age of seventy-one. The vast majority of the congregation is in retirement and probably held to a fixed income level.[20] These financial statistics, as well as feedback from the core value surveys, focus groups, and statistical information of congregational life, indicate the need to become less inward-focused. The problem is

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[20]First Church of God of Elizabethtown Finance Committee, Congregational Meeting Report November 14, 2010.

similar to many aging traditional churches and is compounded further by the larger

contextual realities. So the question is asked again, "'Son of man, can these bones live?' I

said, 'O Sovereign LORD, you alone know.'"
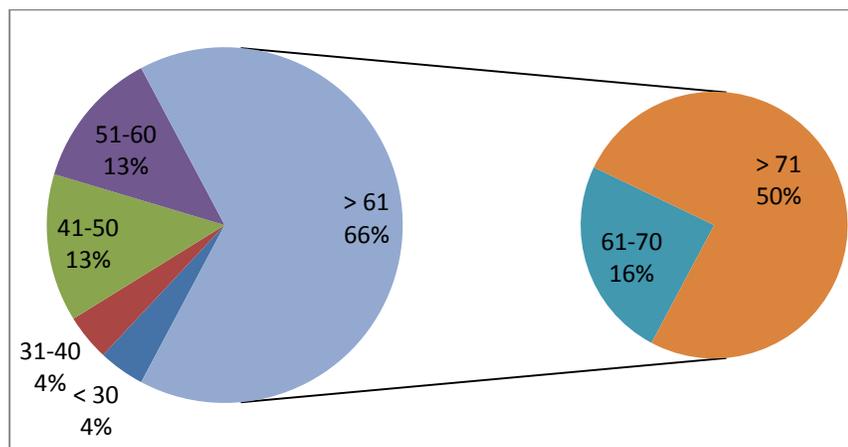


Figure 1.5. Financial contributors by age

As a result of these sources of research showing an inward-focused ministry

combined with the present realities of a cultural shift toward a non-church culture and

other sub-problems, the research problem has been identified. The Elizabethtown First

Church of God is lacking a strategic plan for transitioning from a traditional attraction-

based church model to a missional model of ministry. Sub-problems have been identified

as a lack of a clear vision, a tepid evangelistic fervor as evidenced by few confessions of

faith and baptisms, an aging congregational population, few new people joining, and a

poor sense of koinia that has resulted in unnecessary conflict. The aging factor of the

congregation is evidenced by two indicators as seen in figure 1.4.

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this project is to develop a set of principles to guide the

Elizabethtown First Church of God from traditional to missional. At the time of this

researcher's arrival to the Elizabethtown First Church of God, the congregation lacked a transition plan. Since then, this researcher has begun to implement a rudimentary plan that is untested. This researcher will identify potential principles to make the successful transition and examples from those principles.

## Research Methodology

This project will use quantitative and qualitative research methods with this researcher as the primary instrument of data collection. The significant portion of research for this project is qualitative. Interviews with focus groups in the congregation will take up a significant amount of the qualitative research. Shortly after arriving to Elizabethtown First Church of God in 2008, this researcher conducted focus group interviews in homes called "Evenings with the Pastor" to obtain observations on behaviors, thoughts, experiences, and values of the congregational life.

In 2009 and 2010, this researcher conducted two more focus groups with congregational participation in "60 Day Share and Prayer Triplets". Their experiences, reflections, and behaviors were also recorded for use in future ministry planning.

After the two congregation-wide initiatives of prayer, two more focus groups were conducted in 2010. These groups consisted of an even broader representation of the church leadership and ministry teams. They were interviewed and questioned by an independent interviewer. The questions were vision-oriented and similar to those asked in 2008 home fellowships. These responses were also recorded to be utilized for future vision-casting and ministry development.

A review and reflection of the local church history will be included to assist in understanding the context of the problem. The local church history is also important for

understanding core values of the congregation. This researcher will attempt to obtain perspectives of the problem from former Elizabethtown First Church of God pastors as well. This project will also make use of questionnaires. In 2009, core values surveys of the congregation, administrative council, and pastor were conducted. Feedback from these surveys will be followed up by citing the similarities and differences in participant perspectives. Understanding the proper positions of the leadership and congregation is important for determining the pace of this transition.

This researcher will report outcomes from community needs surveys that were given during two large church events. These surveys obtained input from individuals of the community as they were asked to identify unmet needs in the community. During this process of community assessment, this researcher also engaged input from community agencies and community civic leaders as to their perspectives on needs to be served.

This researcher will perform interviews and case studies of pastors and congregations inside and outside the denomination who are in the process of transitioning traditional model churches to missional model churches. If deemed beneficial, interviews will be conducted with current local and formal conference leaders for the purpose of obtaining their perspective of the research problem. Former Church of God denominational leaders will also be interviewed as to their reflections on the denominational renewal and revitalization efforts of the 1990s that ultimately culminated into the initiative to reach "35,000 morning worshippers by 2000" initiative. This will add value to understanding the project problem in its larger context.

Quantative research for this project will be limited to such data as church documents, statistical information regarding congregational life, and local conference

reports. In order to understand any societal or economic factors that may have contributed to the research problem, demographic census information will also be obtained and assessed.

## Research Questions

The research conducted will address the following questions:

1) *What are the congregational barriers to becoming missional?*

   Identification of the congregational barriers to be overcome has historical roots back to the Constantine era. The problem of ingrown ministry can also be found throughout the Scriptures. Those cases will be considered in Chapter Two of the research project.

2) *What leadership skills are needed to guide a church to become missional?*

   Issues such as spiritual leadership, vision, and experience are included in this research question.

3) *What are the strategies needed to become a missional church?*

   Input to this question will come from interviewing pastors and congregations who have been undergoing transition toward more missional models as well as sources from experts.

## Significance of the Study

Inward-focused ministry crosses all denominational, ecclesiastical, and geographical boundaries. Hence, the value of this project is not limited to this writer's ministry context or denominational context but to any attraction-based congregation or ministry that desires to pursue an externally-focused ministry. It has been previously

cited by this researcher that the state of the traditional and mainline churches in America is in decline. The reasons for decline in these churches are similar to those of the ministry context of this project. Outcomes and conclusions of this project can have significance to the broader national church context.

This research project is significant to the denominational context as well. The Churches of God's lack of focus on church planting and development were evidence that the denomination had become ingrown. The context of the project problem serves as a microcosm of the larger denominational problem, just as understanding the causes precipitating the decline of the Elizabethtown First Church of God and the strategies behind its successes should prove helpful to the broader church context.

**Assumptions and Limitations of the Study**

This researcher has made an assumption that not all traditional attraction-based churches are declining. Many attraction-based churches have been thriving and prospering for many years, but they are not missional as God intends and as defined in this project. Research collected and literature reviewed indicate that it is not a realistic expectation that the Elizabethtown First Church of God shift totally from an attraction-based model to a missional church.

A second assumption of this researcher is that most aging and declining churches share a common model of doing ministry. They do ministry out of an attraction-based model that is predominantly inward-focused. It is a further assumption that a missional model approach will grow to be more effective in building the kingdom by reaching the postmodern culture in the future. Lastly, this researcher assumes the pastor needs to be the spiritual leader and pacesetter for transitioning an inward-focused church outward.

Due to the time limitations of this research project, resolutions to the problem may not be fully attained. Transformation in aging, declining churches is a slow process and must be seen as a lifetime journey. Qualitative information from surveys, questionnaires, and focus groups will never be as objective as it should be. There are always several perspectives to a story, so the data collected here may be skewed by factors such as these. Furthermore, due to sensitivities and confidentiality involving former pastors, names may need to be withheld or pseudonyms will be given.

Lastly, every ministry context has its own unique factors and therefore creating a "one-size fits all process" will never be able to completely address every situation that involves decline.

### Definition of Terms

*Strategic Spiritual Journey*: A term labeled by George Bullard that has influenced this researcher's project. For the purpose of this project, this researcher will utilize Bullard's definition of a strategic spiritual journey, which begins, "It is not a destination. It is a beginning, but seldom an ending."[21] He goes on to describe a spiritual strategic journey in more depth. It is spiritual in that it assumes total reliance on God as individuals and as congregations. It is strategic in that it focuses on those goals and actions that will make the most difference in a congregation's ability to serve in the midst of God's Kingdom. Lastly, Bullard describes it as a journey in that it is ongoing. [22]

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[21]Bullard, *Pursuing,* 15.

[22]Bullard, *Pursuing,* 17.

*Attraction-Based Model*:  A traditional model of ministry that is building, events, and

      activities driven. This model is concerned with creating activities that get people

      into the church. Many of these ministries have been successful for many years.

      They can have vibrant worship services with state of the art technology and

      effective children and youth ministries.

*Inward-Focused Ministry***:** Another name for attraction-based ministry. For the purpose

      of this project this writer cites *Outgrowing The Inward Church* where author C.

      John Miller quotes from Curry Mavis definition in his book *Advancing the*

      *Smaller Church*:

> Like persons, local churches are sometimes introvertive. Following the introvertive pattern in human personality these churches turn their interests and their energies upon themselves. They are concerned primarily with their own affairs. Sometimes they devote most of their attention to spiritual introspection which results in a neglect of spiritual expression in their communities.[23]

      Inward focused ministry concentrates on attendance, programs, activities,

      buildings, and budgets.

*Externally-Focused Ministry*: A ministry model that is focused on the non-church, service

      to community and beyond. For the purpose of this project the term external-

      focused can be used interchangeably with outward-focused or missional.

*Christian Spiritual Leadership*: The ability of a Christian spiritual leader to take people

      where they currently are spiritually to where God wants them to be.

*Community*: A sense of interdependence, belonging and mutuality among members. A

      sense of community or koinonia (kingdom fellowship and synergy) in the church

      is when members are working in harmony toward a common goal.

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[23]C. John Miller, *Outgrowing The Ingrown Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 27.

*Vision*: The uncovering of a God-given spiritual picture to a leader and congregation. It

shows a preferred future for a particular congregation or ministry and is the

outcome of prayer and seeking God.

*Modernism*: A worldview held by the majority of the population between AD 1500 and

2000 that was man-centered and trusted in reason to discover truth. Power and

faith were found in human reasoning which helped explain and interpret God.

The Christian's authority was in the Bible.

*Postmodernism*: A world view prominent thus far in the twenty-first century where

conflicting views are expected and accepted. Power and faith are found in

personal experience. Postmodern thought says that the Bible is only one of many

authoritative religious writings. Feelings and whatever makes one happy are

determinants to what is right.

*Missional*: The term missional is from the Latin word *missio*, which means "sent." From

this term we derive the words *missionary* and *missions*. These terms are roughly

equivalent to the generic use of the term *apostolos*, or apostle, which also means

"one who is sent". The authors of *Missional Church* state this, "'Mission' is not

something the church does as a part of its total program. No, the church's essence

is missional, for the calling and sending action of God forms its identity. Jesus

drew close to us and the missional church seeks to draw close to those who do not

know Him."[24] The issue is what idea of church is more faithful to the Scriptures.

Genuine fruitfulness cannot simply be measured by numbers as is common in

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[24]Darell L. Guder, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 4.

attraction-based models but by "making disciples" as commanded in the Gospel of Matthew 28:19-20.

## Organization of the Study

This project will unfold according to the following blueprint. Chapter One will state clearly the project problem and sub-problems. This project will research the Elizabethtown First Church of God's lack of a plan and strategy to transition from an attraction-based model of ministry to a missional model. The project problem will be explained in the broader historical context of the Constantine era and the Second Great Awakening as well as the denominational context.

Chapter Two will develop the biblical and theological foundations for investigating the problem. Exploration of biblical mandates and teaching from both the Old and New Testaments relevant to the research project will be explored. The theological foundation for pursuing a missional model of ministry will be investigated. This chapter will answer the question of why the church should be missional. A study of theological themes pertinent to the missional model such as the nature of God, mission of Christ, and the nature of the church will accomplish this goal.

Chapter Three shows what the literature and information resources bring to the problem. There is an immense amount of literature on the missional movement in America. Books and articles by authors who are on the forefront of the missional church movement will be utilized and noted in this research project as well. Secular leadership works will also be utilized in this chapter as deemed appropriate.

Chapter Four will describe the research methodology and procedures that will include interviews of former pastors, observations by this researcher, local church

materials, denominational documents, questionnaires, local history, case studies, and surveys collected by this researcher. Chapter Four will answer the how, what, where, and when of the research. The scope of research will not be limited to the local church, or local denomination settings. Case studies of denominational and churches of other denominations will be obtained.

Chapter Five will display the results of the actual data researching of the problem. This researcher hypothesizes that the research data will verify the project's identified problem of an attraction-based ministry. In addition this researcher has set out to establish the viability of the missional ministry model.

Chapter Six will discuss the summary, conclusions, findings, and recommendations for addressing the problem of lacking a plan to transition from a traditional attraction-based model to a church missional model. It is the desire of this researcher that this project accompanied by the Holy Spirit's guidance will be beneficial to pastors desiring to lead their churches to becoming more missional.

**Summary**

The Elizabethtown First Church of God's problem does not exist in a vacuum. As shown in the context of the problem, inward-focused ministry has broad historical roots to the third century. The problem has theological, spiritual, social, and human behavioral connections as well. In Revelation chapter two, the apostle John is directed to write to the angel of the church in Ephesus. The Ephesian Church was once prominent but was also on a decline and needed to make a change. The striking rebuke in Revelation 2:4, "…You have forsaken your first love," could have been spoken to the church in the Constantine era or to the church following the Second Great Awakening. The need to return to their

first love was also Bob Logan's sentiment as he spoke of the spiritual reality of the

Churches of God General Conference in the 1990s. As evidenced, the Elizabethtown First

Church of God also needs to return to its first love, which is the desired outcome of this

research project.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

This chapter will formulate the biblical and theological foundation for the

Elizabethtown First Church of God's transition to become more missional. This

researcher's desire is to show that such a transition is a biblically viable option. For

Christianity, the Bible is the most authoritative and respected source, directly available

for correct theological information regarding missional theology. In this chapter, key

passages from both the Old and New Testaments will be examined.

These show God to be a missionary God who sent individuals, families, a nation,

his Son, and ultimately his Church to carry on his mission.

Chapter Two will also look at history and tradition and how effective and faithful

the church has been in accomplishing God's mission in the larger church context as well

as the local denominational setting. Research will show the church has left its first

century love and its original mission. The two thousand year history of the church

provides a wealth of theological information on the research problem at hand. Tradition is

a standard which is held accountable to the compass of Scripture. It is always good for

the church to ask if what it is doing is in agreement with the primary source of Scripture

or if it is being done because of tradition. Kevin Vanhoozer says, "Canon may be the

cradle of Christian doctrine, but tradition is its wet nurse."[25]

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[25]Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 2005), 234.

Thirdly, Chapter Two will appeal to reason for transitioning to being more missional. The biblical and theological foundation will establish becoming missional as a viable approach to ministry. The changing culture and worldviews provide further reason for this transition. Research has shown that the modern church has not always communicated the gospel as effectively to the changing cultural as the early church did. Paul's motto, "… to be all things to all men..." has not been the motto of the traditional church.[26] As a result, many churches, though not all, have lost their relevance. The church now exists in a post Christian culture and needs to do ministry differently.

Lastly, this researcher will view the research problem against the background of experiences in this world. The writer will make his own personal reflections on leading churches to become more missional as well as record reflections from interviews with other pastors.

## The Theological Foundation

In an interview by this researcher, Greg Funk, the Senior Pastor of Manheim Brethren in Christ Church, responded to this project's research question: *What leadership competencies or skills need to be developed to enable a traditional ministry style to transition to a more missional model of ministry?* His immediate answer is relevant to Chapter Two of this research project. Pastor Funk answered, "Pastors need to have a high view of Christ if they are to transition a traditional ministry to be missional."[27] In another interview, Stephen Dunn also responded to this question by saying, "Good preaching

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[26]1 Cor 9:22 [NIV].

[27]Pastor Greg Funk, Interview by author, Elizabethtown, PA, April 27, 2011.

with emphasis on evangelism, Jesus, relationships and core values [is needed]."[28] Funk and Dunn clarify that our research problem is not only an issue of style of ministry but of theology as well.

Missional thinking recognizes that God is on a mission to rescue his people in the world. Thinking missionally is seeing God's plan as not just for oneself or for others or for the church but for the entirety of the universe. Missional doctrine understands that God created the world, and he has a destiny for it.

<div align="center">Old Testament</div>

The Old Testament shows God, not mankind, as the center of the biblical story. From cover to cover in Scripture, the driving force of God's story is the mission of God. The idea of God as a missionary is prevalent throughout the Old Testament.

The call of Abram in Genesis 12:1-3 is a significant Scripture on God's missionary nature. God chose Abram (meaning "exalted father") to be in the lineage of the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. God set to work at reconciling the world first by calling and sending Abram, who became a model of faith. God made a covenant with a three-fold promise of progeny, land, and blessing to Abram. His plan for Abram, was to make from him a great nation of people who would be not only the people from whom the Messiah would come, but also they would be God's chosen nation, a witness of God to all the earth. His call resonated not only throughout the Old Testament but the New Testament as well.

The prophetic literature and tradition is rich with sending language. In particular this is seen in the calls of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, and

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[28]Stephen Dunn, Interview by author, June 30, 2011.

Jonah. In all these prophetic callings there was a call to *go*. The story of Jonah has traditionally been used as a missionary call and as a clear example from the prophets of the sending heart of God.

*Jonah*

Jonah is a story about an inward-focused prophet and his displeasure toward God. In the book of Jonah, the sovereignty of God is clearly seen in his mission in which God makes things happen. God calls Jonah to go to Nineveh in chapter one and calls him to go to Ninevah again in chapter three:

> The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.[29]

Jonah's call does not follow the traditional model of the prophetic calls such as Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah. However, a word study reveals significant theological terms in his call that are pertinent to the rest of the book.

Jonah's name means *dove* and was used as a metaphor for Israel (Hos 7:11, 11:11, and Ps 74:19), and Jonah is seen as a representative of Israel. Doves were seen as messengers from earliest times (Gn 8:10). Jonah is sent as a messenger to Nineveh to preach a message of judgment not hope. He is the son of Amittai, which means *truthfulness* or *faithfulness*, but he abandons both because of his prejudices.

A word with missional significance introduced in these opening verses that intensifies the theme of God as a sending God is the word *gadol* or *godol* (Hebrew meaning *big* or *great*). The word *great* is used fourteen times in the book of Jonah. Six

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[29]Jon 1:1-3 [NIV].

times it is used of Ninevah or Ninevites (1:2, 4; 3:2, 3, 5, 7; 4:11). Outside sources show

Nineveh indeed was great in antiquity, wealth, size, and population.[30] Sources also

indicate Nineveh as great in wickedness and sin.[31] The missional significance for

Nineveh as an object of God's great mercy could not be missed.

The word *cry* or *gara* is repeated nine times in Jonah. It is used in two ways. In

chapter three verses two and four, it is used in a missional reference to the proclamation

of God's Word to Nineveh. It is used as a human cry to God in a time of distress in 1:6,

in 2:2 by Jonah, in 1:14 by the sailors, and in 3:8 by the Ninevites. The final use is in 3:5

for the proclamation of a fast in response to the call of God. Thus the word is used in

reference to God's action and human response in times of crisis.

*Evil* or *ra* is used in verse two for the first of ten times in the book of Jonah. It

also is used in two related senses. In 1:2, 3:8, and 3:10, it refers to the wickedness of the

Ninevites. It is also used to refer to the judgment upon man by God (1:7, 8; 3:10; 4:2).

Jonah's theme, the sinfulness of man inevitably leads to God's judgment unless God

relents, is pertinent to this discussion on becoming missional.

God is active in his mission of saving sinful mankind as is evident in Jonah 1-2.

He hurls a storm and sends a great fish to deliver Jonah. Jonah 1-2 are a polemic against

the Israelites who do not want to proclaim salvation to others. This can be a barrier

churches struggle with even today.

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[30]Samuel Clift Burn, *The Prophet Jonah* (Minneapolis: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, Inc., 1981), 38.

[31]H. L. Ellison, *The Prophets of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), 51.

The aim of chapters three and four of Jonah are to declare the divine pardon to the world through preaching and repentance.[32] Jonah teaches that divine love is universal as seen by God sending his prophet to the heathen city of Nineveh.

Chapter Four adds more relevant material to this discussion on missional theology. In verse one Jonah is angry that God delivered Nineveh. "But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry." In verse two, he offers a prayer of justification for fleeing to Tarshish. He does so in the form of an Israelite creed. "I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity" (CF Ex 34:6-7). Jonah admits that it is common knowledge that God is gracious, compassionate, and slow to anger, abundant in loving-kindness, and one who relents. A word study on Chapter Four is also helpful to this discussion on missional theology.

The first characteristic of God described in this creed is a combination of gracious or *chanan* and merciful or *rachan*. *Chanan* is defined as a favor issued from a superior to an inferior based on a natural bond. *Rachan* is defined as an inner feeling of compassion or deep love. This combination is present eleven times in reference to God in the Old Testament.

Not only does God show mercy to those undeserving, but he is slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness or *chessed*. God's patience is evident by his slowness to anger, quite unlike Jonah. *Chessed*, combined with God's graciousness and mercy, is defined as the love of an object in a pitiful state without necessarily any covenant relationship involved. In other words, it is a love that goes beyond any binding contract.

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[32]Jacques Ellul, *The Judgment of Jonah* (Grand Rapids: William B. Erdmann's Publishing House, 1971), 11-13.

This is the primary point of the book of Jonah and of missional theology: that God's love transcends to all people not just to his covenant people Israel or the church. The lesson to be learned from Jonah for contemporary Christians is that we must examine ourselves for personal prejudices. We must be aware of any unsound doctrine in our thinking that justifies the exclusion of some portion of God's creation which is contrary to what it means to be missional. The New Testament's use of *agape* would be the closest equivalent to *chessed*.

The Old Testament is not lacking in similar stories of God's *chessed*. The book of Hosea is another great challenge from God to love the unlovable. This book describes the unfailing love of Yahweh for an unfaithful people. On one level, it is a story of a man and his troubled marriage, but on a higher level it is the story of God's relationship with his Covenant People, Israel. Hosea is the first prophet to use the metaphor of marriage as the relation between God and Israel. Hosea's message is stated as a powerful metaphor. In his call as a prophet, he is told to marry a prostitute named Gomer. His life indeed is transformed into a metaphor; his wife and children symbolize the people of Israel and their unfaithful relationship with God.

The examples of Abraham, Jonah, and others in the Old Testament make it obvious that God has been sending from the very beginning of human history. God is missional. The missional approach to ministry finds its authority from the Scriptures' truth that God is sovereign and is a sending God. When understood in the context of the Scriptures, *Missio Dei* or mission God, correctly emphasizes that God is the initiator of his mission. The missional theme is more evident in the New Testament as it comes to a clearer focus in the person of Jesus Christ.

**The New Testament**

The climax of God's sending is seen in the sending of his son Jesus into the world. "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."[33] He died on the cross to make cosmic reconciliation possible. God raised him from the dead, and, in time, he will return to earth to redeem the creation fully and to raise the dead to life, some to eternal joy and others to eternal condemnation. In the New Testament, God's mission and nature to send is most clearly seen in the theological doctrine of the incarnation.

Incarnation

Christ's incarnation permeates the New Testament. The incarnation remains central to the traditional Christian faith as held by the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox, and most Protestants. It is the belief that the second person of the Godhead, also known as the Son or the Word, "became flesh" and was miraculously conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary.[34] "This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit."[35]

In the incarnation, the nature of the Son was perfectly united with human nature in one divine person. "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation".[36] Jesus Christ was both "truly God and truly man." The incarnation implies that

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[33]Jn 3:16 [NIV].

[34]Jn 1:14 [NIV]

[35]Mt 1:18 [NIV].

[36]Col 1:15 [NIV].

the almighty God of Abraham, the sending God who was intimately involved in the lives of God's people, took on the limitations of time, place, and of a body to be with mankind. Such is God's love that God came to earth to live out life as humanity: growing up, walking, eating, sweating, speaking, practicing spirituality through prayer and fasting, and suffering humiliation and death by crucifixion at the hands of his own people. Christians believe that this was done so that even the worst sin could not stand in the way of a relationship with God, and even death would not be the end.

Missional theology is rooted in the biblical doctrine of the incarnation of Christ. John the evangelist identifies his purpose statement in John 20:3. *"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."* The Gospel of John was written to encourage those who are believers to continue to believe. Under the inspiration of the Spirit, the Apostle John wrote the perfect commentary on the incarnation. John begins to build the believer's faith in Jesus with the key incarnational passage of John 1:1-18. The prologue is foundational to the classic Christian formulation of the doctrine of Christ. In it, John discusses divinity and humanity, preexistence, and incarnation. Though structured like an ancient hymn, the prologue is an overture to the story of the rest of the gospel.

Scholars have structured the prologue into four turning points or stanzas that give different glimpses of the *logos* or Word. When one thinks of the term *word,* communication comes to mind. Jesus is God's Word to the world. These four stanzas express the logos' relationship in general terms then move to the specific. It unfolds with a reference to the *Logos* and God; the *Logos* and creation; the *Logos* and revelation, and the *Logos* and incarnation. The prologue's finale found in verses 14-18 sums up what

John has said in verses 1-13. John brings the abstract thought of light and darkness into the concrete Old Testament images.

Regarding the discussion of missional theology, verse 14 is one of the most important verses. The first phrase, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us," is translated in Peterson's translation The Message as, "The Word became flesh and blood and moved into our neighborhood." The word did not just appear human, but "the word became flesh". This statement was stunning to two audiences. The Greek mind held to the axiom that the divine spirit and flesh were separate and independent. Hence the first part of the statement would have gotten their attention.

The second phrase "made his dwelling among us" was stunning to the Jews. Jesus was now the replacement of the tabernacle (Ex 25:8-9). This new presence and residence of God is not a mystical display of power, but the visible and powerful manifestation of God, as to Moses on Sinai, is present in Jesus.

The third phrase adds to the description. "We have seen his glory." Christ is now the new dwelling and manifestation of the *doxan* (Greek) or *kabod* (Hebrew) of God. The difference in Christ is that his glory will come through the suffering and humiliation of the cross (Jn. 12:23-24; 13:31).

There is no name more telling than *Immanuel,* which Matthew refers to in his Gospel. "'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us')."[37] The name Immanuel was first given to Jesus by the prophet Isaiah 700 years before his birth. "Therefore the Lord himself will give

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[37]Mt 1:23 [NIV].

you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him

Immanuel."[38] John's discussion on Christ's nature is not limited to his gospel.

*1 John 1:1-4*

John elaborates on the incarnation with more specificity in his first Epistle 1 John:

> That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.  We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.  We write this to make our joy complete.

"That which was from the beginning..." The word *beginning* refers to the

beginning of the gospel (1 Jn 2:7, 24) It is not personal but neutral. It refers to the

message of the gospel. However in 1 John, the message and the person of Jesus Christ are

inseparable (1 Jn 5:5-8; 1:1-2). This truth is what incarnation is about. The eternal life of

God came to the world in a verifiable historical event. John says this event, can be

verified by the senses of sound, sight, and touch.

I John 1 clearly shows that in the incarnation of Jesus, God is "with us". He is

with us to restore his creation and redeem his people. "To this you were called, because

Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps."[39]

That is why Jesus told his disciples that his purpose for coming was to seek and to save

the lost (Lk 19:10). He accomplished salvation through the cross. In addition to John,

Paul's writings are not silent concerning Christ's divine and human nature.

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[38]Is 7:14 [NIV].

[39]1 Pt 2:21 [NIV].

*Philippians 2:5-11*

Paul describes Jesus as turning his culture upside down in Philippians 2. He does so when Jesus considered his equality with God not as an opportunity to exploit his position with God but made himself nothing and humbled himself (Phil 2:6-7).

Jesus' incarnation went beyond the theological doctrine that he was literally God in flesh. The incarnational ministry of Jesus meant that he came to physically be with us and to reach us with the Father's love. He was hands-on in our culture. God did not send Jesus to simply pitch a tent outside the temple or to camp in Jerusalem for the purpose of building a ministry around a physical location. Jesus did not even have a permanent place to live. "Jesus replied, 'Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.'"[40]

On the contrary, Jesus came to love and go to the individuals on the fringes as well as the masses. Jesus went to serve the lost, the sick, and the outcasts. He was misunderstood by the establishment and criticized for being a friend of sinners. Getting out and associating with tax collectors, prostitutes, the diseased, and the down and outers of society was Jesus' way of showing what it meant to be sent by God. Jesus did not retreat from the culture but penetrated it. Jesus was a missionary. He was out among the people, going to their parties, and reaching out to them in love. Christ socialized with people with whom the religious leaders of his day would have no contact. He battled the tunnel vision of the religious leaders of his day, be it over healing on the Sabbath or forgiving a tax collector of his sin.

Jesus had a broad and universal appeal. Foreign magi came to seek him after his birth. Lowly shepherds were the first to receive the announcement of his birth. Even in

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[40]Mt 8:20 [NIV].

His death we see his mission was worldwide. A sign was placed on the cross announcing him as the king of the Jews. "Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Many of the Jews read this sign for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek."[41] In what is now called missional theology the doctrine of the incarnation and Jesus' ministry of incarnation come together. This truth can be further explained by Jesus' new commandments.

*Good News and Good Deeds*

Proponents of missional theology identify a couplet in Scripture of the good news and good works. The Pharisees asked Jesus a trick question:

> Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"[42]

The first half of this commandment to love God expresses an important aspect of what it means to be missional. This text addresses the One God's claim over every aspect of every life, and the response of his people to that claim. They contain far more than a mere declaration of the unity of God as against polytheism or of the sole authority of the revelation that he had made to Israel. They assert that the Lord God of Israel is absolutely God and none other. He and he alone is Jehovah (*Yahweh*), the absolute, the One who had, by his election of them, made himself known to Israel.

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[41]Jn 19:19-20 [NIV].

[42]Mt 22:34-39 [NIV].

In the New Testament, Deuteronomy 6:4-5 is expressed in Jesus as Lord. Further

elaboration on Jesus as Lord, will be done in chapter three in the literature review where

Alan Hirsch writings will be reviewed. He labels the element of Jesus is Lord as Christo-

centric monotheism and the epicenter of what he has called spiritual Missional DNA or

(mDNA).[43]

The first statement of the Elizabethtown First Church of God's vision is, "Seeking

to be closer to God today then yesterday." This statement is further explained by the goal

to become inwardly strong. Deuteronomy 6:4-6 and Jesus' first commandment in

Matthew 22:37-38 are statements of knowing God. Knowing Jesus and his good news is

how we know God today.

The Elizabethtown First Church of God's second statement of vision is "Seeking

to be outward-focused." Good news and good deeds are coupled through Scripture.

Jeremiah wrote little about King Josiah, but what he wrote had missional overtures and

speaks of what it meant to know the Lord:

> "Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar? Did not your father have
> food and drink? He did what was right and just, so all went well with him. [16] He
> defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it
> means to know me?" declares the LORD. [44]

Isaiah warned those who claimed to know God and were religious but neglected those

who were unfortunate. Isaiah says knowing God is seeking justice, encouraging the

oppressed, defending the cause of the fatherless and pleading the case of the widow (Is

1:17). It is also significant that Isaiah ends his prophecy on a similar note. There he

shows true fasting is more than a ritual or a religious duty. "Is it not to share your food

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[43]Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006), 100.

[44] Jer 22:15-16 [NIV].

with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked,

to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"[45]

The second half of Jesus' commandment, to love one's neighbor (Mt 22:39),

speaks to what it means to be outwardly focused. This command is no less important in

missional theology. On numerous instances, the ministry of Jesus was summed up as it

was in the Gospel of Luke, "... and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to

heal the sick."[46]

To be missional is not a matter of either good news or good deeds but rather good

news and good deeds. Both are conducive to the sending nature of God. Each is

complementary of the other. There are examples throughout church history that express

what it means to love God and love one's neighbor as well. During the first three

centuries, the early church ministered to the sick and dying during the devastating

plagues that swept across Europe.

Saint Patrick not only preached the gospel to the barbarians of Celtic Ireland in

the fifth century but was active in ending slavery and violence in that area. William

Wilberforce was best known for bringing an end to the slave trading in the late 1700s and

early 1800s. The revival and the great awakening of the 1700s and 1800s included the

proclamation and the demonstration of the gospel through such people as John Wesley

with his social reforms and William and Catherine Booth's formation of the Salvation

Army. These examples and the life and teachings of Jesus illustrate that the missional

church movement is a proclamation of the gospel as well as a demonstration of it. The

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[45]Is 58:7 [NIV].

[46]Lk 9:2 [NIV].

authors of *The Externally Focused Church* sum it up clearly. "Woven throughout the fabric of His life was a ministry of show and tell – of good works and good news, side by side, working powerfully together".[47]

This researcher has established the theological and biblical viability for the Elizabethtown First Church of God's pursuit to become more missional The Scriptures clearly depict the nature of God as a sending God. This truth was also demonstrated in the nature, person and mission of Jesus Christ. Jesus' gathering and sending of his disciples in Matthew 28 and Acts 1 provide his mandate for the church to carry on God's original purpose.

*The Great Commission*

The Great Commission addresses the purpose of the church. God sent his Son, but there his Son sends his church. The Gospel of Matthew occupies the first place in the gospel witnesses. This fact reflects its importance in the early church. The theme of Matthew's gospel narrative is the royalty of Jesus. The key missional passage of the Gospel of Matthew concerns the commissioning of the twelve disciples by Christ. Matthew, throughout his gospel, emphasizes the kingdom of God. Jesus' ministry ends in Matthew 28 where it began in Matthew 4 on a mountain.

A thorough exegesis of Matthew 28:16-20 shows that discipleship means more than getting decisions for Christ. Evangelism, done through the lens of missional theology, involves more than preaching the gospel; it includes making disciples. It is from the mountain that the disciples hear Jesus speak of his universal sovereignty, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me," and the commission to go and

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[47]Rick Rusaw  and  Eric Swanson, *The Externally Focused Church* (Loveland, CO: Group, 2004), 112.

proclaim it to all nations, "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" (Mt 28:19-20).

Up to this point in the gospel, Jesus claimed authority to forgive sins and astounded the Galileans by the authority of his teaching. But now, by virtue of his triumph over sin and death, all authority in heaven and earth is given him. His claim of authority is evident by his resurrection power. The loftiness of this passage is brought out by William Tyndale:

> From henceforth all angelic powers are subject to Him; and his authority over all created persons and things, visible and invisible, is now an accomplished fact.  In spite of all appearances to the contrary, the kingdoms of this worlds are destined to become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ. It is on that high note of majesty that the royal gospel of Matthew ends. [48]

Authority (*exousia*) is a Greek word used in this passage that is significant in understanding the person and work of Christ. It denotes his divinely given power and authority to act. As God's Son, his authority and commission is not restricted. The Father's power is invested in him. Jesus exercised his authority by commissioning his disciples to go and proclaim to all nations and to carry on His work. They were to go to all nations. The word *go* means to go with a goal. In the case of the apostles, it is to be a worldwide mission of preaching the gospel. It is in this word *go* that the theme of the sending nature of God surfaces again.

The goal of the missional church does not end at making decisions for Christ, rather the goal is to make disciples or *matheteuo*. This is a command to make learners. A disciple of Jesus is a lifetime learner. In addition, disciples of Jesus are to carry on His work of baptizing. The word *baptizo* means to dip or immerse into the name of the

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[48]R.V.G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to Matthew: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981), 26.

Father, Son and Holy Ghost. In baptism, people are moved from the sphere of death of the first Adam to the righteous life of the second Adam.

As disciples of Jesus go, they not only baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but they are to continue Jesus' work of teaching *didaskontes* or the claims of Jesus. The words *go*, *baptize,* and *teach* are present participles modifying the phrase *to make disciples*. They imply a present and continuous action. Jesus concludes his command with a promise of his ongoing presence as a reminder that "God is with us" (Mt 1:23).

Through the lens of Matthew 28:16-20, to be missional means the church is commanded to make disciples. This commission means going beyond traditional means of merely counting decisions to a continuous teaching process in which the church develops followers of Christ.

The story of God sending is continued with the mission of his church. Before Jesus left his disciples and this earth, He gave the Great Commission to continue his ministry. The New Testament inaugurates this phase with the Day of Pentecost, the age of the Spirit. When this phase comes to a close, Christ will come again and bring about the decisive end of God's redemption story. The mandate of Acts 1:8 "to go" was on its way to being fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. This theme of going is seen throughout the book of Acts.

*The Early Church (Acts 10:1-11;18)*

God's missionary work is seen in the Acts narrative where God sends Cornelius to Peter. This is a significant passage on being missional when one considers nearly two

chapters are spent to deliver the truth about God's new activity of opening the gospel to all people. The story can be divided into two visions and seven interconnected scenes.

Scene One and Vision One (Acts 10:1-8)

The setting of the vision is at Caesarea, a Roman show piece. The recipient of the first vision of the narrative is a Gentile who was a highly esteemed Roman Centurion. Cornelius was a Gentile "God-fearer." During one of his times seeking God, a vision comes to him from an angel of God who instructs Cornelius to send his servants to Joppa to bring Peter to him. In missional terms, God involves a Gentile to take part in his activity by sending the Gentile to a Jew. The scene ends with the obedience of a Gentile.

Scene Two and Vision Two (Acts 10:9-16)

Peter is staying at the home of Simon the Tanner, a man who is considered unclean. While there, he receives a vision of a sheet coming out of heaven. On it are animals that are representative of the animal world. Some of the animals are ceremonially clean and others that are ceremonially unclean. Peter is commanded to "Get up, kill, and eat." The Jewish dietary laws and past prejudices do not allow him to eat. They become obstacles to God's new activity in the world. Three times Peter is told to eat and the third time is after the sheet is taken away. In scene one, the Lord comes to a Gentile in a vision. In scene two, a Jew is residing in the home of a man considered unclean. A pattern is coming together that is important to understanding what it means to be missional.

Scene Three (Acts 10:17-23)

Peter meets the unclean Gentile visitors and messengers sent by Cornelius. The Jew/Gentile tension continues as Cornelius stops at the gate where Peter is residing but does not enter the house. Instead he calls out in a loud voice. The question raised in the reader's mind is, "Will the Gentile be allowed in the Jew's house?" Ironically, they are in Joppa where Jonah boarded a ship when his prejudice would not allow him to go to Nineveh.

As a result of the Spirit's promptings (Acts 10:19-20) Peter went down to meet them. The key verse in this passage relevant to missional theology is verse 23, "Then Peter invited them into his house to be his guests." Walls were beginning to come down. God was about to do something momentous in salvation history.

Scene Four (Acts 10:23-33)

The Jew (or ceremonially clean animal) enters the Gentile's (ceremonially unclean animal's) house. When Peter meets Cornelius, the Gentile and highly esteemed centurion pays homage to Peter. Peter refuses the homage and confesses he is only a man and is no longer allowed to call any man unclean. Peter has caught God's missionary vision.

Scene Five (Acts 10:34-43)

Peter's sermon topic is God's impartiality. Peter explains that God's is all-inclusive and his choice of Israel was an act of grace. Echoes of the book of Jonah are hard to ignore. The good news on God's activity is that the walls of tradition and resistance are broken down by Christ's death and resurrection. God's mission is to bring

all races into the fold, because Jesus is Lord of all. Jesus alluded to this when he said, "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd" (Jn 10:16). The story of Cornelius and Peter is a concrete example of what Jesus meant in his Great Commission to go to all nations (Mt 28:16-20).

Scene Six (Acts 10:44-48)

The Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit. The coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles shows that Jews and Gentiles are now one. A characteristic of the missional church is to be diverse and kingdom-focused rather than focused only on the local church. The gift of the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles was a great example that God does not show favoritism.

Scene Seven (Acts 11:1-18)

The criticism from the Jews toward Peter was that he went into the house of a Gentile. The implication was that the Jews and Gentiles were now having fellowship. This criticism gave Peter the opportunity to retell the story of the vision of the sheet and about the new thing God was doing. The story ends with a significant truth relevant to the biblical and theological foundation of the missional church, "So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life" (Acts 11:18).

**History and Tradition**

The rapid growth of the early church during the first century was phenomenal. This is especially true when considering there were no church buildings or professional clergy, and Christianity was an illegal religion. Christianity is meant to be an organic

movement of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. There have been some similar periods over the history of the church such as the underground church in China as well as the Awakenings of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Proponents of the missional movement point out the church's failure to respond to the shifting worldview in North America and beyond as reason for the church to change the way it does ministry. The need for a new paradigm shift by the church can be understood best by understanding the larger context of Christendom.

The church today conducts ministry out of the context of Christendom. The theological and historical implications of the legality of Christianity to the mission of the church and the research problem must be considered. Up to the time Constantine became the Emperor in AD 306, Christianity was an illegal religion. The persecution of Christians ended in AD 313 when Constantine of the West and Licinius of the East proclaimed the Edict of Milan.

This legalization of Christianity gave special privileges to priests that freed them from heavy taxation, a privilege not available to the rich. An additional factor was that wills could be made out to the church, which allowed churches to accumulate wealth. This made it possible for massive church building programs to happen and enabled large groups to gather and worship. The implications of Sunday becoming a holiday still have effects today on the culture and ministries. Bishop courts were set up and took on legal functions as well. Consequently, the state began to interfere with church affairs such as the Council of Nicea in AD 325. The church operated for centuries, in many instances successfully, under the influence of Constantine and Christendom. An in-depth description of their influences will be given in Chapter Three of this project.

Nevertheless, Missiologists Stuart Murray, Allan Hirsch, and Dan Kimball believe the long era of Christendom is coming to an end. There is evidence accumulating of a second shift, a transition from Christendom to post-Christendom. The percentage of the population attending state churches in most European nations is now very small. Statistics have already been given to support the decline of church attendance in North America and particularly in the mainline denominations.

A new era is dawning that is forcing the Church to explore the implications of its witness in a pluralistic society. Missiologists do not believe the fall of Christendom in Europe and North America will be sudden or total. That is because they believe Christendom as a mindset within the churches (and to some extent also within society) will persist, and many will seek a return to a supposedly more Christian society. The challenge is to promote true Christian discipleship in a different kind of culture.

In Christendom the mindset was as though the church was at the center of culture, responsible for the way history turns out, exercising a top-down influence. But in post-Christendom, the churches are not at the center but on the margins. Hence, any influence the Church will have is likely to be from the bottom up. The Church can now learn once more to trust God for the outcome of history, while it concentrates on its members becoming faithful disciples and seeking first his Kingdom.

The transition of operating on the margins rather than in the center will require a change of perspective, a very different mindset. The traditional church will need to re-think many issues. The Church will require creativity and courage to engage with the changing culture and wrestle in fresh ways with what the gospel means in this culture.

The early church operated from the margins and would challenge the Christendom mindset of today.

## Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

The Protestant Reformation began in 1517 and was led by Martin Luther with the publishing of his Ninety-Five Theses. It was a doctrinal and ecclesiastical movement. The Reformation was more inward and did less to change the culture outside the church than later movements. Unlike the Second Great Awakening that began about 1800 and reached out to the unchurched, the First Great Awakening was a religious revitalization movement in the 1730s and 1740s that swept Protestant Europe and British America, especially the American colonies, leaving a permanent impact on American religion. The First Great Awakening focused on people who were already church members. It changed their rituals, their piety, and their self-awareness.

In Chapter One, this project has provided evidence that the evangelical church has suffered greatly in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Nevertheless, the churches of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were more productive and unified under the Second Great Awakening. During those centuries, the church was more engaged in evangelism and social involvement. The church was a missionary. It not only transformed hearts but a good portion of society as well. The efforts of John and Charles Wesley, William Wilberforce, and Charles Finney are a few of the many that could be cited. Steve Addison notes that by the end of John Wesley's lifetime, one in thirty English men and women had become Methodists. In 1776, fewer than two percent of Americans were

Methodists. By 1850, the movement claimed the allegiance of 34 percent of the population.[49]

Phase one of the Second Great Awakening of the 1800s began in New England through the influence of Beecher, Yale, Timothy, Dwight and Finney. This awakening was a religious revival movement during the early nineteenth century in the United States that expressed Arminian theologyby which every person could be saved through revivals. It enrolled millions of new members, and led to the formation of new denominations. Many converts believed that the Awakening heralded a new millennial age: Millennialism. Millennialism is a belief held by some Christian denominations that there will be a Golden Age or Paradise on Earth in which Christ will reign.The Second Great Awakening stimulated the establishment of many reform movements designed to remedy the evils of society before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Charles Finney's new measures featured protracted meetings of indefinite length of time. Personal testimonies were often very emotional. It included praying for people by name. He introduced the "anxious bench" for persons under convictions. In addition to the new measures, other results of the Awakening were an emphasis on missions both foreign and at home. The Benevolent Empire was an independent group supported by different denominations that sent in money for benevolent causes such as American Bible Society, American Temperance Society, American Sunday School Union, and America Tract society. These were all meant to transform society in some way. Other results of the Second Great Awakening were the rise of abolitionism, sects, growth of Baptists, and Methodists, as

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[49]Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways*, 20.

well as church splits over revivalism. The church through the Second Great Awakening was beginning to impact its culture once again as it did in the early church.

Denominational Tradition and History

John Winebrenner was originally ordained in the German Reformed Church in 1820. Due to his conversion experience and the outside influences of the Methodists and United Brethren, he separated from the German Reformed Synod in 1825. His change was an outcome due to his theological changes on free will, new birth, believer's baptism by immersion, feet washing, the Lord's Supper, and his view of the Bible. In the late 1820s and early 1830s of this time of awakening, John Winebrenner was in large part responsible for the organization of a new American denomination, the Church of God. The Church of God, under the influence and leadership of Winebrenner, was characteristic of the American church during that period.

In 1830, he joined five other teaching elders, or ministers, in central Pennsylvania to form an "eldership" for mutual cooperation. That organization became known as the "Churches of God of North America". Church of God settlers moved west, and by 1853 they had established new churches and elderships in Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Michigan. By 1900, the denomination had spread to Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. Separate elderships had also been formed for churches in Maryland and West Virginia. A General Eldership was formed in 1845 to provide for cooperation between local elderships.

A reading through the many articles and sermons about or by John Winebrenner brings one to the conclusion that the Church of God's first love was a passion to win the lost to Christ. Whether it was camp meetings, revivals, or planting new churches, the

predominant drive of John Winebrenner and his followers was to share Jesus Christ. Pastor James Moss, Sr. notes that in his final sermon, John Winebrenner challenged the Churches of God to preach the gospel. He preached far and near, in English and German, to rich and poor, to white and black, to men and women.[50] There is no doubt Winebrenner and his new denomination was missional from its inception.

Furthermore, there is no doubt that the Church of God through Winebrenner's influence represented a changing idea about the nature of the Christian Church in nineteenth century America. From a missional perspective, there was another side of the story of the Church of God under Winebrenner. Winebrenner was also very involved in the reform movements at the time through his efforts with abolition, peace movements, and temperance programs.

Moss noted in *Returning to our First Love* that during the late 1800s nearly 800 Churches of God existed at one time. He also added that 502 churches existed by 1918. However those counts diminished to 465 in 1925 and 385 by 1964. From the period of 1925 to 1988, the denomination experienced a drop of 2.5 churches annually. They had indeed lost their first love.[51] Viewed from the perspective of logic and reason, the Churches of God should already have been extinct. In 1977, a noted church analyst predicted that in twenty years the Churches of God would be lying dead in the wilderness.[52]

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[50]Jim Moss, Sr. *Returning to our First Love* (Harrisburg, PA: Church Consultants, 1995), 6.

[51]Ibid., 8.

[52]Joe Miller, *Core Values for Growing More and Better Disciples* (Findlay, OH: Churches of God General Conference, 2001), *5.*

Speaking of the evangelical church in the twentieth century, John Stott says that during the first forty years of the century and especially during the decade following World War I, a major shift and reversal took place. Evangelicals disconnected with social action and community needs. The church retreated from the public square. The church's mission was reduced to saving souls, serving our congregations, and defending the faith.[53] The loss of optimism could have come about because of two World Wars, the Stock Market Crash, and the Great Depression. This disconnect served as a description of the Churches of God General Conference and the Elizabethtown First Church of God specifically during the same period.

<div align="center">Modernism to Postmodernism</div>

The theological rationale for transitioning to a missional approach of ministry has been established. Research has shown that the Scriptures are permeated by the sending nature of God, making the pursuit of becoming more missional a viable approach. Research for chapter one has also shown the church has failed in its mission to respond to the changing culture and worldview. The Churches of God have clung to the methods that may have worked in the Second Great Awakening when the church was at the center of the community, but that is no longer true. After operating for centuries out of a Christendom mindset, the church finds itself declining and scrambling for a new way. The assumption of this project is that restoring a missionary mindset is what God is doing to renew and transform traditional churches.

Even in light of the troublesome trends in the contemporary church, the research in this project shows there are congregations and denominations experiencing new life.

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[53]Reggie McNeal, *The Church of Irresistible Influence* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2001), 208-209.

There is reason for hope. It is God's mission and his Church. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against his Church. Chapter Two has established the intent of God in Scripture for his Church to go in mission. In addition, this project has shown the mixed results from history and tradition regarding the church's efforts to fulfill God's mission. The changing culture presents the greatest challenge for the evangelical church.

The qualitative research obtained from interviews with pastors and denominational leaders by this author provide further insights. Research from the larger denominational setting has provided a broader understanding of the research problem to the Elizabethtown context. Just as statistics indicated a decade of decline in annual attendance and membership of the Elizabethtown congregation, so it was on the denominational level.

Nevertheless, interviews from current and former denominational leaders indicated that God was providentially working in the denomination over the past three decades. During an interview, Dave Draper, President of Winebrenner Theological Seminary, reported to this researcher that renewal has been happening in the denomination for years.[54] He pointed out the following experiences to illustrate his point: in 1970 the first General Conference Administrator, Richard Wilkin, centralized the denomination office in Findlay Ohio in1981; the arrival of President George Weaver to Winebrenner Theological seminary in 1977-1988; the efforts of Pastors Joe Miller and Jim Moss, Sr. in church planting; the inception of Summer Seminar known as Impact; the arrival of Bob Logan in 1990; the move of Winebrenner Theological Seminary to the

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[54] Dave Draper, Interview by the author, Findlay, OH, July 12, 2011.

University of Findlay campus; the expansion of foreign missions; the participation of

men with the Promise Keepers Movement; the increase of pastors praying together at

denominational prayer summits. The efforts of these events have produced a movement

of God's Spirit leading to an increase in membership and morning worship attendance

across the denomination. History shows that being missional takes an ongoing effort.

Pastor Joe Miller writes that during Summer Seminar in 1990:

God spoke to the Churches of God through church consultant and conflict management specialist Norman Shawchuck. In attendance was the General Conference Administrator who was already distressed over the declining twenty year statistics of the denomination. Conviction that "we needed to deal with our need" gripped his heart.[55]

Subsequent meetings between the Churches of God, Norman Shawchuck and his Chicago

staff took place. Upon Shawchuck's recommendation, Robert Logan was hired as a

consultant to the denomination on September 18, 1990 to refocus and redirect the

churches' ministry.

The hiring of Robert Logan in 1990 was a significant time in the life of the

denomination. The research has shown that many pastors and denominational leaders

knew the Churches of God were experiencing trouble. The degree of the problem

surprised many in attendance. Jim Moss, Sr. was sounding the alarm for the lack of

church planting efforts.

The presentation Logan gave to a group of about one hundred pastors,

denominational leaders, and staff was described as very painful. William Reist called it a

"bomb shell."[56] All persons interviewed by this researcher concurred with Logan's

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[55]Miller, *Core Values,* 9.

[56]William Reist interview by author, Findlay, OH, July 14, 2011.

conclusion that the Churches of God General Conference had lost their first love. They were no longer being missionaries. Logan described the dire situation of the Churches of God, General Conference as first a spiritual problem. To this gathering, he described the denomination as "evangelical on paper only" and called on them to fall on their knees in repentance.[57]

Another painful description used by Logan to describe the denomination's current state was that they were being a drain to the kingdom. The Churches of God according to Logan had also moved away from their denominational leader's vision organizationally. Logan said this was evidenced by their bloated and expensive organizational structure that was too controlling. Persons interviewed by this researcher described Logan as a prophetic figure whose motives were pure and who said what needed to be said.

Interviewees noted that after reviewing the declining statistics of the denomination, Logan initially resisted the invitation to come to the Churches of God as their consultant. Those interviewed and in attendance at the large group gathering remember Logan reporting no good news on the denomination's current condition. They recalled red faces and many tears during his presentation. One interviewee responded, "Logan had attacked something they all loved."[58]

Logan recommended a five-part prescription for bringing the Churches of God to a renewed growth and vitality: 1) Refocus the church's purpose, 2) Revitalize spiritual life, 3) Redirect resources, 4) Retrain pastors and lay leaders, and 5) Raise up new church

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[57]Draper interview.

[58] Michael Walker, Interview by author, Bowmansdale, PA, July 9, 2011.

planters.[59] The denomination acted immediately with a long range plan addressing the five areas.

The research indicates mixed opinions on the long range effects of Logan's recommendations. Lance Finley, the Director of Youth and Family and the Missional Leadership Initiative for the Churches of God, General Conference, reported that statistics indicated a decade after Logan's efforts that the denomination was losing ground again especially among pastoral leadership.[60] Finley reported pastor dropout and burnout rate was increasing. He went on to describe a gathering of fifty to sixty leaders at Camp Otyokwah called by denominational director Ed Rosenberry in October 2007 as the "winter of discontent."

This gathering was an outcome of a previous denominational leadership gathering at Ashland Seminary to hear Reggie McNeal speak on personal leadership pain and woundedness. Out of this experience, the CGGC began the Missional Leadership Initiative (MLI):

> The CGGC announced a new opportunity for personal growth and leadership development within our denomination last year called the *Missional Leadership Initiative*. The "MLI" is a two-year experience designed to help our church leaders grow and develop the character and skills necessary to lead effectively in the work God is asking us to do for the sake of his kingdom. The experience has been designed and is led by Reggie McNeal, and it involves six three-day retreats over a two-year period, participation in a 'cohort group,' as well as various books to read and homework exercises to complete.[61]

The first cycle included forty-one participants completing the process. The second cycle of leaders is to begin in January 2012. This initiative and the relocation of the

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[59]Miller, *Core Values,* 9.

[60]Lance Finley, Interview by author, Findlay, OH, July 13, 2011.

[61]Dan Horwedel, "The Missional Leadership Initiative," CGGC in an Emerging World Blog, entry posted January 8, 2011, http://emergingcggc.blogspot.com/2011/01/missional-leadership-initiative.html [accessed 7-30-11].

Winebrenner Theological Seminary to their new mission field on the campus of the University of Findlay are signs that the denomination is moving back to its missionary roots.

The Elizabethtown First Church of God is a microcosm of the denomination. Just as the research was indicating the Churches of God's need to refocus its mission, so it is for the Elizabethtown First Church of God. It also was failing to be missional and connect to its community's culture. Efforts are being made by this writer and congregation to bring about incremental changes in the church culture toward becoming more missional. Qualitative research gathered from congregational surveys, observations, experiences, interviews, and focus groups indicated a lack of vision. Quantitative research obtained from congregational life such as baptisms, conversions, attendances, and membership showed a need to approach ministry differently.

Influences of Christendom have been evident in the ministries and strategies of the Elizabethtown First Church of God. The changing American culture and the highly competitive church community have made it difficult for Elizabethtown Church of God to grow while operating under its current ministry model. In 2009, the congregation began a strategic spiritual journey to seek out a new vision to connect with the growing non-churched population. The journey has consisted of church-wide prayer efforts, vision-casting, and community-focused initiatives. Progress is being monitored as the church continues to become a missionary to its community.

This strategic spiritual journey to become more missional not only requires the congregation changing the way it does ministry, but the pastoral leadership must change as well. This researcher has led from a traditional model of pastoral leadership for

twenty-five years. In the interview with Lance Finley, he reported that the pastor must embody the missional lifestyle and develop a missionary mindset.[62] This writer has operated predominantly out of the traditional ministry style that emphasized programs, buildings, numbers, and budgets. Personal growth will be necessary to make the transition to missional ministry.

Unfortunately, at times the focus has been more inward on the local church and less outward on the Kingdom. Operating from this traditional ministry mindset often perceives social involvement as being too secular. A shift to a missional lifestyle does not see a disconnect between the secular and sacred. This is what Jesus was referring to when he said, "You are the salt of the earth and light of the world," and, "We are in the world but not of the world."[63]

Some church tradition can be an impediment in transitioning a congregation to be more missional. This fact was made evident to this researcher during the interviews conducted with pastors and denominational leaders who have had successful experiences with transitioning traditional churches. Outcomes of these interviews will be presented in Chapter Four on the research findings of this project.

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[62]Finley interview.

[63]Mt 5:13 [NIV].

**Summary**

Chapter Two of this research project has set out to establish the transition to becoming a missional church as a viable option that honors God and his Scripture. It has also established that church history and tradition has not always been consistent with the sending nature of God and the mission for his Church. The mission of God has not changed, but his world is in constant change. The culture and worldview of its people have gone through many changes throughout history. As a result, logic, and reason indicate a need for the church to do things differently. The church has not always been attuned to those changes and has not effectively offered the gospel to the changing culture. As a result, the church has lost the influence in society it once had.

This chapter has also shown through examples of experience from the local denomination that not all is lost. The Elizabethtown First Church of God and any local church have great potential to be part of the next great movement of God. Indeed these bones can live!

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

The problem stated in this research project was identified in Chapter One as the Elizabethtown First Church of God's lack of a strategic plan to transition from a traditional attraction model to a missional model of ministry. Chapter Two explained the biblical and theological foundation for the church becoming more missional. In addition, it described that the constantly changing worldview in the American culture is necessitating the need for the church to do ministry differently.

This researcher found the literature pertaining to missional theology to be abundant. This chapter will include a review of literature and materials that shed light on the research problem, as well as literature offering constructive criticism regarding the missional church movement. It will conclude with a potential resolution to the attraction verses missional tension.

The lyrics from the Christian contemporary song *I Will Go,* inspired by the prophet Isaiah, beautifully illustrate the impact missional theology is having on church culture today.

> Verse 1
> To the desperate eyes and reaching hands
> To the suffering and the lean
> To the ones the world has cast aside
> Where you want me I will be

Chorus
I will go, I will go, I will go, Lord send me
To the world, to the lost, to the poor and hungry
Take everything I am
I'm clay within your hands
I will go, I will go, send me

Verse 2
Let me not be blind with privilege
Give me eyes to see the pain
Let the blessing You've poured out on me
Not be spent on me in vain
Let this life be used for change [64]

## The Missional Church: The Biblical Mandate

In *Missional Renaissance,* Reggie McNeal relates that missional theology affects

one's perspective of the Bible. He states:

> In a church-centric world, the Bible is viewed as God's self-revealing gift
> to his people, chronicling for them his work on their behalf and how to conduct
> their lives together as his people. In this context, Bible study typically functions
> as a devotional aid and an instructive lesson applied to church people who find
> what they need for godly living. The Bible certainly does all this, but there is
> much more for the missional follower of Jesus. For the missional church, the
> Bible serves as a narrative to help the people of God understand his mission in the
> world and their role in it. It serves as an authoritative guide for living as God's
> people while being on a mission with him to woo the world. It conveys God's
> hope for humanity, his dreams of how people should treat one another and what
> life in the kingdom looks like. By forcing us to see the disparities between the
> kingdom of earth and the kingdom of God, it becomes far more disruptive than
> informational. The Bible presents a call to action, not just a lesson to be studied. [65]

Missional theology is having an influence on seminary curriculum today, as

evidenced by Biblical Seminary's courses on reading the Old Testament missionally.[66]

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[64]Tim Neufeld and Jon Neufeld, *I Will Go*, Nashville: Starfield, 2008.

[65]Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church* (San Francisco*:* Josey-Bass, 2009), 26-27.

[66]Biblical Seminary, "Course Descriptions," http://www.biblical.edu/index.php/academics-course-descriptions [accessed October 21, 2010].

Chapter Two of this project addressed the biblical and theological foundations of recovering a missionary understanding of God. By his very nature, God is a sending God who takes the initiative to redeem his creation. During the researching of the literature on missional theology, this researcher found numerous occurrences of the concept of *missio Dei*, or "mission of God." The Latin term *Missio Dei* has become increasingly popular in the church in the second half of the 20th century by theologians such as David Bosch and Lesslie Newbigin. The literature expresses that, for the local church, *missio Dei* implies that the church is not called to bring its mission into a local context. Instead, in the words of Henry Blackaby and Claude King in their book *Experiencing God,* the church is called to find out where God is working and go join him in his mission, as he is working all around our world.[67]

Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology's definition of *mission* sheds additional light on what it means to be missional:

> The divine activity of sending intermediaries, whether supernatural or human, to speak or do God's will so that his purposes for judgment or redemption are furthered. The biblical concept is expressed by the use of verbs meaning "to send," normally with God as the expressed subject. The Hebrew verb is *salah* and the Greek is *apostello*. These terms emphasize the authoritative, commissioning relationship involved. [68]

This definition reflects the Old Testament view of God as the divine sovereign who calls and sends in order to accomplish his redemptive mission upon the earth.

Brad Brisco has an insightful post presenting a biblical overview of the theme of God as a sending God. Brisco credits the results of his survey to the work of Francis

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[67]Henry T. Blackaby and Claude V. King, *Experiencing God* (Nashville: Lifeway Press, 1990), 15.

[68]Walter A. Elwell, *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996). http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary [accessed October 21. 2001].

DuBose in his 1983 publication, *God Who Sends*. Brisco surveys seven major sections of Scripture, including the Pentateuch, the Historical Books, the Poetical Books, the Prophets, the Synoptic Gospels, the Gospel of John, and the Acts of the Apostles.

Brisco reports that the Hebrew verb "to send," *salah* and its derivatives are found over eight hundred times in the Old Testament. Though it is used with secular, sacred idioms, nuances are employed more than two hundred times with God as the subject of the verb.[69] In other words, it is God who commissions and it is God who sends.

This researcher verified the source's claim of 800 occurrences of the verb "to send" in the Old Testament through Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible and found its numerous usages as very striking. In his post, Brisco summarizes the biblical foundation of missional theology in both the Old and New Testaments. His Old Testament summary on the nature of God as a sending God clearly shows that God had an intentional strategy of sending from the beginning. He shows the instances of God's sending in the Bible as broad and diverse. God's sending activity in salvation was comprehensive, as seen it's unfolding in the history of his people across the centuries.

Reggie McNeal in *Missional Renaissance* concurs with Brisco that the idea of God as a sending God expresses the heart of the missional church. He adds saying, "the notion of "sentness" lies at the heart of the missional church because it reveals the heart of God". [70] McNeal also notes that other theologians such Darrell Guder and David Bosh agree on the idea of the nature of God as a sending God.

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[69]Brad Brisco, "The Missional Language of 'Sending'," Missional Church Network, entry posted January 15, 2010 http://missionalchurchnetwork.com/the-missional-language-of-sending [accessed October 21, 2010].

[70]McNeal, 21.

According to McNeal, readers interpreting the Bible from a missional view see it as a guide for living while being on mission with God as he draws all men to him for the purpose of redemption. He adds that the missionary activity of God is seen in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity with the Father sending the Son, the Son sending the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit sending the church into the world. Regarding the Trinity McNeal says, "All sending's share a redemptive mission." [71]

Eleonora L. Scott in her theological critique of the emerging movement and missional church makes the following statement about the emerging church's drive for creating spaces for others to explore their spirituality. "Because spiritual experiences are unverifiable, they must be interpreted in the light of theology rather vice versa. It is absolutely essential that good teaching and theology accompany experience."[72]

Citing numerous passages of Scripture, Martin Sutherland believes a broad picture emerges of a plan of God, a divine "mission," an eternal mission, from before the dawn of time. Before there was creation, God had the end in mind. [73] The research of the literature supports that movement toward a missional model is theological and biblically viable. As will be identified in the cautions and concerns later in this chapter, much of the debate in the literature about missional theology regards how it is implemented and measured.

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[71]McNeal, 21.

[72]Eleonora Scott, "A Theological Critique of the Emerging, Postmodern Missional Church/Movement," *Evangelical Review Of Theology* 34 [serial online], no. 4 (October 1, 2010): 335-346. Available from: ATLA Religion Database with ATLA Serials, Ipswich, MA [accessed January 26, 2012].

[73]Martin Sutherland, "The Kingdom Made Visible: A Missional Theology of Church," *Stimulus* 13 [serial online], no. 1 (February 1, 2005): 2-7. Available from: ATLA Religion Database with ATLA Serials, Ipswich, MA [accessed January 26, 2012].

## The Missional Church: The Need for a New Approach

As has been stated in Chapter One of this research project, the problem of lacking a strategic plan can be generalized to almost any denomination in America. The literary sources concur that the church in North America is in decline.

Lesslie Newbigin in his classic and foundational book on the gospel and culture, *Foolishness to the Greeks,* addresses what is involved in a missionary encounter between the gospel and the contemporary modern culture. Newbigin comes at the issue of culture and the gospel from his perspective as a foreign missionary to India. He believes the western culture has proven to be the most resistant to the gospel. He goes on to mention the fact the gospel is growing steadily and even spectacularly in Asia, Africa; and Latin America. But in areas dominated by western cultures (whether influenced by capitalism or socialism), the church is shrinking and the gospel appears to be dropping on deaf ears.[74] After giving his definitions of culture and gospel Newbigin makes this statement that is significant to missional theology, "There can never be a culture free gospel."[75] Newbigin's work, as well as other literature shows the gospel and culture is essential to the problem facing the church today. In other words, the literature shows that culture matters to the gospel.

The relationship between the gospel and culture was pointed out in a recent seminar attended by this researcher. Discussing church culture and school prayer, the following paragraph describes the dilemma facing the American church today:

In the 1950's and 60's when the church was a dominant force in the culture, prayers were in the schools largely because the culture supported that. They were

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[74]Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), 3.

[75]Ibid., 4.

also Christian prayers because many people either were Christians, sympathetic to Christianity, or respectful of it. The political climate and the culture were pluralistic in its religious values. If the political climate would encourage our politicians to readmit prayer into the schools, it is guaranteed they would not be exclusively Christian prayers. We have moved into an entirely different world view in this country when it comes to religion. And in that world view, no religion is permitted to be the norm. – Steve Dunn, excerpted from Life Matters October 2010 www.yourlifematterstogod.blogspot.com. [76]

This point of the changing culture and the need for the church to no longer do business as usual is also emphasized in *The Church on the Other Side. "*We live in a time unlike any other time that any living person has known. It is not merely that things are changing. Change itself has changed, thereby changing the rules by which we live…"[77]

The book, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America,* is quoted and cited in many sources. The thesis of the book argues that the church in the United States must be reinvented in light of its mission to the new cultural context in which it finds itself. "The church has now been moved away from its position of dominance as it has experienced the loss not only of numbers but of power and influence within society."[78] The ineffectiveness of the North American Church is so significant that the authors say North American Christian churches are increasingly marginalized to the degree that in our urban areas they represent a minority. "It is by now a truism to speak of North America as a mission field."[79] The purpose of the book is to

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[76]Stephen Dunn, *Bridgebuilders: Helping Traditional Churches Reach Their Unchurched Neighbors,* seminar manual, 2010, 6.

[77]Brian D. McLaren, *The Church on the Other Side* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 21.

[78]Darrell L. Guder, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 1.

[79]Ibid., 2.

help churches come to terms with the fact that Western society has shifted from being a

"Christendom" society to a non-Christian and often anti-Christian society.

Alan Hirsch agrees with *Missional Church* and states in his introduction of *The*

*Forgotten Ways,* "The overwhelming majority of church leader's today report that they

feel it is getting much harder for their communities to negotiate the increasing

complexities in which they find themselves. As a result, the church is on a massive, long-

trended decline in the West."[80] Hirsh goes on to illustrate the church's failure to reach the

average non-Christian West:

> Based on my reading of significant research from all across the post –
> Christian West, I discovered that when surveyed, the average non-Christian
> population generally reported a high interest in God, spirituality, Jesus, and prayer
> that, taken together indicated that a significant search for meaning was going on
> in our time. But the same surveys indicated that when asked what they thought
> about the church, the average non-Christian described a high degree of alienation.
> It seems that at present, most people report a "God? Yes! Church? No!" type of
> response.[81]

Reggie McNeal cites George Hunsberger's book, S*izing Up the Shape of the*

*Church* on how the western church has veered from its mission. In doing so, he gives

three notions of the church that have shaped its agenda. "1) The church as 'a place where

certain things happen.' 2) The church as 'a vendor of religious good and services.' 3) The

church as 'a body of people sent on a mission.'"[82]

David Olson attempts to paint an accurate picture of the American church's

current reality, as well as suggesting a positive path forward. Regardless of impressions,

over twenty years of data gathered on the state of the church in the United States by The

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[80]Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006), 17.

[81] Ibid., 34.

[82]McNeal, 22-23.

American Church Research Project (TACRP), Olson shows as stated in his book *The American Church in Crisis* that the American church truly is in crisis. "On any given Sunday, the vast majority of Americans are absent from church. Even more troublesome, as the American population continues to grow, the church falls further and further behind. If the trend continues, by 2050 the percentage of Americans attending church will be half the 1990 figure."[83]

The problem is further seen by the "halo effect" or underreporting undesirable behavior in surveys. Page six of Chapter One of this project cites the statistics of Olson's "halo effect." Fifty-two million people attend a Christian church on any given weekend in the United States population, while at the same time the population has grown by 52 million from 1900 to 2006. More than 91 million people live in the United States today who did not live here 16 years ago. The challenge of the American church can be understood by the fact that no growth in church attendance has occurred during the same period.[84]

In *The Church of Irresistible Influence,* the authors cite sources that describe the plight of the problem in the church today.[85] Today, "numerous studies confirm that the public, especially media and intellectual leaders, do not see Christianity as a dominant social force." [86] Instead, six out of ten Americans believe the church is irrelevant.[87] These

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[83]David Olson, *The American Church in Crisis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2008), 16.

[84]Olson, 36.

[85]Robert Lewis and Rob Wilkins, *The Church of Irresistible Influence* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001), 23.

[86]Elmer Towns and Warren Bird, *Into the Future: Turning Today's Church Trends into Tomorrow's Opportunities* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 2000), 37.

sobering facts have had their effects on today's pastor's outlook toward their ministry.

Only one out of three pastors believes the church is making a positive impact on the

culture.[88]

In the opening chapter of *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the*

*Church,* Reggie McNeal says this about the current state of the church culture in North

America:

> The current church culture in North America is on life support. It is living off the work, money, and energy of previous generations from a previous world order. The plug will be pulled either when the money runs out (80 percent of money given to congregations comes from people age fifty-five and older) or when the remaining three-fourths of a generation who are institutional loyalists die off or both.[89]

McNeal, as Olsen, cites studies that indicate the problem of church attendance may be

worse than originally thought:

> A study conducted in the late 1990s suggested Americans might be lying about their churchgoing habits to pollsters. It pegged church attendance at only 26 percent of Americans. Additional cause for alarm for the church, says McNeal, is that the further you go in the generational food chain, the lower the percentage each succeeding generation reports going to church. He indicates that 52 percent of builders (those born before 1946) and seniors to only 36 percent of gen Xers.[90]

The collapse of the church can be demonstrated not only by the percentages of

those who claim to go to church each week but by the number of unchurched that have

increased as well. Increase in the subgroups of unchurched peoples such as women,

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[87]George Barna, *The Frog in the Kettle* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1990), 138.

[88]Barna, 139.

[89]Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003*),* 1.

[90]Ibid.

Hispanics, Northeast, and West Coast are also evidence that it is time for the church to do things differently.

Habecker Mennonite Church in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, is ministering differently. Six years ago, young families wanting a different worship service decided to leave the church. That left about three dozen elderly people behind grieving the loss. The congregation began to pray for more families and kids to come. One church family sponsored a Burmese family of four in 2008. Habecker members rallied around the family, then six more arrived. Soon a revival broke out as seen in the church bringing Burmese families to church on Sundays. The congregation, now at eighty attendees, is evenly distributed between Burmese and native Lancaster Countians including older women in head coverings. [91] This is an example of a traditional church dating to the seventeen hundreds moving with the culture.

An example in Beavers Falls, Pennsylvania of a traditional church re-inventing itself was reported to this researcher by his son who attends Otterbein United Methodist Church. Century-old Otterbein United Methodist Church was destroyed by a fire three years ago. Before the fire, Otterbein Church had been gasping for breath, financially on the brink of closing possibly within a year. Immediately after the fire, the Otterbein congregation wanted to rebuild. A fire insurance policy would provide sufficient money to rebuild, if necessary, but the bishop was reluctant to have a church that was just about to die put in a brand new building. The bishop asked the Otterbein congregation to assess the needs of the congregation and the community. In September 2010, the pastor started a Sunday night worship service in the small, less formal chapel at First United. Dress was

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[91]Jeff Hawkes, "Learning As They Go,*" Intelligencer Journal / Lancaster New Era*, December 6, 2011.

casual, the service contemporary, and the music upbeat. Otterbein members began

attending the service that started with worship followed by teaching and prayer.

Otterbein members began asking, "What are we going to do?" To become a vital

congregation, the pastor recommended the following changes: rename the church, have a

contemporary worship service, meet in small groups during the week, and focus

outwardly into the community. The congregation unanimously approved all four

recommendations. The church was renamed "Ashes to Life." One member describes it

this way, "We're stepping out of the traditional type of services. We're putting ourselves

out on the streets and seeing what (people's) needs are. We want to show people who

have been hurt, and disillusioned that God is still there and working mightily in the city

of Beaver Falls."[92]

Another member described their experience this way, "We found out through the

three years that the church is not the building, that the church is the people." [93] Although

Ashes to Life ministry has no building to call its own, it has some forty members, many

from the Otterbein congregation and others who are people in recovery from alcoholism,

drugs and other addictions. It is evident from the literature, whether it is books, articles or

real life stories that the church in American is in need of doing things differently.

In *Returning to our First Love,* Jim Moss Sr. brings the problem closer to home

for this researcher. Moss wrote about the decline in the Churches of God General

Conference. "In 1964 I wrote the original paper *The Expansion and Concentration of the*

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[92] Patti Conley Calkins, "Three Years After Fire, Church Rekindles," *Ellwood City Ledger*, November 2, 2011 http://www.ellwoodcityledger.com/news/three-years-after-fire-church-rekindles/article_b6defe65-4a99-5a73-ad61-5456edbc4908.html [accessed December 14, 2011].

[93]Ibid.

*Churches of God from 1825-1900.* I didn't know that serious decline had already set in and was to proceed relentlessly into the 1990s. The decline was massive and life threatening."[94]

The Churches of God General Conference's efforts in renewal and revitalization were addressed in Chapter Two of the research project. The outcome of that research will be provided in Chapter Four of this project. The review of literature not only confirms the problem facing the church today but sheds light on the cause of the problem as well.

### The Missional Church: The Cultural Challenge

The problem is best understood when seen through the context of the cultural shifts going on in the West. There is a significant amount of literature on the changing culture challenging the North American church today. Dan Kimball points out in his book *Emerging Church* that the future is best understood by understanding the past.[95] He cites examples from the Old and New Testaments to support his belief. He makes the following reference from the Old Testament, "from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do.[96] Secondly he quotes the New Testament, "To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some." [97] The disconnect or the church's lack of plan to respond to the cultural shift from modernism to postmodernism is understood by the question posed by Dan Kimball also in his book, "Where did the young people go from

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[94]James Moss Sr., *Returning to our First Love* (Harrisburg, PA: Church Consultants, 1995), 113.

[95]Dan Kimball, The *Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for All New Generations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 42.

[96]1 Chr 12:32 [NIV].

[97]1 Cor 9:22 [NIV].

the church?" Books and blogs are not lacking on Christendom, modernism, and

postmodernism, and its impact on the contemporary church.

Alan Hirsch defines Christendom in the following way:

Describes the standardized form and expression of the church and mission formed in the post-Constantine period of AD 312 to present. It is important to note that it was not the original form in which the church expressed itself. The Christendom church is fundamentally different from the NT church, which is made up of a network of grassroots missional communities organized as a movement. Christendom is marked by the following characteristics:
1. Its mode of engagement is attractional as opposed to missional/sending. It assumes a certain centrality of the church in relation to its surrounding culture.
2. A shift of focus to dedicated, sacred buildings, places of worship. The association of buildings with church fundamentally altered way the church perceived itself. It became more static and institutional in form.
3. The emergence of an institutionally recognized, professional clergy class acting primarily in a pastor-teacher mode.
4. The paradigm is also characterized by the institutionalization of grace in the form of sacraments administered by an institutionally authorized priesthood.[98]

On the subject of the culture and the gospel, Alan Hirsch in his book *Forgotten*

*Ways* says, "No one looking at the situation of the church today can say that over the last

century or so things have not fundamentally changed. The reality we deal with is that

after around 2,000 years of the gospel, we are on a decline in about every western cultural

context."[99] In view of this reality, Hirsch expresses the need for a new paradigm, a new

set of tools, and a new vision of reality.

A paper written by Stuart Murray from a European perspective also contains some

pertinent information regarding the origins of Christendom in Europe and its impact on

the church today. He begins his paper on the description of the historical roots of

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[98]Hirsch, 276.

[99]Hirsch, 51.

Christendom at the time of Constantine. He describes the system known as Christendom as an alliance coming into being between church and state that would dominate Europe for over a thousand years and that still impacts the way Christians think and act.

Christendom has had its proponents and opponents over the years. Murray mentions two opposite assessments of what happened in the fourth century. One assessment saw it as a God-given opportunity that the church rightly seized, which ensured the triumph of the church and of Christianity in Europe. Contrastingly, the other saw it as a disaster that perverted the church, compromised its calling, and hindered its mission, achieving through infiltration what three hundred years of persecution had failed to achieve. This assessment saw it not as a triumph of the church over the empire but the triumph of the empire over the church.

For Murray, Christendom meant:

- The adoption of Christianity as the official religion of city, state or empire;
- The assumption that all citizens (except for the Jews) were Christian by birth;
- The development of a "sacral society", where there was no effective distinction between sacred and secular, where religion and politics were inter-twined;
- The definition of "orthodoxy" as the common belief, determined by socially powerful clerics supported by the state;
- The imposition of a supposedly "Christian morality" on the entire population (although normally Old Testament moral standards were applied);
- A political and religious division of the world into "Christendom" and "heathendom";
- The defense of Christianity by legal sanctions to restrain heresy, immorality, and schism, and by warfare to protect or extend Christendom;
- A hierarchical ecclesiastical system, based on a diocesan and parish arrangement, which was analogous to the state hierarchy and was buttressed by state support;
- A generic distinction between clergy and laity, and the relegation of the laity to a largely passive role;
- Obligatory church attendance, with penalties for non-compliance;

- The practice of infant baptism as the symbol of obligatory incorporation into this Christian society;
- The imposition of obligatory tithes to fund this system.[100]

Understanding the ramifications of history and tradition coming out of the Constantine Era is essential for the church today to move forward.

While Dan Kimball admits the line between modernism and postmodernism is cloudy, he does label AD 2000 as the approximate beginning of postmodernism.[101] According to Kimball, the word *postmodern* represents a change in the worldview moving from the values and beliefs of the modern era to the new postmodern era, which rejects many modern values and beliefs. He does say that not all modernism is bad and not all postmodernism is bad. Rather what needs to be done is a rethinking of what was actually biblical in the way ministry was done in the past.

Kimball's view of pure modernism is a worldview that holds a single universal worldview and moral standard that all knowledge is good and certain. Modernists believe truth is absolute, but truth must be proven or provable in order to be relied upon. Individualism is valued. Modern thought perceives thinking to be logical and systematic. Contrastingly, postmodernism holds there is no single universal worldview. All truth is not absolute; community is valued over individualism and thinking.

Kimball and Hirsch believe the church's challenge in the postmodern culture today bears similarities to the challenges the early church faced in the pluralistic culture of its time. As a result, Kimball calls for a return to vintage Christianity, while Hirsch challenges the church to remember its forgotten ways. Hirsh adds that it is not wrong to

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[100]Stuart Murray, "*Christendom and Post-Christendom," Missional Church Network, entry posted* October 5, 2009 http://missionalchurchnetwork.com/the-importance-of-understanding-the-post-christendom-shift [accessed June 21, 2011].

[101]Kimball, 43-44.

go back to the past to reach for a solution, but the problem is that the church does not go

back far enough or delve deep enough for answers.

On the decline of the American church, in his book *The Church of Irresistible*

*Influence,* Robert Lewis talks about the evangelical church retreating from the public

square during the first thirty years of the twentieth century. McNeal quotes John Stott's

reasons why today's church's mission is being reduced to saving souls, serving the

congregation, and defending the faith as being: "1) The evangelical's reaction against

liberalism. In the process the evangelicals neglected their social responsibility. 2) The

division of the gospel into 'social' and 'spiritual' categories. As a result says Stott,

evangelicals made 'getting to heaven' their chief concern"[102] .

Brad Brisco posted an article and gave credit to "Anabaptist Network Newsletter

of 2004" for listing the seven shifts and challenges facing the church in the western

culture today:

> From the center to margins**:**
> From majority to minority**:**
> From settlers to sojourners**:**
> From privilege to plurality**:**
> From control to witness**:**
> From maintenance to mission**:**
> From institution to movement: [103]

The importance of culture to the church is also pointed out in *Cultural Shift* where
the authors say, "Culture is to the church what a soul is to the human body. It is the
overall life force that the Holy Spirit uses to give energy, personality, and uniqueness to
everything a body says and does."[104]  The authors add information that is pertinent to this
project about church and culture, "Yet to make any transition as a church, your church's

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[102]Robert Lewis, *Church of Irresistible Influence*, 209.

[103]Brad Briscoe, "Missional Church Network," entry posted March 20, 2010 http://missional
churchnetwork.com/from-christendom-to-post-christendom [accessed June 21, 2011].

[104]Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro, *Culture Shift* (San Francisco: Jossey Press, 2005), xxi.

culture can't be ignored."[105] It is evident from the review of literature that the American church is in crisis. Church attendance is on a decline, while the American population is increasing. The literature also indicates the church's ineffectiveness in responding to a shifting worldview that is precipitating the current problem. There is a need to come up with a response that is biblical, God honoring, and able to meet the needs of the changing culture.

## The Missional Church: Definitions

It has become increasingly difficult to open a ministry book or attend a church conference and not be accosted by the word *missional.* Missional has become the church's latest buzz word. Missional is best understood by the term *missio Dei* or "mission God." This writer's intention is for readers to understand that foremost, missional is the church becoming missionaries to their community and the world.

As church leaders continue to pile onto the missional bandwagon, the true meaning of the word may be getting buried under a pile of assumptions. Is it simply updated nomenclature for being purpose-driven or seeker-sensitive? Is missional a new, more mature strain of the emerging church movement?

Although the definition of missional church is varied among experts and novices alike, there are significant similarities among the opinions that are helpful in bringing clarity and specificity to what it means to be missional. Author and missional expert Alan Hirsh defines missional church in a similar way but adds, "…The church itself is not only the product of that mission but is obligated and destined to extend it by whatever means possible. The mission of God flows directly through every believer and every community

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[105]Robert Lewis and Wayne Cordeiro, 3.

of faith that adheres to Jesus. To obstruct this is to block God's purposes in and through his people."[106]

A central term Hirsch uses in *Forgotten Ways* is *apostolic genius*. He defines this as the built-in life force and guiding mechanism of God's people and the living components or elements that make it up. [107]He has labeled the components as missional DNA (mDNA). He illustrates the apostolic genius with two examples, one from ancient times and one from modern.

His ancient example is the early church where he quotes examples from Rodney Stark. In AD 100 before Constantine came on the scene, there were approximately as few as twenty-five thousand Christians. Using Stark as a resource, he approximates there were about twenty million by the year AD 310. Hirsch then poses the question, "How did they do it in light of the fact they were an illegal religion throughout this period?"[108] They did not have church buildings as we know them. They did not have Scriptures as we know them. They did not have an institution or the professional form of leadership normally associated with it. They did not have seeker sensitive churches, youth groups, worship bands, seminaries, and commentaries.

Hirsch goes on to describe another example of his "apostolic genius" as seen in the underground church in China. He notes that at the time of Mao Tse-tung's systemic purge of religion and the church with its western forms there were an estimated two million Christians in China. The aim was to obliterate Christianity and all forms of

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[106]Hirsch, 285.

[107] Ibid., 18.

[108] Ibid.

religion from China. In the late 1970s and 1980s after the lifting of the "Bamboo Curtain", foreign missionaries and church officials were allowed back in under strict supervision. They expected the church to be decimated and battered. However, to their amazement, they discovered the opposite. The estimates were that the church had flourished to sixty million Christians. Hirsh points out that this all happened in a situation much like the early church.

Other historical movements such as the Methodist movement of the late seventeen hundreds to early eighteen hundreds were also noted. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there was the rise of the Pentecostal movement. Hirsh identifies six inter-relating missional DNA or mDNA elements that make up what he calls the apostolic genius. He dedicates a chapter each to six experiences or ways of understanding the church and mission. They are:  1) Jesus is Lord. 2) Disciple Making. 3) Missional – incarnational Impulse. 4) Apostolic Environment. 5) Organic Systems. 6) Communitas.[109] These six elements define Hirsch's understanding of what it means to be a missional church. He is adamant that all six elements must exist and each is critical to the other forming the Apostolic Genius.

Another leader and writer of the missional movement is Reggie McNeal. McNeal defines being a missional church in this way:

> The missional emphasis involves connecting with people where they live and deploying them as kingdom agents in their natural settings and established relational networks. The connecting and deployment modality also implies an agenda of connecting Jesus followers with each other to engage in an external focus by deploying to serve people in the community. Both aspects-connecting and deploying-help form the DNA of the missional church, distinguishing it from the church-centric approach. [110]

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[109]Hirsh, 25.

[110] McNeal, *Missional Renaissance*, 59-60.

In a one-sentence summary, Reggie McNeal defines the missional church as, "the people of God partnering with God in his redemptive mission in the world."[111] McNeal identifies certain pillars that define his view of a missional church. He describes three major shifts needed to be made in order to become more missional: "Missional Shift 1) From an internal to an external focus. Missional Shift 2) From program development to people development. Missional Shift 3) From church-based to kingdom-based leadership." [112]

Dan Kimball in *The Emerging Church* describes the missional church in similar terms. His definition is "as a body of people sent on a mission who gather in community for worship, encouragement, and teaching from the Word that supplements what they are feeding themselves throughout the week."[113] The shift from tradition to missional is foremost a shift in thinking.

The authors of *Missional Church* describe the missional church in similar terms: "'Mission' is not something the church does as part of its total program. No, the church's essence is missional, for the calling and sending action of God forms its identity."[114]

In an article, Martin Sutherland defined missional in succinct terms. "The missional church (and there is no other kind) exists to make the kingdom visible."[115] All the definitions have common themes. They emphasize that mission shapes the totality of what the church is about. Mission is not just a department in the church program but

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[111]McNeal, Missional *Renaissance*, 38.

[112] Ibid., 6-15.

[113] Dan Kimball, 42.

[115]Martin Sutherland, "The Kingdom Made Visible: A Missional Theology of Church," *Stimulus* 13, no. 1 (January 2005): 7.

integral to the whole. McNeal prefers to use the term organic in reference to the church, because the church is people and not a place. It is a "who" not a "what."[116] It is about being as much as doing. The definitions include the theme of redemption as the goal of God's mission and salvation in Jesus Christ.                  .

There is an article that looks at the traditional church and its move toward missional as a social movement. Its author states:

> In the context of the church or, rather, the Jesus movement, we have to acknowledge that it is a sociological reality, with the inherent dynamics of any social movement. By exploring the dynamics of social-movements theory, the story of the church and its calling to become a missional movement might be supported, mobilized, activated and energized. Kok (2008:35–38) argued that we are fundamentally in a crisis and disorientation situation (also see Burger 1995:14–15; Niemandt 2007:10–11)2 but, in this situation, we also find ourselves in *God-space*, a sacred space in which we might experience the birth and recreation of God's impossibilities that will shatter every contained view of reality (Brueggemann 1995). One of the greatest challenges to the church of the third millennium will be the (re)discovery and (re)awakening of the lost dynamics of our missional-incarnational movement ethos (Hirsch 2006:138, 187). By missional-incarnational, we mean to make manifest or comprehensible (Merriam-Webster 2003: *ad loc*) the nature of the Gospel message as we understand it in a way that transcends social, geographical, cultural and other boundaries, especially to those who are often geographically closest to us but socio-culturally worlds apart. We therefore have to come to understand (among other things) the fundamental dynamics and nature of social movements, for right here lies one of the most significant clues to transforming our world for Jesus (Frost & Hirsch 2003:202). By understanding the nature of social movements, it helps us to think about the kind of situational leadership that is required, about where the strategic focus and investment of the organization – or rather the movement – should be and about the way in which the culture of the organization could be shaped in the dynamic direction of a new frontier. [117]

The article brings good news to the declining institutional church in two ways. First, a study of social movements shows that at critical periods of social movements, they are

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[116]McNeal, Missional *Renaissance,* 124.

[117]Jacobus Kok and Cornelius J. C. Niemandt, "(Re)discovering a Missional-Incarnational Ethos," HTS *Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 65 (November 2009),:1, http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/HTS/article/view/274 [accessed October 16, 2011].

known to rise and energize. Secondly, the authors report that biblically-speaking death

often gives way to life, "Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground

and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." [118]After an

extensive discussion of John chapter 4 and the story of Jesus and the Samaritan women,

the authors end with the following word of hope and challenge for a church in a critical

period:

> It is often in the context of loss, brokenness, crisis and disorientation that
> the need for alternative narratives is born and in which we can make a radical
> missional and restorative impact in the world, for the Gospel is, in essence, a
> message of healing, restoration and reconciliation (Mt 10; Lk 7:22; also see Jn
> 12:40; Jr 6:10 etc.; also see Kok 2008). Against the background of brokenness,
> the world, as we know it, is desperately in need of healing, restoration, and
> reconciliation, calling the church to embark on a missional incarnational journey
> of healing, restoration and reconciliation. [119]

Phyllis Tickle in her book *The Great Emergence* concurs with the social aspect of

looking at the church. She says religion is described as a social construct as evidenced by

the five hundred year hinge times when religion experiences turmoil.[120] She further

describes these times of religious turmoil as rummage sales for the church. However,

looking at religion as a social entity rather than just a personal or individual experience is

often offensive to many people.

In a review of Tickle's book Allan Sager reports:

The "big theory" she explicates is credited to the Right Reverend Mark Dyer, an
Anglican bishop, who first declared that the only way to understand what is

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[118] Jn 12:24 [NIV].

[119]Jacobus Kok and Cornelius J. C. Niemandt, "(Re)discovering a Missional-Incarnational Ethos,"
HTS *Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 65 (November 2009),:1, http://www.hts.org.za/index.php/
HTS/article/view/274 [accessed October 16, 2011].

[120]Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why* (Grand Rapids:
Baker Books, 2008), 33.

currently happening to us as twenty-first century Christians in North America is first to understand that about every five hundred years the church feels compelled to clean out its attic and hold a giant rummage sale. He goes on to say that we are currently living in and through one of those five-hundred-year sales. [121]

The *"Great Emergence"* does provide hope for those in the church living through the current upheavals, in that the current time is a recurrent pattern in Christian affairs. Perhaps corporate and individual guilt can be laid aside as the church allows the insights that historical parallels always provide.

## Missional Church: It is Not Without its Skeptics!

Establishing the integrity of the word *missional* is critical, because recovering a missional understanding of God and the church is essential not only for the advancement of our mission but also for the survival of Christianity in the West. There is discussion in the church circles about the emerging movement and the missional movement. Are they synonymous?

This researcher posed the question about the difference between the emergent church movement and the missional church movement to the Doctor of Ministry class at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. One student gave a definition that was very helpful in increasing understanding. She said:

> The emergent church seeks to reach a pluralistic society through a variety of models where the goal is engagement with no specific outcome. The missional church seeks to reach a pluralistic society with the specific goal of sharing God's mission of reconciliation. It seems to me that the significant difference is that the emergent movement is interested in allowing a gradual and organic model, with no specific form or shape, to emerge out of the encounter between the church and the world whereas the missional movement has a specific form and a deliberate model which it intends to use as the medium for the encounter between the church

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[121]Allan H. Sager, "The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why," *Trinity Seminary Review* 32, no. 1 (2011): 39-42, *Religion and Philosophy Collection, EBSCOhost* [accessed December 20, 2011].

and the world. The emergent movement says, "Here we are. Come taste and see that the Lord is good."  The missional movement says "Even a cup of water can be given in the name of Jesus." I would argue that in many ways the emergent movement is simply the attractional model taken into the marketplace and re-packaged for a post-modern context while the missional movement seeks to move from the attractional model to a model based in the teachings of Jesus.[122]

Missional is not a new way to talk about church growth. Although God clearly desires the church to grow numerically, it is only one part of the larger missional agenda. Finally, missional is more than social justice. Engaging the poor and correcting inequalities is part of being God's agent in the world, but we should not confuse this with the whole.

There is also literature that raises cautions and concerns about the missional church movement. One source comes from Dan Kimball in his post *Dan Kimball's Missional Misgivings.* In his article he states that the missional movement has not yet proven itself beyond the level of theory. He does agree that theologically it makes sense but sees little fruit of the movement to this point. [123]

A further criticism that he has in the missional conversation is that it often dismisses the "attractional" model of church as ineffective. In contrast, Kimball believes that mega-churches are showing more evidence of fruit then the small, indigenous churches and that given their unproven track records, these missional churches should be slow to criticize the attractional churches that are making a measurable impact. [124]

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[122]Kathryn Helleman, Instructor of Systematic Theology and Christian Ethics and Director of Assessment at Winebrenner Theological Seminary, interview by author, Findlay, OH, 2012.

[123]Dan Kimball, "Missional Misgivings," *Leadership* 29, no. 4 (2008): 112-22, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host* [accessed December 13, 2011].

[124] Dan Kimball, "Missional Misgivings," *Leadership* 29, no. 4 (2008): 112-22, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host* [accessed December 13, 2011].

Contrastingly, the criticizers of the missional movement have their critics. In the same article, missional church bloggers David Fitch and Alan Hirsch respond to Kimball's "no fruit" criticism by saying the time for measurable "fruit" is much longer because the missional church exists in a post-Christendom environment. They criticize the growth model for attractional church as being church transfers, folks moving from denomination/tradition to the mega-church in the suburbs.[125]

This article further criticizes Kimball's argument against the missional church by pointing out that attractional is not working in Canada. Canada exists in an age that's about ten to fifteen years ahead of most parts of the United States when it comes to public existence in a post-Christendom world. Hence, they believe you can capture a glimpse of the future for many United States cities by watching the events in Canada.

They continue to build their case against Kimball by mentioning that Canada is largely devoid of the mega-church. The ones that do exist are struggling with growth and with their programs or attractions that are not working.

As a result, Canada is faced with a generation of children whose parents have never been to church. They conclude that Kimball's critique on the missional church and "no fruit" simply does not apply to Canada. Although this is just the advent of the missional church, the authors believe missional is one of the stronger responses to a post-modern, post-Christian, post-evangelical, post-church worldview.

This researcher attended a forum entitled, *Moving Ministry Out of the Building,* at Myerstown Theological Seminary. The forum presenter, Drew Williams described

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[125] Rohadi Barry Nagassar **,** "Kimball Critique on Missional Church Doesn't Apply to Canada," PomoTheo – Missional Perspectives, entry posted on December 15. 2008, http://www.pomotheo.com/2008/missional/kimball-critique-on-missional-church-doesnt-apply-to-canada/2008. [accessed December 13, 2011].

Mission Shaped Communities (MSC). Williams explained how the best of the attractional and the missional models can co-exist. Regarding large group Sunday morning worship celebrations, he said, "There is a place for us to come together but it can't be all we do." [126] The presenter's purpose in the forum, was to provide the philosophical and theological rational for missional shaped communities.

Upon the recommendation of Williams, this researcher obtained the resource *"Launching Missional Communities: A Field Guide."* The field guide contains some very practical information on missional shaped communities that is pertinent to this research problem. Authors of the guide, Mike Breen and Alex Absalom dedicate a section of chapter two of their work to the discussion about attraction verses missional. They begin their discussion by saying:

> The debate continues to rage: Attractional vs. Missional. Is one model better? Worse? Which is more effective? Can they work together? Do they have to be separate? While the debate itself can be a bit overwhelming and heated at times, the interesting thing about all this is that this isn't the first time we've seen this conflict play out in church history. In European history, we see this question being raised and answered in Minister churches (or monastic mission centers), which we have come to call "resourcing churches." What we see is the two dominant church models of the day, the Roman and Celtic, combined to great effect to evangelize Europe [127]

The authors go on to describe and contrast the Roman and Celtic models of the Middle Ages. They describe the Roman model and pre-reformation era with the mindset of "If you build it, they will come." They were attraction-oriented with a mission based in the church inviting people to come. The Roman model was characterized by Christians being attracted to cathedrals that dotted the larger cities of Europe. These are further

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[126]Drew Williams, "Moving Ministry Out of the Building," Forum at Myerstown Theological Seminary on April 14, 2011.

[127]Mike Breen and Alex Absalom, *Launching Missional Communities: A Field Guide* (United States of America: Sheriar Press, 2010), 50.

described by their event-driven, massive pilgrimage sites during those Middle Ages. Such

pilgrimages, say the authors, "were less about outreach and far more about in-drag."[128]

Clearly, the Old Testament depicts God as a sending God but it also has a

theological theme of gathering or attraction of God's people as well. This is demonstrated

through the feasts of Israel. Israel's festivals were communal, commemorative,

theological, and typological.

The attractional and communal nature of these feasts and festivals subjected them

to the criticism from the prophets. They saw the potential danger in them in becoming

meaningless rituals that led to an inward-focus, causing Israel to lose touch with their

community at large.  "Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to

me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations— I cannot bear your worthless assemblies.

Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals I hate with all my being. They have

become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them."[129] "Is not this the kind of fasting I

have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the

oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to

provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not

to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"[130]

The authors do say that attraction is not wrong, as the Jewish and Christian

traditions were event driven pilgrimages. The point they make is that the Jew in Jesus'

day went to the Temple only twice a year and to the local synagogue, the regular place of

worship, each week. According to these authors' opinions, cathedrals were blamed for all

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[128] Mike Breen and Alex Absalom, 50.

[129] Is 1:13-14 [NIV].

[130] Is 58:6-7 [NIV].

the problems people attribute (unfairly) to mega-churches. It is not that cathedrals were intended for this; it just happened.

Contrastingly, the Celtic model of that same time was characterized by smaller, organic, and more missional groups of wandering Christians. They evangelized the most barbaric and fiercest people during the Middle Ages. The strength of their model was that they met people who would not otherwise hear about Christ in their context. Evangelism done this way was not without its critics. They were criticized for lack of accountability and their judgmental attitude toward the church at large.

This author researched an article entitled "Missiological Reflections on Celtic Christianity: Implications for Ministry in Western Culture." Some of what it says about Celtic Chrisitianity can be seen in the following quote:

> For Patrick in Ireland and the Celtic monks who went to the continent of Europe, the gospel was always communicated in the vernacular. This was quite different from their Roman contemporaries. The Roman church insisted that if the Pagans and barbarians were to become Christianized, then they must first become civilized. Consequently there was very little missionary activity from the fourth century on. George Hunter states, 'By now, the church assumed that reaching the barbarians was impossible; a population, by definition, had to be literate and rational enough to understand Christianity, and cultured and civil enough to become real Christians if they did understand it.'
> The Celtic mission, on the other hand, did not force the Roman form of Christianity on their audience. Instead, Christianity was fused with the society and produced new spiritual, cultural and religious patterns (Davies 1999: 15). James Mackey writes:
> We know from their earliest art that the wandering Celts had an inherent ability to assimilate and to enrich whatever the peoples they encountered had to offer, while leaving all essential differences intact. They could make quite distinctively their own forms borrowed from others, and contribute to the richness of the cultures of others without attempting to suppress these.[131]

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[131]Michael T. Cooper, "Missiological Reflections on Celtic Christianity: Implications for Ministry in Western Culture," *Mission Studies* 20, no. 2 (2003): 35-56, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCO*host* [accessed February 11, 2012], 46.

This author reviewed another source regarding the Celtic and Roman model that provided a summary of early Celtic Christianity by the following:

A. Marginal: Rural Christianity on the Edge of the World
B. Culture-Appropriate: Peaceful Evangelization, Preservation of (Much) Celtic Culture
C. Confident in God: Open to the Spirit, "Wild Goose" Letting-Go, Journeying
D. Charismatic: Extravagant, Power-Encounters, Wandering, Restless Art
E. Flexible: Creative, Spontaneous, Open to Women
F. Ascetic: White Martyrdom (Not New Age, Self-Actualizing, Narcissistic)
G. Grateful For Nature: But Looking Through Nature to God
H. Learned: Love of Words, Manuscripts, Poetry, All Culture and Science
I. Communitarian: The Trinity, relationships as well as the anamchara.[132]

After briefly commenting on the merger of these two models at the Synod of Whitby (AD 664), authors Breen and Absalom posed some interesting questions about the purpose of both models. "What if," they ask, "the purpose of attractional celebrations isn't to make disciples in the same way that Missional Communities can? What if attractional celebrations serve a profound purpose, but it isn't the everyday, ins-and-outs, life-on-life of making a disciple? What if we shouldn't expect attractional celebrations to do this?"[133]

Breen and Absalom blended the attractional celebrations and missional communities with these words, "So, when we talk about the merging of the Roman model and the Celtic model, the merging worked when each understood its unique purpose. "…The truth of the matter is that we need both to work together in tandem; we need both to realize their unique purpose".[134]

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[132] Leslie Fairfield, "The Roman Empire and Irish Christianity: Ministry to People Unaware of the Christian Story in Any Shape or Form," http://www.gulfatlanticdiocese.org/continuingeducation [accessed February 11, 2012], 17.

[133] Breen and Absalom, 51.

[134] Ibid., 52.

The authors emphasize that the transcendence of God is displayed to the church with the attraction the cathedrals brought. Attraction gains its meaningfulness because it is seen through the lens of having been on a mission. The celebration of attraction sends the crowd back out fresh and energized and enthused to be missional. These authors summarize their argument on the missional versus attractional debate in the last two statements. "We need to understand what Attractional does well and do it. We need to understand what Missional does well and do it"[135]

The authors of Launching Missional Communities challenge any previous assumptions that the attractional and missional models are in opposition. This author concurs with authors Mike Breen and Alex Absalom that an understanding of the unique purposes of each model is what is necessary.

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[135] Breen and Absalom, 53.

**The Missional Church: Changing the Culture of the Church**

This researcher has made an intentional effort to not only interview pastors and judicatory leaders but attend webinars, simulcasts, and forums for the purpose of gaining insight in to how others are making necessary changes in their church culture.

This researcher observed a webinar entitled "Engaging Imperfect People" that addressed the cultural challenge facing the church. The webinar was presentation by John Burke, Pastor of Gateway Church Community and author of *No Perfect People Allowed*. He opened by sharing statistics from twenty years of studying the church in Europe  by saying the worship attendance trend of the church in Europe is between two and five percent.  He believes what is happening there will be happening in America soon. These trends were the reason he started Gateway Community Church and wrote his book. In his opinion the cause of the decline of the church in Europe is due the fact that it left its missionary mindset. [136]

In the webinar Burke identified five barriers between the church and the emerging culture. He identified these as five soils that change culture: 1) tolerance, 2) trust, 3) truth, 4) aloneness, and, 5) brokenness. When asked in the webinar how to reach the culture, Burke responded by saying the church has to go to them in a missionary mindset. A culture of grace must be created by putting skin on grace.

This author also attended a live simulcast by Ed Stetzer, sponsored by the Commission on Renewal of the Eastern Regional Conference and hosted by the Enola First Church of God. The simulcast was a presentation of principles from Stetzer's book,

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[136]John Burke, "Growing Your Church by Engaging Imperfect People," The City, http://www.onthecity.org/conversation/growing-your-church-by-engaging-imperfect-people [accessed 9-14-10].

*Transformational Church*. The focus of the simulcast was about the leadership needed to bring about change in the small traditional church. The simulcast did offer hope for the small church by affirming that God is working but his work is most evident outside the four walls of the church.

Stetzer emphasized that leadership is the key to bringing about change. He cited a book by Rainer entitled, *Eating the Elephant: Leading the Established Church to Growth,* as saying it takes time to change the church culture to become missional. Stetzer notes four characteristics about the leadership needed in transformational churches:

1) What you reward is what you have in your church. Reward missional acts versus rewarding only nickels, noses, and numbers.
2) Eat the elephant one bite at a time. Changing culture takes time. It takes five years to begin seeing greatest growth.
3) Strategic relationships need established with the E. F. Hutton's of the church.
4) Leadership teams with a culture that has an attitude that is no longer about me, to outward focus. [137]

This researcher also participated in a webinar installment of The City Conversations Series, entitled "The Gift of Church." Senior Pastor Jim Samra of Calvary Church in Grand Rapids and author of *Being Conformed to Christ in Community*, shared how the local church is a gift from God with a divine purpose. He also described the benefits that come from active participation in a local church. During the webinar Sarna listed six blessings of the local church that appear in his book. One pertinent to the missional church discussion is the local church being the means by which God makes visible the invisible Christ. He also added that the local church is just part of the body and the more a church connects arm in arm with other churches, the more of a church they

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[137]Ed Stetzer "Transformational Church," The Exchange Simulcast (Lifeway, September 6, 2010).

are.[138] Case studies of churches successfully changing their church cultures will be included in Chapters Four and Five of this research project.

## Summary

The preceding pages have provided a literary review from contemporary and biblical sources that are relevant to transitioning an established attractional church to a more missional model. There are four principles that emerge from the literary review that are pertinent to this research project.

First, this chapter has shown that literature supports the assumptions that there is a decline in the church in North America. This is evidenced by the fact that the gospel seems to be falling on deaf ears in the West, while it is flourishing in most other places around the world. A precipitating factor was noted to be a lack of cultural relevance between the church and culture. As a result, the Western society has shifted from a Christian culture to a non-Christian or an anti-Christian culture.

Second, a sociological theme observed in this review is that a changing culture has triggered the current crisis faced by the American Church. This is evidenced not only by the decline seen in church attendance in nearly all mainline denominations but also by the fact that the population in America is rapidly growing during the last decade. It has clearly been seen by the literature that the American Church is losing the numbers, influence and vitality that it once had. The evidence demonstrated this crisis to be true not only in the national context but the local denominational context of this research project as well.

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[138]Jim Samra, "The Gift of Church," The City, http://www.onthecity.org/conversation/the-gift-of-church [accessed12/16/10].

Third, the situation of the American Church today challenges the church to do ministry differently in order to regain its relevance. This chapter reviewed literature on a new way of doing ministry known as *missional* derived from the Latin term *missio Dei* or "mission of God". This literature review complemented and confirmed the researcher's Chapter Two's premise that the church's shift toward becoming more missional in ministry is theologically and biblically viable. The foundational principle of this shift as seen in the literature review is the truth that God's nature is to send.

Fourth, it has been demonstrated that the missional movement is not without its cautions and critics. One criticism of the missional shift is that is a slow process. As a result, the verdict is still out for many of its skeptics. The missional church movement measures success according to a new scorecard that is not as quickly noticeable. The movement is an ongoing journey as is this research project and context. This chapter has also made attempts to bring the attraction-based model of ministry and missional model together. Sources explained that it need not come down to an "either/or" choice, but attractional and missional models can augment one another in the ministry of a traditional church. It may actually be wise to seek an integrated approach when leading a congregation. This literature review has given examples of successful attempts of aging congregations reinventing themselves with a new vision and mission. Additional stories of hope among established, traditional, and once declining congregations will be shared in Chapter Four of this research project.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

This project's aim is to transition the Elizabethtown First Church of God (EFCOG) from a traditional attraction-based ministry model to a more missional model of ministry. The goal of this chapter is to describe the methods and procedures used to conduct the research for this project. Research for this project was collected from quantative and qualitative sources. A significant amount of the research is qualitative as reflected by the numerous interviews, observations, discovery groups, and focus groups. The quantitative research includes surveys, documents, articles, statistical reports, archive materials, and census information. In 2008, the EFCOG, under the leadership of this researcher, began its strategic spiritual journey at a time that pre-dated this project.

At the arrival to this project setting, this researcher was invited to participate in a monthly district LEAD (Leadership Encouragement, and Development) Team. These are denominational groups of pastors that meet for leadership development and accountability. The group chose a book by George Bullard, *Pursuing the Full Kingdom Potential of Your Congregation,* for discussion. In his book, the author uses the term *spiritual strategic journey* to describe the author's philosophy of church renewal.[139] Bullard's label of *strategic spiritual journey* (identified as SSJ hereafter) partially describes this researcher's process with EFCOG.

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[139]George W. Bullard Jr., *Pursuing the Kingdom Potential of Your Congregation* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2005), 15.

The journey commenced with a period of listening, observing, and questioning. It was unknown just how valuable the data gathered prior to 2010 would be to this researcher's doctoral project. It was when this researcher began the doctoral journey that the focus of this strategic spiritual journey became a missional journey.

This research project has been and will continue to be an ongoing story. A book by Dan Southerland, *Transitioning: Leading Your Church Through Change,* was recommended by interviewees for this project. Southerland's chapter, "Step One, Preparing for Vision," concurs with the nature of this project as a journey. The author of *Transitioning* describes the vision formation process, as a "journey and not a destination." [140]

The focus now will shift to the qualitative research that makes up the significant amount of data such as focus groups, interviews, discovery groups and surveys.

## Focus Groups

This researcher will report on two categories of focus groups. First there were small home focus groups conducted that this writer identified as *Evenings with the Pastor*. The second focus group was a large focus group conducted by an outside moderator.

### Evenings with the Pastor

During the period of August 12 through October 9, 2008, this researcher began an effort labeled *Evenings with the Pastor*. This type of focus group was introduced to this

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[140]Dan Southerland, *Transitioning: Leading Your Church Through Change* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 20.

researcher in the 1980s by Darrel Prichard, former Pastor of the College First Church of God in Findlay, Ohio. Just two months after this writer became pastor of the EFCOG, he implemented this initiative. The home setting was chosen so that the informal setting would promote a more open discussion than conducting group meetings in the church setting.

Secondly, asking members to host these groups in their homes promoted ownership of the process and gave the members of the congregation the opportunity to practice hospitality in their homes. All current morning worship attendees ages teen years and up were invited by personal letter from this researcher and phone call from the hosts to participate in these home focus groups. Members were encouraged to invite inactive members if they desired and some did so. A total of eleven focus groups were conducted in homes with a total of eighty-nine persons in attendance. Considering that the average morning worship attendance was 107 at the time, this was a very positive response.

After a time of fellowship and refreshments, this researcher asked all participants to share some personal history, memories, and perspectives of the EFCOG. All participants were given the opportunity to respond to three questions on a three by five index card and then the group held an open discussion. All responses were collected, recorded, and prioritized according to the frequency they were mentioned by the participants. These will be analyzed in Chapter Five.

The three questions asked were: *1) What do you like about your church? 2) What would you like to change about your church? 3) What would you like your church to look like in three to five years?* Their responses were very helpful in gaining an understanding of what the congregation views as its areas of strength, growth areas, and core values.

Large Focus Group

Pastor Dave Williams, ERC Director of Congregational Care & Renewal, led the congregation in phase one of the strategic planning process with a large focus group meeting on June 2, 2010. It consisted of an evening of prayer, Bible study, and group discussion. During the evening, he separated the group into smaller focus groups with three questions for discussion. All elders, administrative council members, and ministry leaders were invited by letter to attend this large group session. Approximately thirty-three people were in attendance at that first focus group meeting. Unlike the Evenings with the Pastor focus groups, this researcher's role was that of an observer.

The three questions posed by Dave Williams were similar to those in the home focus groups. *1) What do you believe are two or three of the greatest gifts God has given this church? 2) What do you believe are two or three of the greatest opportunities God may be presenting to this church at this time? 3) What is your God-given dream for this church?* It provided a forum for the members to share their vision and dream for the church. Outcomes of the focus groups will be presented in Chapter Five of this research project.

**Discovery Groups**

There were also two other groups that served the purpose of discovery. Members of the congregation formed Share and Prayer Triplets to seek God's vision for individual lives as well as for the EFCOG as a body. A second discovery group was implemented to seek God's purpose for the church through a Sunday school Bible study.

Share and Prayer Triplets

In 2009 and 2010, this researcher initiated two 60-Day Prayer and Share efforts. These efforts were adapted from Bullard's, *Pursuing the Full Kingdom Potential of Your Congregation,* 100 Day Prayer and Share Triplet. Considering that this was the first attempt on the part of EFCOG at such an intentional prayer effort, this researcher, along with the elders, decided to modify the plan to sixty days.

Share and Prayer Triplets are a process where groups of three people meet once a week over a six-week period for no less than thirty minutes each meeting. In these triplets, the participants are encouraged to share their personal spiritual pilgrimage, dialogue about the spiritual journey of the church, and to pray aloud for one another and for their congregation.

The potential benefits of these triplets were numerous. They were intended to heal old wounds, break down dividing walls between people, and bring a God-sized vision for the EFCOG and beyond. These triplets were also intended to assist in identifying additional congregational perspectives and to discern congregational readiness to make changes necessary to becoming more missional.

This writer and the church elders set a goal of twenty percent of the adult congregation participation in these efforts. The groups were free to meet in homes or at the church. The participation goals were met in both these prayer efforts with twenty-four adults participating. There were twenty-five different people who participated in these two efforts.

The prayer triplets were led by visionary leaders from the congregation who were recommended by the membership, approved by the elders, and trained by this

researcher. These triplet leaders recruited the other two participants for their

triplets. The criteria for the other two people, as much as possible, included:

1. Be from different worship services and age groups. If possible, try to

   make the triplets as diverse as possible with persons who have different

   church perceptions and have been connected to the congregation for

   different lengths of time.

2. Not be from the same household, close friends, or close relatives.

3. Be willing to enter a no-exit covenant relationship. This means that each

   person will agree to stay actively connected to the triplet over the six

   weeks even though there may be some challenging moments as the

   triplets seek to deal with significant and meaningful issues.

A prayer guide with sharing conversations for each of the six meetings was

presented to each group leader. The guides used for both sessions of Prayer and

Share Triplets are included in the Appendix of this project. Observations and

outcomes from these two prayer efforts will be included in Chapter Five of this

project.

All groups were asked to write journal reflections and impressions on their triplet

experiences. At the conclusion of these sixty-day efforts, all the groups came

together for a time of celebration and sharing about their groups. Observations and

notes were recorded from this celebration and will be shared in Chapter Five of this

research project.

Discovery Bible Study

A second discovery group was conducted during the Sunday school hour from September through November in 2009. This researcher conducted a twelve-week Bible study on the purpose of the church. The study was entitled, *Discovering God's Purpose for the Church*. Invitations to attend the Bible study went out to all adults through the church bulletin, newsletter, and morning announcements. The purpose of this study was to spur discussion and gain an understanding of the congregation's theological view of the church as well as Christ's purpose for the church.

This researcher consulted two sources in addition to the Bible for this study. The images of the church and their Scripture references were obtained from Rick Warren's book *The Purpose Driven Church*. The inductive Bible study outline was adapted also from Rick Warren and his book *Inductive Bible Study Methods*. This researcher taught this class with a team of two other members. Two adult Sunday school classes were combined for the twelve-week study. Sharing the leadership of the class enabled other leaders to gain ownership in the effort.

The class studied the following topics:

- Jesus' ministry on earth, (What did Jesus do while on earth, and what would he do today?)

- Images and names of the church, (Why is the church described as an army, bride, building, family, and the body?)

- What should the church do?

- What should the church be?

- What ministries did the churches at Jerusalem, Corinth, Philippi, and

  Thessalonica do, and how did they do them?

- The Letters to the Seven Churches in Revelation (What were the Seven

  Churches complimented for, condemned about, and commanded to do?)

- The commands of Christ (What did Jesus command the church to do

  before he left this world?)

At the end the group was asked to summarize and state themes emerging from the study in a phrase that they sensed God had shown them about the nature of Christ and the church. The outcome of these studies as well as the study outline will be reported in Chapter Five of this research project.

## Interviews

A significant amount of the qualitative research in this project came in the form of interviews. This researcher conducted twenty-five, one-hour interviews that were directed to four groups of individuals. Some of these individuals were interviewed in two different groups. This writer conducted seven interviews for the purpose of obtaining multiple perspectives about the CGGC renewal process in the 1990s. A second group of thirteen interviews were conducted with pastors and judicatory leaders who had experience in leading traditional churches to become more missional.

Two interviews were conducted with long-term local pastors for the purpose of obtaining their perspective of the EFCOG and their transition to becoming more missional. Lastly, the researcher conducted three interviews of local leaders of the community and non-profit agencies.

Community Interviews

The purpose of the community interviews was to gain an understanding of unmet needs in the Elizabethtown community. Local leaders interviewed were Chuck Mummert, the mayor of Elizabethtown and the directors of Hope Within and Homes of Hope.

These agency representatives were asked the following questions: 1) *What services do you provide?* 2) *What problems do you face as an agency?* 3) *What problems and needs exist among those you serve?* 4) *What trends do you see that will affect your work over the next five years?* 5) *What can a church, a group of churches, or volunteers do to help?* 6) If *you had an opportunity to challenge church people to help, what would you say?* 7) *May we pray for you and your work before we leave?* The purpose of these interviews was to begin the process of building bridges into the Elizabethtown community. Outcomes of these interviews will be reported in Chapter Five of this research project.

Pastors and Judicatory Leaders

This researcher conducted a second group of interviews consisting of thirteen one-on-one interviews that lasted approximately one-hour each. First, a series of interviews were conducted that consisted of thirteen missional pastors and judicatory leaders who were leading traditional churches to become missional. All these interviewees were directly asked the three research questions of this project.

The first interviews conducted in 2010 by this researcher were of pastors and judicatory leaders that have had experiences with transitioning, aging, declining, or plateaued traditional churches to become more missional. The initial contacts to be interviewed were recommended to this writer by his project mentor, Stephen Dunn, who

also served as chairman of the ERC Commission on Evangelism and Outreach. This researcher was fortunate to have such a mentor that not only has over thirty years of pastoral experience, but is making the missional journey as well. His knowledge of and contacts with denominational missional pastors was helpful.

Though the interviewees were experiencing successful transitions, this researcher learned from the challenges they faced in their churches. The purpose of these interviews also, was to attempt to formulate principles and strategies that could be generalized to this researcher's project context and utilized in Chapter Six of this project.

Ten of the thirteen interviews consisted of active pastors and two were active or former denominational leaders. Interviewees were pastors and judicatory leaders of the Churches of God General Conference, United Methodist, United Brethren, and Brethren in Christ denominations across the states of Pennsylvania and Ohio. The pastors interviewed for this project were limited to those serving aging and traditional congregations as evidenced by the fact that nine of the ten churches interviewed were over 100 years old. The youngest church was a twenty year-old church plant.

Thirteen one-hour interviews were conducted; seven were done in person, while six were conducted by phone, due to the geographical distance. One pastor declined to be interviewed. Nine of the interviewees were currently serving as the lead or senior pastor of a local church. One person interviewed was a member of the pastoral staff and served as a youth pastor. One interviewee was a retired pastor and denominational leader of the CGGC, another one is currently serving on the staff of CGGC, and one is a professor at Myerstown Evangelical Seminary and is currently serving the Brethren in Christ denomination.

All participants interviewed by this researcher were asked to give some personal background information as well as information on their ministry context. This information consisted of questions regarding the pastor's tenure, local church history, and the age of the pastor. These questions were then followed by the research questions of this project. 1) *What are the congregational barriers to becoming missional?* 2) *What leadership skills are needed to guide the church to become missional?* 3) *What are the strategies needed to become a missional church?*

Three current or former denominational leaders were asked only the research questions because they were not currently serving a single congregation. The purpose of these interviews was to gain their broader perspectives on the research questions. These interviewees have a wealth of experiences and knowledge of their pastors and churches where they served as overseers.

This researcher obtained additional prospective from interviews of those outside of the Churches of God. The desired outcome was to discover from their experiences what strategies and principles can be generalized from their denominational ministry contexts, to the ministry context of the EFCOG. The results of these interviews will be analyzed in Chapter Five of this research project.

<p align="center">Logan Interviews</p>

Seven interviews were conducted with former CGGC presidents, staff members, and directors that were involved in the 1990s renewal movement lead by Robert Logan. The purpose of these interviews was to gain their perspectives on the Robert Logan renewal process. It was the expectation of this researcher to discover principles that could

be generalized to the project context. These interviews will be analyzed more specifically in Chapter Five.

In Chapter One of this project, the problem was understood in the larger church context of Christendom, the American Church, and the Churches of God General Conference. The hypothesis was that the EFCOG decadal decline was a microcosm of the decline occurring in the denomination. Nearly two decades before the EFCOG began their strategic journey, the CGGC was beginning theirs as well. In the 1990s, the Churches of God denominational leadership entered a long term strategic planning process. An outcome of that process was the hiring of Robert Logan of Fuller Theological Seminary as a consultant to the denomination.

Once again in order to better understand the EFCOG problem, this researcher interviewed denominational leaders who were involved in the renewal process with Logan at the time. A total of seven one-hour interviews were conducted with individuals who had firsthand knowledge of the renewal process. Six individuals were interviewed in person and one by phone. This researcher recorded notes and observations from those open-ended interviews. The interviewees were asked to share their reflections, impressions, and reactions to the Logan process.

The researcher's intent of these interviews was also to discover any common themes and trends that either confirm or contradict the research already obtained from other sources. Outcomes of these interviews were helpful in answering the research questions posed in this project. Of the six interviews conducted by this researcher, two were former directors of the denomination at the time, two interviewees were former presidents of the Churches of God at the time, one was a pastor who served on the

administrative council, and one held an associate staff position. The notes of these interviews will be provided and analyzed in Chapter Five of this research project.

## Missional Leadership Initiative Interview

As part of the Logan research, this researcher obtained information of a recent initiative of the Churches of God that was pertinent to this project, which is known as the Missional Leadership Initiative. The CGGC developed this two-year program based on a cohort model to strengthen and develop effective mission-oriented pastors for the church. The program consists of forty to fifty individuals meeting in eight groups, each led by a trained mentor/facilitator. Program leaders provide oversight and instruction to the participants who meet together for six three-day retreats. Facilitators lead their cohort in community-building, character development, and competency based exercises.[141]

This researcher interviewed Lance Finley, the Director of Youth and Family for the Missional Leadership Initiative of the CGGC in Findlay Ohio. This researcher questioned Finley regarding the Missional Leadership Initiative (MLI) as to its connection with the renewal process guided by Robert Logan. Lance replied, "A decade later the Churches of God discovered they were losing ground again as evidenced by increasing pastor burnout and dropout rate."[142] An in-depth analysis of this interview and its contribution to this research project will be presented in Chapter Five.

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[141]Churches of God General Conference, "Missional Leadership Initiative," Churches of God General Conference, 2012, http://www.cggc.orgministries/leadership [accessed July 25, 2012].

[142]Lance Finley, Interview by author, Findlay Ohio, July 13, 2011.

**Surveys**

Surveys made up one category of quantitative research. There were three survey efforts conducted in this research project. A core values survey of the congregation was conducted in 2009 and repeated in 2012. It was focused inward on the congregation. A third survey was conducted and repeated but focused outward into the community.

Top Ten Core Value Surveys

In April 2009, upon the recommendation of ERC Director, Kevin Richardson, this researcher engaged the administrative council in leadership training on core values. As an outcome of that training, this researcher asked the administrative council and congregation to participate in a Top Ten Core Values survey. According to the survey's author, Herb Miller, understanding core values of a congregation is important because:

> Congregational behavior does not stem from what its leaders write on paper but from the core values of its members. Congregations always act on their core values, not on the goals they set! Congregations act according to their core values, not according to their plans. If a church's core values do not support its vision statement and mission statement, the writing process creates zero change.[143]

These surveys were used to serve two purposes. Through their use, this researcher was able to obtain additional data as to the state of the church and its core values. These outcomes would be combined with the results of the earlier home focus groups and prayer triplets for future reflection. Secondly, surveying the congregation and the administrative council separately would help to determine if there was any vision disconnectedness between the administrative council and the congregation.

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[143] Herb, Miller. Top 10 Core Values handout by Kevin Richardson meeting with ad council, 2009.

This researcher administered the survey as instructed by the guidelines of the survey's author. It was a forced-choice survey. Respondents were asked to give their top ten choices but no more. However, they could make less than ten choices. At the end of the worship service the ushers handed out the surveys, and this researcher gave brief instructions to the congregation on completing them. Participants were given ten minutes to complete the survey. The questionnaire asked participants to answer questions "as they see their church over the past few years." Seventy-one adults completed the surveys during both worship services. They were not permitted to take surveys home and bring them back at a later date. Ushers collected them before leaving the sanctuary. This author then delegated two members to rank the outcomes from most frequently to least frequently mentioned.

The same survey was later handed out with instructions to the administrative council members during an administrative council meeting. Ten of the twelve administrative council board members completed the survey. These also were collected and tabulated by the same couple.

The survey was performed again on the congregation and administrative council in 2012. The purpose of this second survey was to evaluate any change in the congregational core values as a result of the renewal efforts. The outcomes of all these surveys will be presented in Chapter Five of this research project. The Top Ten Core Value Survey used by this researcher may be found in the Appendix of this research project.

Community Survey

This researcher conducted a community survey during two church events directed toward the community between September and October 2009. The survey was adapted from the book *Becoming an Enthusiastic Church*. The surveys were randomly given to community persons attending the EFCOG rummage sale and community block party. A total of sixty surveys were returned. Of those returned forty-nine participants or eighty-three percent indicated that they attended church. While on the other hand ten percent indicated no church affiliation.

The participants were asked five questions: 1) *What do you think is the greatest need in this area?* 2) *Why do you think most people don't attend church?* 3) *If you were to look for a church, what kind of things would you look for?* 4) *What could we do for you?* 5) *What advice can you give a minister who really wants to be helpful?* Outcomes from these community surveys will be reported and analyzed in Chapter Five of this project.

## CGGC Renewal Process of the 1990s

In addition to the interviews of former denominational leaders who were involved with the Robert Logan strategic planning process, this researcher obtained pertinent documents. Information reviewed from director notes as well archive material confirmed reports of the individual interviews conducted by this researcher.

## Director Notes

Additional quantitative research was obtained by this writer from the CGGC Executive Director. He obtained director notes of the Logan efforts from the office of the

current CGGC Executive Director, Ed Rosenberry. Those notes contained four sets of

documents pertinent to this research project. Included in them were the CGGC

administrator's report from March 21, 1991; final report of the *Task Force on Small

Conference Concerns* to General Conference Executive Committee from March 19,

1991; an article entitled *The State of the Church Churches of God General Conference*

from July 1991; and notes by Robert Logan on his long-range planning from January,

1991. These documents contained assessments done by Logan of the denominational

health, and long-term plans to bring spiritual renewal. Analysis of these documents will

be reported on in Chapter Five of this research project.

## Archived Materials

This researcher obtained access to the archive museum in the Christian Ministries

Center located in Findlay, Ohio through the vice chairman, Barbara Meyers. As a result

of that access, this author obtained the *Report and Minutes of the Forty-Seventh Session

of Churches of God General Conference* held at The University of Findlay in Findlay,

Ohio in 1992. Valuable insights into the administrative council meetings and general

conference sessions with Robert Logan were obtained from the materials. These

documents affirmed the interviews conducted by this researcher of the CGGC staff

concerning the Logan renewal process. Analysis of those minutes will be made in

Chapter Five of this research project.

## Visionary Sermons

This researcher presented a series of outward-focused and visionary sermons in

the fall of 2009 and 2010. In the fall of 2009, Old Testament characters were chosen as

the focus of these visionary sermons. Themes included were the leadership feats of Nehemiah, Moses, Joshua and Caleb. In the late summer and early fall of 2010, this researcher presented another series of eleven sermons on vision. These messages were influenced by themes and Scriptures presented in the book, *The Externally Focused Church*. This researcher believes these messages were instrumental in getting the congregation to begin thinking in missional terms. This was evidenced by this researcher's 2012 annual review by the church elders. The review and comments pertinent to these sermons will also be reported on in Chapter Five of this research project.

## Missional Events

This researcher attended seventeen missional events for the purpose of gaining multiple perspectives of the missional church movement. A second purpose for attending these events was to enhance the quality of this project, provide recommendations for Chapter Six and to enrich this researcher's ministry context.

This researcher attended thirteen workshops in person, three were live simulcasts, and four were one-hour online webinars. Nine of these live events were attended by multiple denominations. The four one-hour online webinars hosted by Zondervan were entitled *The City Series*. An in-depth report and analysis will be in Chapter Five of this research with recommendations being made from them in Chapter Six.

## Case Study

In Chapter One, a low sense of *koinia* was identified as a sub-problem in this research project context. In the midst of the first sixty-day Prayer and Share effort

of 2009, a significant conflict occurred in the congregation which resulted in the loss of some members and financial resources. This conflict was evidence that there were some in the congregation still operating from an inward-focused mindset. This researcher conducted a case study of the situation entitled *The Straw that Broke the Camel's Back* for a recent Spiritual Leadership class.[144] An analysis of the case study will be included in Chapter Five of this project. *The Straw That Broke the Camel's Back* will be included in the Appendix of this research project.

## Finances

This writer obtained EFCOG's financial statistical reports for the last eight years. Included in these reports were church expenditures versus income over that same time period. The hypothesis of this researcher is that the finances have had, and remain to have, a direct impact on the growth of the congregation. An in-depth report and analysis of the role of the finances will be given in Chapter Five of this research project.

## Facilities

This researcher completed a People Spots diagnostic tool to assess the potential of the church's facilities and small groups to allow growth.[145] Areas assessed were parking, comfortable sanctuary, seating capacity, and small group life as well as morning worship and Sunday school attendances.

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[144]Mark Yarger, "The Straw that Broke the Camel's Back," Case Study for Spiritual Leadership Class Independent Study at Winebrenner Theological Seminary (July 2010).

[145] James Moss., *People Spots* (Harrisburg: Church Consultants, 1993), 154.

In August of 2012, James Moss, Sr. was also invited to follow-up this assessment with a direct on campus visit of his own. Analysis of his site visit and recommendations will be included in Chapter Five of this project. In addition, a copy of the People Spots diagnostic tool completed on the EFCOG is included in the Appendix of this project. Further reflection on the assessment as it applied to EFCOG will be addressed in Chapter Five of this project.

**Summary**

This researcher has attempted to utilize both quantitative and qualitative research. The research process has been a spiritual journey for this researcher as well as the congregation. This researcher has been enriched especially by the qualitative research in the form of focus groups, discovery groups, and interviews. In particular, listening to the stories, observations, and journeys of other pastors who are going through missional transition or have experienced it in the past has been fulfilling. When all the sources of the research are pieced together, it is the hope of this writer that a wonderful story of God's transforming power unfolds. The EFCOG's spiritual journey will continue to be told in Chapter Five of this project.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of Chapter Five is to report the results and analysis of the research

data. The research gathered from surveys, documents, interviews, focus groups,

worskshops, books, and other sources will be reported on first. Secondly, this writer will

then respond to the three research questions identified in Chapter One of this project:

*1) What are the congregational barriers to becoming missional? 2) What leadership*

*skills are needed to guide a church to become missional? 3) What are the strategies*

*needed to become a missional church?* The most common responses, observations, and

patterns of the research will be subdivided under these questions. The analysis and results

of the data in Chapter Five will be useful in formulating principles and developing

strategies in Chapter Six of this research project.

**Surveys**

This researcher conducted a Top Ten Core Values Survey with the EFCOG

congregation and administrative council. A second survey was a community needs survey

taken by community citizens attending a block party and a rummage sale conducted by

the church.

Top Ten Core Values Surveys

*2009 Congregational Results*

The first *Top Ten Core Values Survey* was conducted during two morning worship services on April 19, 2009. This was just ten months after the arrival of this researcher as pastor of the EFCOG. There were a total of 114 people attending morning worship. This attendance included children and adults. The surveys were given only to the adults in the services. A total of seventy-one surveys were completed and returned after the services. The congregation had thirty choices and was asked to identify ten core values. This researcher engaged two members to record and list the top ten in order mentioned. The top ten core values in 2009 were: effective preaching, effective seasonal special events (such as Christmas Eve, Holy Week, or Christmas musical), effective
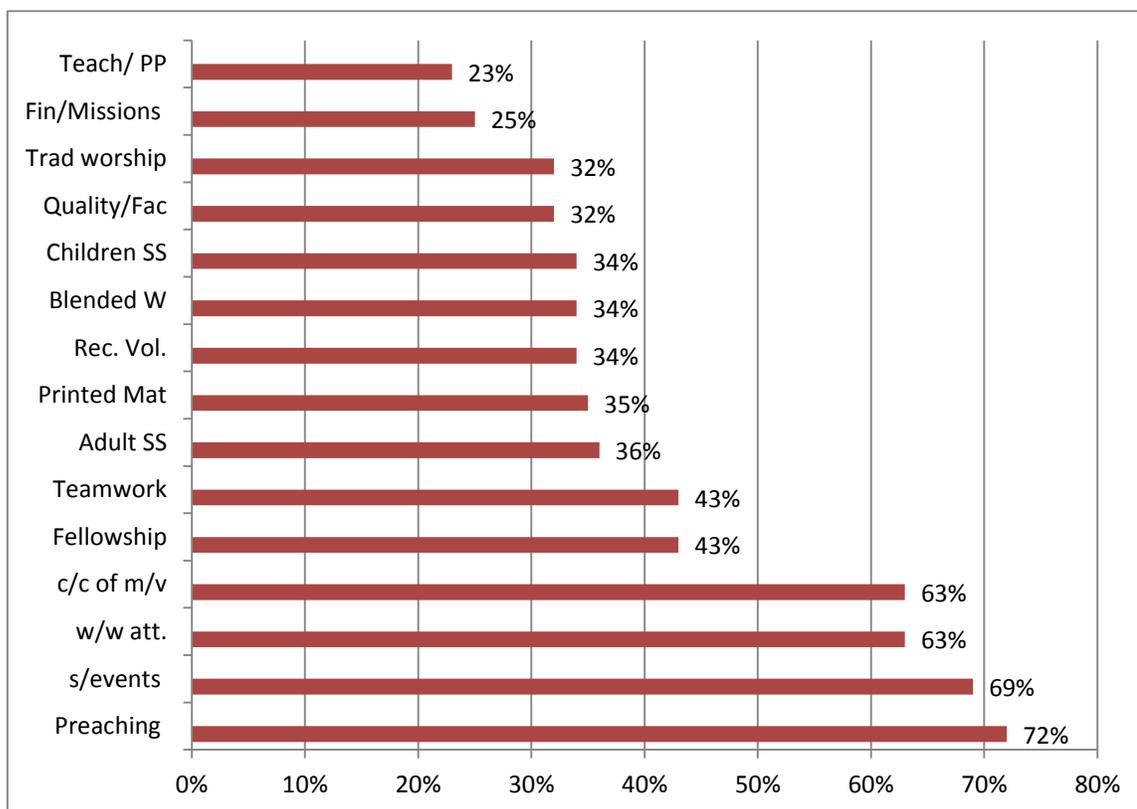


Figure 5.1. 2009 Congregational Core Values Results from Seventy-One Participants

warmth and welcoming attitudes toward newcomers and visitors, effective care for members or attendees during times of life stress, and effective fellowship events and activities.

*2009 Administrative Council Results*

Ten of the twelve EFCOG administrative council members completed surveys. Additional core values mentioned by the administrative council were: effective printed materials and communication systems, effective quality facilities, effective recognition of people who provide volunteer service, and effective traditional style worship. The adult Sunday school and nursery/children ministries were also near the top five core values.
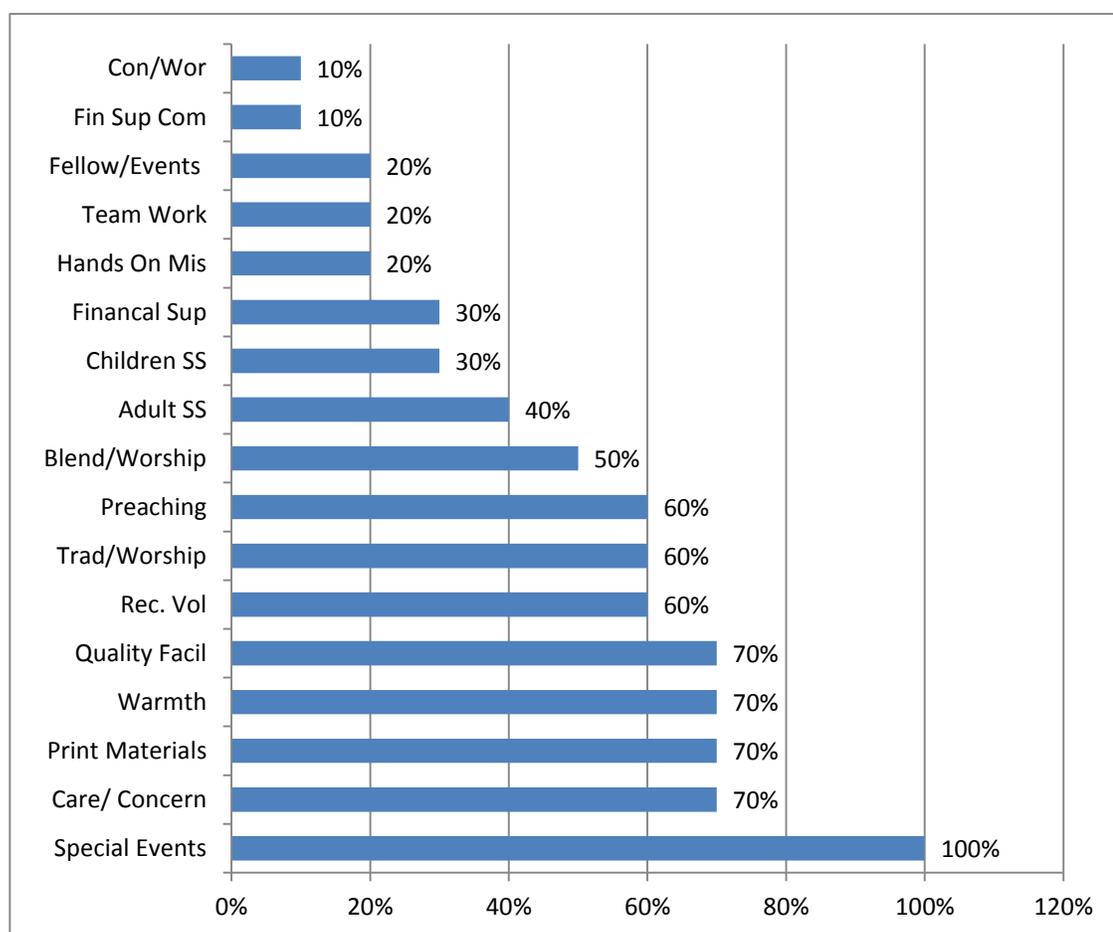
Figure 5.2. 2009 Administrative Council Core Values Results from Ten Participants

In 2009, the administrative council and the congregation chose three of the same core values in their top five: effective seasonal special events (such as Christmas Eve, Holy Week, and Christmas musical) were their number one and two; effective warmth and welcoming attitudes toward newcomers; and effective care and concern for members or attendees during times of life stress were also mentioned in both groups' top choices. This showed very little disconnect between the two groups.

This researcher also found it interesting that certain core values were not mentioned in any surveys in 2009 or mentioned very few times. For example, core values not mentioned in 2009 were: effective encouragement of attendees toward personal sharing with others regarding their faith and effective encouragement of attendees to invite community residents to visit worship. Effective financial support of community service efforts was not mentioned at all by the congregation in 2009, and ranked only eighth in order out of top ten by the 2012 administrative council. Others mentioned in 2012, but as late as ninth and tenth were: effective financial support of world mission efforts and effective teaching of personal prayer habits.

*2012 Congregational Results*

The Top Ten Core Values Survey was repeated on Sunday, April 15, 2012. There were 102 people in attendance compared to 114 worshippers in 2009 on that particular Sunday. Once again only adult worshippers participated in the survey. In 2012, only forty-one worshippers participated in the survey compared to seventy-one worshippers in 2012. There are a few factors that this researcher hypothesizes regarding the lower participation. The morning worship attendance on the Sunday the survey was taken was

eleven percent lower than on the Sunday three years earlier. The lower attendance on this particular Sunday may be due to the fact it was the Sunday after Easter. Thirdly, reports came back to this researcher from some of the elderly that the survey was hard for them to see and read, so they did some did not participate. This was not reported as a factor in 2009. Lastly, there has recently been an increase of newcomers who did not feel they had the history with the church to offer a good opinion. The congregational outcomes for 2012 are ranked in order as follows: care/concern and preaching, special events, and warmth and welcoming.
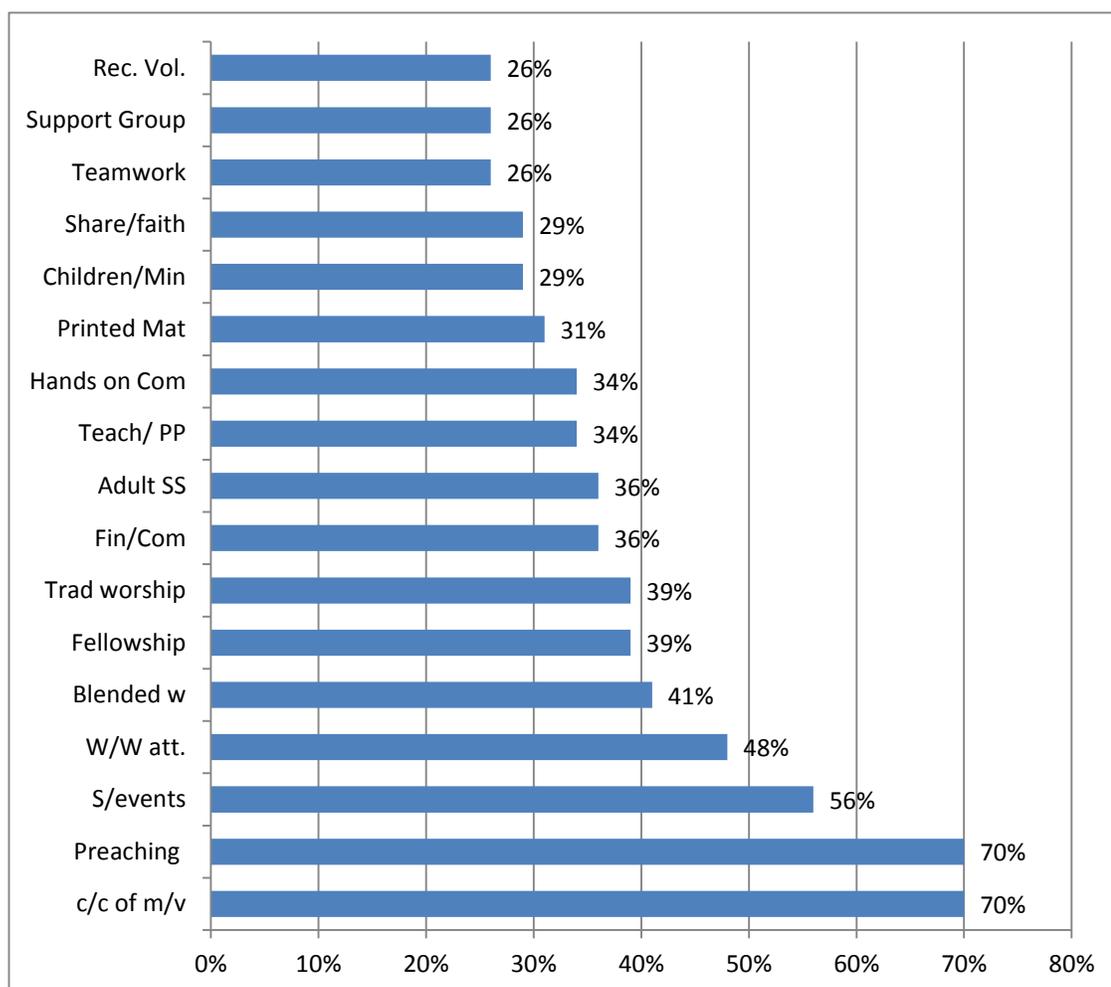


Fig. 5.3. 2012 Congregational Core Values Results from Forty-One Participants

*2012 Administrative Council Results*

The administrative council was surveyed again in 2012. This time nine people

responded to the surveys. Again, they were asked to pick no more than ten out of thirty

choices. These choices are also ranked in order most often chosen and are seen in the

chart. The samples taken in 2009 compared to those in 2012 indicate that some shift in

the core values of the congregation is occurring. This is evident by the fact that the
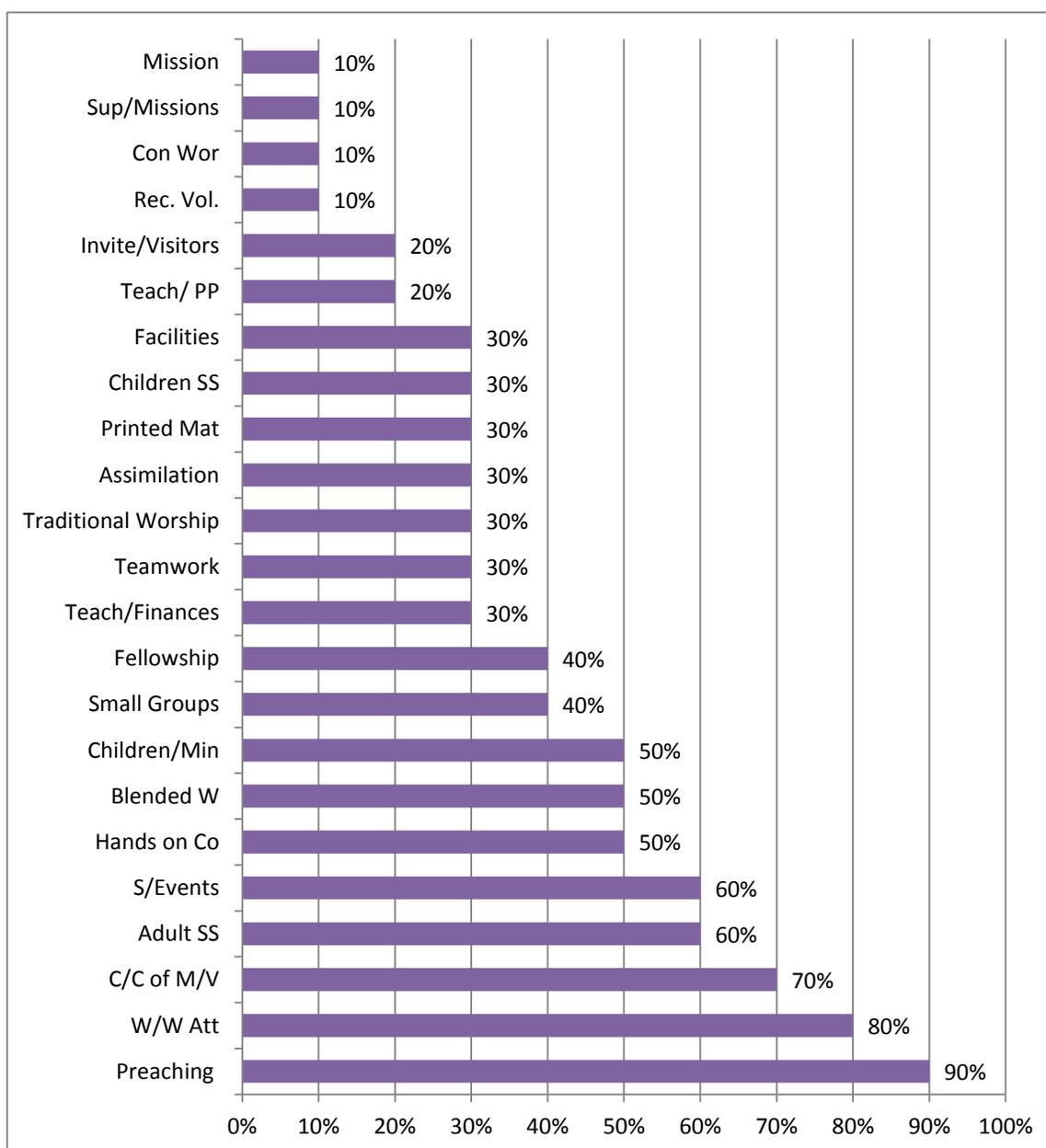


Figure 5.4. 2012 Administrative Council Core Value Results from Nine Respondents

congregation now identified two outward-focused core values: effective encouragement of attendees toward personal sharing with others regarding their faith and effective encouragement of attendees to invite community residents to visit worship. The complete results of the surveys showing all thirty possible choices will be included in Appendix E of this project.

## Community Needs Survey

The survey adapted from the book, *Becoming an Enthusiastic Church* was randomly given to community persons attending the EFCOG rummage sale and community block party. A total of twenty-nine surveys were returned. Of those returned, twenty-four participants or 83% indicated that they attended church while on the other hand, 17% indicated no church affiliation. The results were interesting and confirmed much of the research done around the three research questions. The questions and their main responses have been organized in the following way:

1) *What do you think is the greatest need in this area?*

    A. Help with basic needs was most mentioned

    B. Activities for children and youth

    C. Need for prayer for the sick and needy

    D. Knowing Jesus Christ as your Savior

2) *Why do you think most people don't attend church?*

    A. Negative view of the church

    B. Lack of commitment

    C. Sleeping in and laziness

    D. Confused in their beliefs

3) *If you were to look for a church to attend, what kind of things would you look for?*

    A. Friendly and caring

    B. A service good for my kids

    C. Groups for young adults

    D. First preach Jesus Christ, solid biblical teaching

    E. Blended mixture of old and new music

    F. Services and meetings offered throughout the week

4) *What could we do for you? What advice can you give to a minister who really wants to be helpful to people?*

    A) Prayer

    B) Outreach to the community and people in need

    C) Be open to talk to people about every day concerns

    D) Make personal visits to people

    E) Just be yourself. Be personable and approachable

These responses will also be utilized in developing strategies to move toward becoming missional.

**Interviews**

A significant amount of the qualitative research in this project came in the form of interviews. This author conducted twenty-six individual one-hour interviews. One pastor declined to be interviewed. These twenty-six interviews were directed to four groups of individuals.
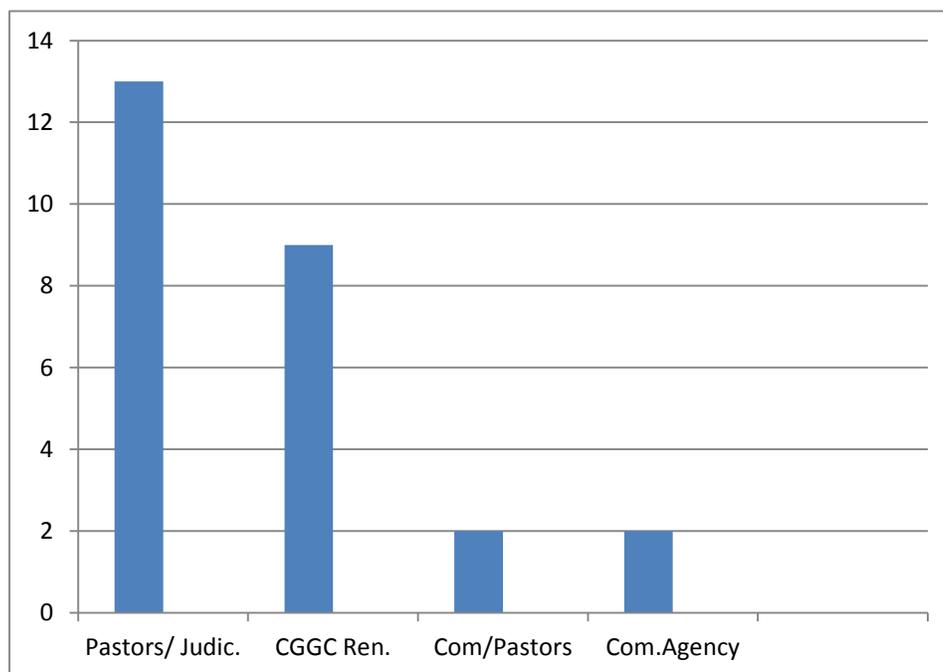
Figure 5.5. Interviews in Person or by Phone

The first group of thirteen interviews was conducted with pastors and judicatory leaders who had experience in leading traditional churches to become missional. A second group of nine interviews were conducted for the purpose of obtaining multiple perspectives about the CGGC renewal process in the 1990s. One group of two was local pastors who were born and raised in the Elizabethtown area. They were interviewed for the purpose of giving a perspective and evaluation of their long-term knowledge of the

EFCOG. Lastly, the researcher conducted two community interviews. One was the mayor and one a community non-profit agency representative.

Pastors and Judicatory Leaders

Of the thirteen pastors and judicatory leaders, seven interviews were completed in person and six interviews were done by phone due to geographical distances. Ten of interviewees were currently in pastoral ministry. Two of these ten were also interviewed regarding the Robert Logan renewal process with the CGGC. All were senior pastors except one, a youth pastor. Of the three not currently serving as pastors, one was retired and two are judicatory leaders in their respective denominations.
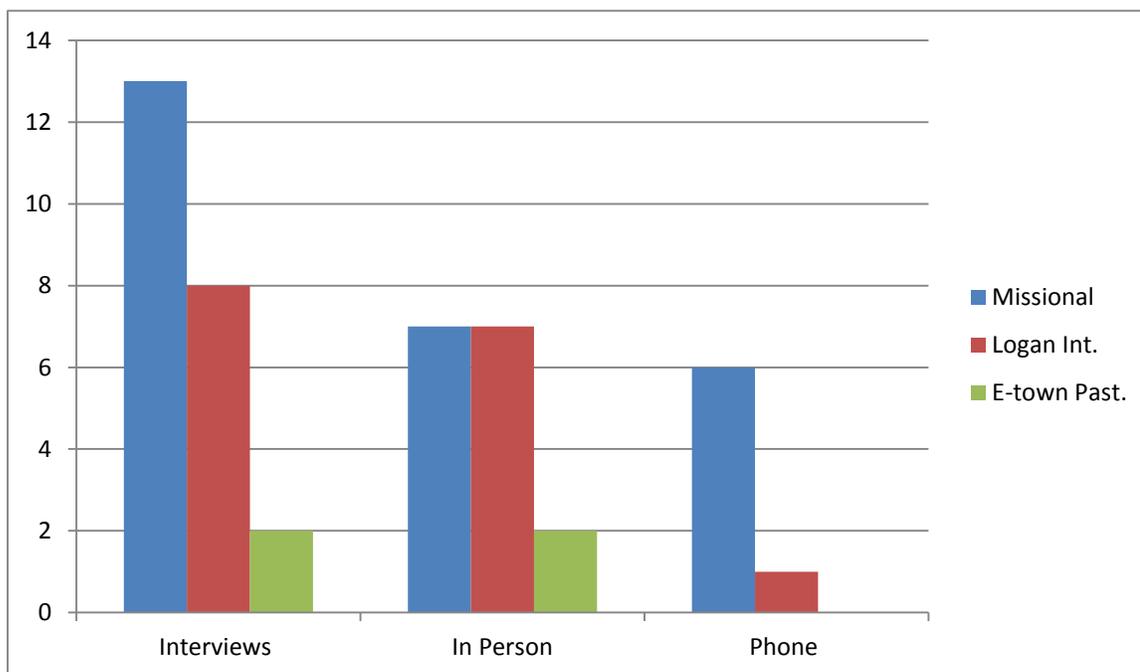


Figure 5.6. Total Interviews Conducted in Person and by Phone

The two Elizabethtown pastors were also asked to respond to the three research questions. In addition they responded to questions of local history and their perspective of

the EFCOG. All interviewees were directly asked the three research questions of this project. However, only those twelve who were serving as pastors were asked the background information about their current congregations. The interviewees were from four different denominations from Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Ohio. There were nine from the Churches of God, General Conference, one United Methodist, one United Brethren, and two were from the Brethren in Christ denomination.

| Churches of God | United Methodist | United Brethren | Brethren in Christ |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 1 | 1 | 2 |

Table 5.1 Denominations Represented in Interviews

The pastors interviewed for this project were limited to those serving aging and traditional congregations as evidenced by the fact that eight of the ten interviewed were serving churches over 100 years old. The youngest church was a twenty-year-old church plant. At the time this project was being written, the interviewees were an average age of 54.1 years old. The average tenure in their churches was 13.4 years. The average age of the churches they served was 128.5 years old.

| Church | Age of Church | Tenure of Pastor | Age of Pastor |
|---|---|---|---|
| Church #1 | 101 | 16 | 50 |
| Church #2 | 163 | 20 | 60 |
| Church #3 | 180 | 11 | 61 |
| Church #4 | 160 | 11 | 61 |
| Church #5 | 185 | 14 | 56 |
| Church #6 | 168 | 18 | 52 |
| Church #7 | 20 | 14 | 58 |
| Church #8 | 112 | 19 | 55 |
| Church #9[+] | 102 | 7 | 29 |
| Church #10* | 94 | 4 | 59 |
| Average | 128.5 | 13.4 | 54.1 |

[+] Associate Youth Pastor
*Sent to the church after it was destroyed by fire.

Table 5.2. Summary of Pastors Interviewed

This researcher found the interviews of the pastors leading transition in these traditional churches very enriching and helpful to this project. The following is a summary of these interviews touching on the areas pertinent to this project. This researcher asked the historical background to their churches. Then they were all asked two questions: *1) How would you describe the church when you arrived there as pastor? 2) What did the change look like, and what does the church look like now?* Lastly, they were all asked the three research questions. Answers to the research questions will be utilized in the last section of this chapter.

*Church Number One*

The church is approximately 101 years old. The pastor did not know the exact age, but he did know that the original building was built in 1912. The interviewee has been there for fourteen years and is forty-eight years old. The church is located in a rural area with the closest town about four miles away.

When the interviewee arrived as pastor of this church, the attendance was around twenty-five to thirty worshippers. He described the church as extremely family-driven and related. There was little focus on worship. Worship consisted of singing a hymn, a prayer, a sermon, sing another hymn, and be dismissed. Their focus was on the past when their attendance was higher. People were reluctant to bring a friend to church. A previous pastor had stayed for eleven years in the 1980s. The prior pastor was there for two years, and then an interim pastor came and served for about nine months.

The attendance is now 185 with a new building about two and-one half years old. The pastor literally lived with his people for two and one-half years until he moved to the area. It gave him an opportunity to get to know the people. He worked on making

worship more intentional. Worship became more blended and now the church has become known as the worship and music church of the community. The pastor was there eight to nine years before he became intentional about being missional. The Sunday evening service became more contemporary than the morning service. Youth liked it in the evening, so they slowly transitioned the contemporary style to the mornings when given permission by a matriarch. They now have a Christian school for grades K-12.

*Church Number Two*

Church number two started in 1850. The current pastor has been there for eighteen years and was fifty-eight years old at the time of this interview. The church is located in a small town of about 16,000 but is near a busy transportation corridor. The interviewee taught the congregation how to reach out beyond themselves. At his arrival, the church attendance was 300 with one part-time visitation pastor. Everyone knew each other. He further described the church as legalistic.

Currently the church attendance is 850 with three different styles of worship services at four different times. They currently have five full-time pastors, two part-time staff, and one other full-time staff member. The interviewee spent the early months and years getting to know people and building relationships. He began starting little things to encourage his congregants to reach beyond themselves. They expanded their mission emphasis to include cross-cultural ministries and routinely made mission trips. The missions budget doubled. The church participated in youth work camps and modeled their outreach ministry after them. Out of this effort, they developed a city project of which the interviewee took leadership for four years. This effort was handed over to community churches later. Church number two planted a church in Brazil for over

$20,000 through money that was bequeathed to them. After a period of prayer and fasting, the church planted a second church. The interviewee emphasized that the vision was on people not on the building. In summary, the ministry had a two-pronged approach: cross-cultural outreach and home missions through the city project and Latino ministries. The interviewee added that "God brought opportunities to us we were not looking for."[146] Church number two relocated in 2007 to twenty-five acres.

*Church Number Three*

Church number three was founded in 1833. The current pastor was there for ten years at the time of this interview. In 2001, the attendance was 125 and went from three pastors to no pastors. They had a belief in lay leadership. They offered multiple worship styles of services. They had a vision but not a real focus. Older people were leaving because of distrust in the pastoral leadership and his drivenness.

At this interviewee's arrival to congregation three, he reported that they conducted shared vision meetings and responded to the following two questions. *1) Given the gifts and the vision of the church, what does God want us to do? 2) Given the gifts and the vision of the church, what does God want us to do in the future?* As a result, the congregation came to the conclusion that they were making little impact in the community.

Ten years later, the average morning attendance is 230. Church number three has rebranded itself as "the outreach church". Other churches in the community come to them to learn outreach. They have become a safe haven for broken people through the Stephen Ministry. The elders practice church discipline and have a "That is not acceptable around

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[146]Earl Mills, interview by author, December 12, 2013.

here!" practice. There is a better sense of stewardship as they have learned to be more fiscally disciplined. Vision comes first and bank roll comes later. This interviewee said, "We do what supports our vision."[147] He added that they learned how to worship. Organizationally, they changed their structure to support their mission, moving from administrative council-driven to commissions-driven ministry.

*Church Number Four*

Church number four is 160 years old and is located in a small city in Ohio. The pastor had been serving this congregation for eleven years at the time of this interview and is sixty-one years old. This pastor reports that the church had a lot of energy when he arrived. They had two worship services with an average of 350 people in attendance. Currently, the morning worship attendance is 500 with four worship services: three morning worship services at the church and one at a nearby university campus.

*Church Number Five*

Church Number Five is 185 years old and is located ten minutes from a community with a population of 20,000. The pastor had been at this church for twelve years at the time of this interview and is fifty-six years old. The attendance was 300 at his arrival. The interviewee reports that the church was traditional and not missional at all. They did church as they always did. The pastor's children were the only ones in the nursery. The elders realized they needed to work on getting new families in the church. The prior pastor had been there for twelve years and had changed very little in the church. There was no outreach to the community other than holding revivals two times a year.

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[147]Stephen Dunn, interview by author, June 11, 2011.

The morning worship average attendance was 363 in 2011. He reported the process toward becoming missional is more important than the goals. Their change was incremental with baby steps along the way. A good change was going to two morning worship services. They started a new one that is more contemporary. The campus ministry director brought in new kids. They hired three new staff people for children, youth and discipleship. Discipleship consisted of small groups. The budget doubled in twelve years. Giving to missions has grown every year while improvement in the building was done over the years. This pastor remarked that vision-casting takes years of repeating to catch on. They also got fresh blood in leadership. As a result the church went from dead to living, institutional to organic and seating capacity verses sending capacity. The people are now on mission.

*Church Number Six*

Church number six is a 166-year-old congregation. The pastor is fifty-two years old and has served there for eighteen years.

He reported that the church lacked leadership due to frequent pastoral changes. At one time, this church was on a four-church circuit, then a three, and then down to two. The interviewee reports that in its "hayday" the morning worship attendance was in the forties and fifties. The Sunday school had the highest attendance running about 100 at one time. In the 1970s, the church obtained its first sole bi-vocational pastor. Prior to the interviewee's arrival, the pastor was there for eight years. There were signs of lack of attention evident around the church. Arborvitaes blocked the view of the church, and there were stacks of old materials lying around the church. The core group consisted of

two retired families and their children. When this interviewee arrived, the church was in crisis and in need of outreach. There was a fear of losing their church.

The church grew to seventy-five, then got stuck and stayed there for two years. In April of 2011, the morning worship attendance was over 200. They now have a part-time youth pastor and two worship services. They conduct a contemporary service at 8:00 am and traditional service at 10:45 am. The emphasis of the ministry has been on monthly fellowships, barbeques, hayrides, and service projects in the community such as building ramps, roofs, and car repairs. Block parties have been popular as well. The church has rented out the local skating rink. They have gone out into the streets and have given out Santa gift bags containing batteries, fruit, and a church invitation.

*Church Number Seven*

Church number seven was a 1991 church plant. It is currently in its sixth building. It grew to about 120 in average morning attendance. This pastor has been there for fourteen years and is fifty-eight years old. At his arrival, the attendance was seventy. It was a "hyper seeker-sensitive church" when he arrived but went missional unintentionally and rapidly. The church relocated to a former motel and restaurant for seven years and experienced twenty-five percent growth. The owner then sold the building and the church moved to a rented church owned by the Lutherans. The interviewee describes this facility as not ideal as it was not conducive for an attraction-based ministry. The church lost momentum and moved again after three years to a rural building in a Mennonite area. The church did not mix well with the culture. Although the administrative council voted to stay the course, several families left the church. After a shift to an emphasis on the priesthood of believers, the attendance went to thirty.

The interviewee reports that the church grew 100% in 2011. The church sends forty-five to fifty people, many not from their congregation into the city to serve meals. Thirty-five percent are not in the Sunday morning worship group. The sending group is actually too big, and it is time to divide. The church does not look anything like it looked three years ago.

*Church Number Eight*

Church number eight is 110 years old. Its pastor is fifty years old and has been with the congregation for nineteen years. Previously, the congregation was very traditional. Their worship consisted of singing three hymns, collecting the offering, and going home. They had high denominational loyalty and were generational Christians. The pastor recalls not touching the music for about nine years. He did not start anything new for the first five years.

The interviewee says the church looks nothing like it did when he started. Hearts had to be changed first. Their worship service is band-driven and eclectic with no interruptions from beginning to end. They moved to a prefabricated auditorium. They now have 600 in attendance. The church is now all about their mission. They are a hands-on church in local missions such as giving away cars. They have a large compassion ministry in the community. He identified the church as having significant regional and global missions.

*Church Number Nine*

The pastor of church number nine was the only youth pastor interviewed by this researcher. The church is located in a rural area near small towns and is 102 years old. At

twenty-seven years old, this pastor was the youngest pastor interviewed. He has been at this church for seven years.

The attendance was 114 when this pastor arrived. The interviewee followed the first youth pastor who was traditional and Sunday school-oriented. It was the only church in town that had a youth ministry beyond confirmation. The church was somewhat missional-minded but did not see service as missional. They supported eight different missionary endeavors. The prior pastor was there seven years but the missional idea was not focused.

The morning worship attendance is eighty-five now due to loss of industry. Church number nine has formed a missions commission for local, national, and global missions in order to make it more cohesive and organized. The church is located in a rural area with little for the community to do, so the congregation purchased a facility in a nearby community to provide opportunities and outreach to people.

*Church Number Ten*

The pastor of church number ten is fifty-nine years old. He has been the pastor for only four years. The church is ninety-four years old. The attendance had been slipping over the years and dropped to the twenties on Sunday mornings. Financially they were on the brink of closing. It has often been said that they probably had a year left of existence. A fire that began in a neighboring building and could have brought an end to the church, destroyed the church building in October of 2008. The church is part of a three-church circuit. After the fire, they began holding services at their sister church in town. They soon learned that their insurance policy would provide 3.1 million dollars for rebuilding. There was an effort to try to get church number ten to merge with her sister congregation.

However, their sister church did not want to change. This church saw its sister church close to closing as they previously were. But given their decline of previous years, they were urged by their bishop to evaluate the needs of the community and assess what kind of ministry the city needed.

The interviewee was sent to pastor the three-church circuit in the summer of 2009 after the fire. This pastor has twenty-four years of pastoral experience. The pastor started noticing God at work among members of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). Some of them began coming to the worship services and becoming members of the church. The pastor began Crossroads to Recovery on Sunday nights. People in recovery began to attend the Sunday night services as did a number of people from the church. Soon all began to appreciate the contemporary worship and the informal setting, but the congregation also enjoyed journeying with people in recovery. The church board once again began to talk about either buying or building their own place of worship. The pastor stated that before they could do that, they needed to become a vital and growing congregation. In order to do that, he proposed that they do four things:

1) Change the name of their church. They needed a name that communicated the kind of ministry God wanted them to have.

2) Change the way they do church. Like many churches, they were program-based. The pastor urged them to consider becoming cell-based, meaning structuring the church on small groups.

3) Change their style of worship. For decades, they had worshiped with a traditional format, using hymnals, piano, organ, and choir. They needed to move out of

their comfort zone and adopt a contemporary style that would likely appeal to a younger age group.

4) Change their focus. Instead of approaching church with a consumer mentality, they needed to become outward-focused seeking to make disciples of the people of downtown. Many of those living in the downtown area were in difficult straits, and there were an unusually high number of people who attended AA and Cocaine Anonymous (CA) meetings. The pastor urged them to seek to minister to "the last, the least, and the lost."[148]

The pastor was surprised when they voted unanimously for all four changes, so he reminded them the next month of the vote they had taken and asked if they had second thoughts or questions. Then they voted again, and again they voted unanimously for the changes.

The pastor's desire was, in fact, to have a new church. They hired a consultant to guide them through the process of launching a cell-based church. As plans began, the pastor spoke with others who had begun to attend Sunday nights asking if they could see themselves as a new church worshiping on Sunday mornings. Nearly all of them said, "Yes!" and so the pastor has since taken care to state, especially to the former members, that they are a new church which has combined the old church with the recovery worship service.

This is a "new" church not only because they brought in the people from Sunday nights but also because they have taken great pains to change the DNA of the congregation. It takes a good bit of reprogramming to get the leadership to understand church differently.

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[148]Mark Ongley, telephone interview by author, February 2, 2012.

As for the name, they had a contest to name the church and even invited other area denominational churches to contribute suggestions. The leadership then sorted through the suggestions, eliminated all but three, and then voted a few more times. On the final vote, "Ashes to Life Ministries" won unanimously. It speaks not only of the history - that a new church has almost literally raised from the ashes of the fire - but also that they want to help people rebuild their lives through the grace of God.

The one-year anniversary of the recovery worship service drew nearly fifty people, twice the usual Sunday night attendance. Most churches are very reluctant to make big changes in order to be more effective or relevant. The burning of the building and the three years without their own distinct worship service or ministry has awakened the congregation and made them more malleable and willing to change. Ashes to Life simply went through a shakeup that made them willing to make radical changes in how they do ministry and life together.

The pastor also pointed out that there are no automatic transfers to Ashes to Life from the former congregation so everyone had to attend four membership classes. Ashes to Life recently took in twenty-nine new members of which fifteen were new people who came with recovery issues. On a side note, the pastor recently presided over the closing of the sister church, First United Methodist Church.

Ashes to Life purchased a former Catholic church building in town. The building has a social hall, kitchen, gymnasium, locker rooms, and restrooms. There is a chapel for their more formal services. As for relationships with other churches, the pastor has been active in the local ministerium keeping them up-to-date on the development of the recovery worship service and the changes with the congregation. The pastor recently sent

sixty-five letters to pastors in the Beaver Falls and New Brighton areas informing them of the emergence of Ashes to Life and asking for their prayers. In addition, the two largest denominational churches of the area have taken an interest in ministry to the downtown area. One of those churches is helping distribute fliers and survey the neighborhoods for families who need help winterizing their homes this fall.

Logan Interviews

Interviews were conducted with former CGGC presidents, staff members, and directors that were involved in the renewal movement of the 1990s lead by Robert Logan. The purpose of these interviews was to gain perspectives on the Robert Logan renewal process. It was the expectation of this researcher to discover principles that could be generalized to the project context.

In Chapter One of this project, the problem was understood in the larger church context of Christendom, the American Church, and the Churches of God, General Conference. The hypothesis was that the EFCOG's decades of decline were a microcosm of the decline occurring in the denomination. Nearly two decades before the EFCOG began their strategic journey, the CGGC was beginning theirs as well. In the 1990s, the Churches of God, General Conference leadership entered a long-term strategic planning process. An outcome of that process was the hiring of Robert Logan of Fuller Theological Seminary as a consultant to the denomination.

This researcher conducted eight one-hour interviews with individuals who had firsthand knowledge of the renewal process. Seven individuals were interviewed in person and one by phone. Two of these interviewees were also among the missional pastors who were asked the research questions for this project. This researcher recorded

notes and observations from those open-ended interviews. The interviewees were asked to share their reflections, impressions, and reactions to the Logan process. The writer's intent in these interviews was to discover any common themes and trends that would be pertinent to answering the three research questions. The outcomes of these interviews will be utilized to help in answering the three research questions later in this chapter.
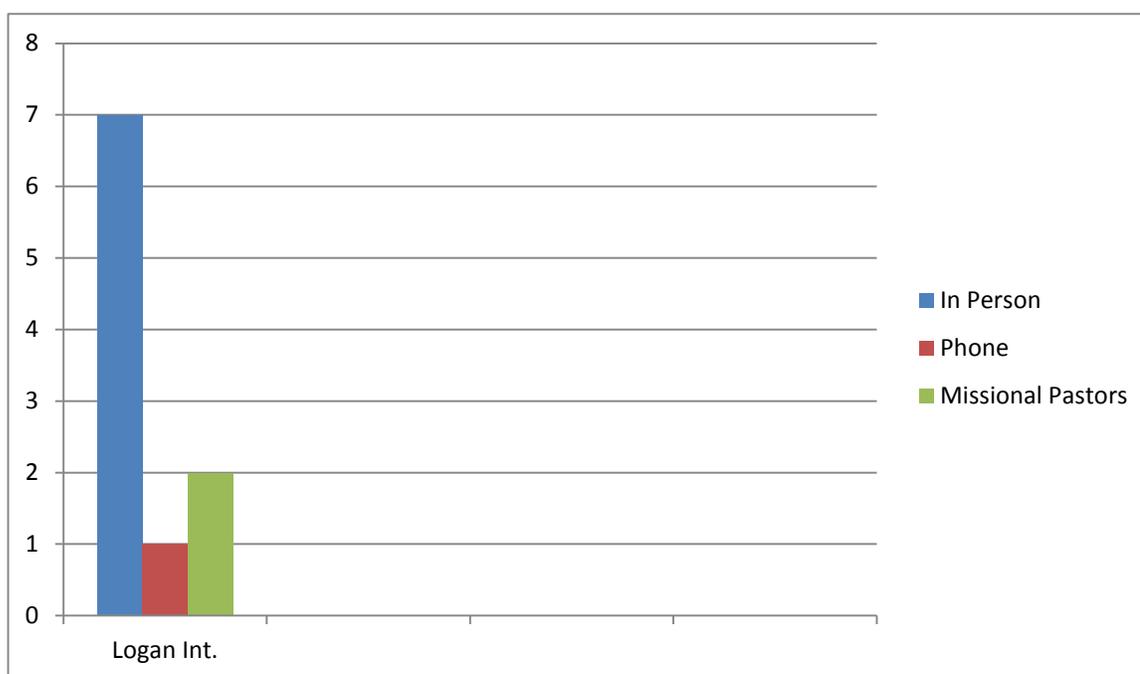


Figure 5.7. Breakdown of Logan Interviews

## Agency Organization Interviews

This writer interviewed three community leaders for the purpose of discovering ways EFCOG can build bridges into the community through service. During those interviews, EFCOG did receive some service ideas and followed up with them. Interviewees were the mayor of Elizabethtown, a representative of Homes of Hopes, and the director of Hope Within. Their recommendations will be considered in Chapter Six of this project.

*Elizabethtown Mayor*

This researcher interviewed the mayor of Elizabethtown in person using the Community Agency Survey that can be found on page 113 in Chapter Four of this project. As an outcome of this interview, the EFCOG has become very active in the community such as becoming an associate member of the Chamber of Commerce. In addition they have become involved with numerous service projects such as the New Year's Eve festivities, monthly Elizabethtown Second Friday event, holiday parade, police chaplaincy program, youth work camps, and local food bank.

*Homes of Hope*

This researcher interviewed a representative of Homes of Hope of Elizabethtown for the purpose of gaining information as to their needs and how we can serve them. Homes of Hope transitional housing program offers families a three-month stay in a church-sponsored, fully-furnished home. Homes of Hope currently manages one home on Park Street in Elizabethtown. There are many ways for churches and individuals to volunteer and serve. The representative indicated the need for churches to partner by sending one or two people to serve on a committee and attend a one-hour Monday meeting per month. Secondly, they are in need of individuals and couples to be mentors for the families during their stay. These mentors are trained and equipped by Home of Hope. Efforts were made to follow up with Homes of Hope to become a sponsor, but due to some staff changes on their part no response was given to the effort to become involved with their ministry up to this time.

*Hope Within*

This researcher also interviewed the director of Hope Within. The mission of

Hope Within is to demonstrate the love and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.[149]

Through the operation of Hope Within Community Health Center, free primary

healthcare services are delivered to the medically uninsured of Lancaster and Dauphin

Counties in Pennsylvania. With patients who give permission, they also take some time

to discuss spiritual matters and to share from the Bible about God's love for all

people. They work closely with medical specialists and health care organizations outside

of Hope Within for medical follow-up care when needed and with local, Bible-believing

churches for follow-up counsel and discipleship for patients who are interested.

The director responded to the survey question by E-mail and then an interview

followed. As a result, this researcher and another member made a tour of the Hope

Within medical facility. Secondly, the director was invited to share about their ministry

during EFCOG's morning worship services. At this time there has not been any follow-

up service or ministries on the part of the EFCOG. Nevertheless doors have been opened

for future opportunities and an ongoing relationship.

## Focus Groups

Home Focus Groups (Evenings with the Pastor 2008)

During the period of August 12 through October 9, 2008, this researcher began an

effort labeled *Evenings with the Pastor*. Outcomes of these groups will also be utilized

when addressing the three research questions later in this chapter. The complete feedback

of these focus groups will be included in the appendix of this project. The following

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[149]Hope Within Ministries, "About Hope Within," http://www.hopewithin.org/about.htm [accessed April, 6, 2013].

details the three questions asked and their top responses listed in order by how frequently they were mentioned.

*What do you like about your church?*

1)  Friendliness: Thirty total people and all eleven groups mentioned some form of friendliness as the number one thing they like about their church.

2) Worship: Nearly all groups labeled some area of the worship service they liked. There were twelve positive responses in all.

3) Church doctrine and biblical preaching/teaching: They were mentioned in six out of the eleven of the focus groups.

4) Facility and building: Things such as the building's beauty, comfort, location, stained glass, kitchen, and beautiful sanctuary were mentioned as likeable aspects of the church. The building and location were mentioned in the large focus group as one of the top greatest gifts from God.

*What would you like to change about your church?*

1) Worship/Music: Not only was worship and music an area that participants expressed they liked about the church, but all the groups expressed this as an area desiring to be changed. There was a definite split in opinions in the area of worship and music. Traditional (32%) and blended (34%) services were given nearly equally value in the *Top Ten Core Values Surveys*.

2) Outreach: Outreach was equally mentioned with worship as an area desired to be changed.

3) Numerical growth: Connected to the desire for outreach was a desire for the church to grow. Though there was a desire for numerical growth, there was also a concern that the church would lose their family atmosphere.

4) Programs and activities: The focus groups did mention numerous program and ministry areas they would like to see increase.

*What would you like your church to look like in three to five years?*

A question was raised in the groups about the willingness of the church to make the attitudinal changes necessary to grow. The EFCOG's motivation for church growth will be discussed in Chapter Six of this project.

Participants expressed the following goals for the next three to five years:

1) Youth: It is clear that the church wants the church to grow with younger people as indicated by the sixteen responses to increase staff and ministries for the youth.

2) Attendance: There is a desire for more people.

3) Facilities: Mentioned under facilities was a new recreation room, use church lawn more for activities, add second floor for multi-purpose room, and add a playground.

4) Christian Education: A desire for two to three teachers for each class, Christian Education leader with new ideas, and a senior high Sunday school class were expressed. Other areas mentioned were discipleship. This includes more small groups at the church and in homes that are open to those who are hurting.

5) Staff: In regard to staffing, the following comments were given: keep the same pastor; have a youth minister, a visitation minister, and a custodian.

6) Activities: Activities desired are progressive dinners, ministry to the elderly, and spaghetti dinners.

7) Worship: The congregation desires multiple types and times of services that are geared to young people. They want to add instruments, orchestra, and a full choir.

The results from these home focus groups were filed along with the outcomes of previous surveys and assessments for future strategic planning and Chapter Six of this project. The following are two unsolicited E-mail reports sent to this researcher. One is from a newcomer and one from a long-time member of the EFCOG that attended one of these focus groups:

> Unhappy with our current church, so we attended the sunrise service. My mother who was living with us, also searching for a church after dad's death, asked me if I thought the church taught the gospel? My dad always said they didn't. I said from what I heard I didn't think that was true. She started attending. We had been attending a mini mega church but never felt connected although we tried many ways. We attended about two times. You and Debbie opened up your home invited us to come and give what we as well as others there, would like to see in the church. WOW we never were asked that before! IMPRESSED. Started attending, joined and rest is continuing history [150]

Following another home focus group, a long-time member who served as a host emailed this author the next day in regards to her sister and brother-in-law coming to her home focus group. It read in part:

> It was a great shock to find my sister and brother-in-law had come. I told her about it ten days ago and simply said, "If you feel like coming you are invited." Well since I say that to her many times for different programs we have, she has never come. We have never heard anything about my brother-in-law's church life or if he ever accepted the Lord. So, telling you all this to tell you how much we have to pray, to the Lord, for helping him see the light![151]

Large Focus Group

The following are the prioritized results of the large focus group meeting conducted by David Williams. The ministry and leadership teams of the EFCOG were

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[150]Ron Stauffer, E-mail message to author, March 15, 2012.

[151]Alma Shank, E-mail message to author, June 26, 2009.

invited to attend. More details of this large group meeting can be found in Chapter Four of this project (See page 111). The full report of the large focus group can be viewed in Appendix L of this project. The group responded to three questions:

*What do you believe are two or three of the greatest gifts God has given this church?*

      1) The location

      2) The building/facility

      3) The people

*What do you believe are two or three of the greatest opportunities God may be presenting this church at this time?*

      1) Opportunity to serve youth/young adults

      2) Serve people seeking due to world events

      3) Deeper faith inwardly

      To grow inwardly was described in terms of individual groups within the church growing through real worshipping experiences. Have worship experiences that are open for everyone with different styles. It was mentioned by the participants that the church was at a breaking point. There is a thirst for leadership, a shepherd, vision and a readiness to for change.

*What is your God-given dream for this church?*

      1) Have the knowledge to move people to Christ-likeness

      2) Huge burden for lost people

      3) Close relationships/family

      4) Churches grow together/come together by networking through the ministerium

      5) Be the next Hanover Church of God

      6) Emphasis on ministries versus Sunday morning masses

Outcomes of this focus group were also filed to be used in future planning and vision-casting. Many of the results in this process were included in the development of a four-year plan.

## Discovery Groups

There were two discovery groups conducted during this project. These groups consisted of two Share and Prayer Triplets efforts that were conducted to seek God's vision for individual lives as well as for the EFCOG as a body. The second discovery group was implemented during the Sunday school among the adults. This group set out to discover the purpose and mission of the church.

Prayer and Share Triplets

After each of the two sixty days of Share and Prayer Triplets, a celebration service was conducted. The following are a record of the participants' observations of the experiences:

*Share and Prayer Triplets, Fall 2009*

*Observations from Groups*

1) We became closer to each other.

2) We felt there was a "time set apart" when we could shut out the world and just be focused.

3) In some ways we are still very different and yet very united.

4) Difference in our concerns: some leaned toward "nurturing", some leaned toward "sending out".

5) We shared more than just prayer together.

6) Maybe we need to pray that God would change us.

7) We need to feel urgency.

*Our Dreams and Vision*

1) Have more people (increased attendance).

2) Unity in the body.

3) More local outreach (be a church in community known for reaching out).

4) Become financially secure so outreach can go to community and we do not

have to keep the money raised for our own bills.

5) Become more spiritual (whole body).

*Share and Prayer Triplets, 2010*

*Answered Prayer*

1) God showing that there is support within the group during difficult times.

2) Opportunity to get to know others in church family through 1st and 2nd triplets

and continue those new relationships.

3) Thankfulness for the Easter season music and special services through Holy

Week. The moving of God's Spirit.

4) Ron Stauffer on Outreach Commission.

*What new things did you sense God will be doing in our congregation with a newfound unity?*

1) Leading our church to pray.

2) Hunger to continue with prayer groups.

3) Felt that God was working.

4) Opening doors to a deeper relationship.

5) Help to accept change when it comes from those we know and care for and have gotten to know.

6) Our location is a lighthouse, and we want to be more welcoming to those who are unchurched.

7) Move forward; the past and difficulties are behind.

8) Get ready for harvest.

*What is our identity?*

1) Buzz Club that can lead young families.

2) We have a core group in our Sunday school that will be a future youth group.

3) Preparing us to be open to God's will.

4) Good Friday service brought unity to community. We have the location to bring others together.

5) Known for providing physical needs. We want to provide spiritual care to the individuals as well. We want to look for ways to expand our outreach to many.

6) Suggest pray and fast before big events.

*Other Thoughts*

1) We see people returned from first prayer triplets.

2) We are hoping for new people, but we realized we do have many new people in the church.

3) It worked well for young mothers to meet in homes for prayer.

4) These triplet groups were instrumental in developing a desire for community in the congregation. A low sense of community was identified as a sub-problem of this research project.

Discovering the Purpose of the Church Sunday School Class

Details of this discovery group on the purpose and mission of Christ can be found in Chapter Four of this project (See page 104). The questions asked and the answers discovered are as follows:

*1) Why does the Church exist?* The church exists to make leaders for Christ's cause.

*2) What are we to be as a Church?* We are to be like Christ.

*3) What are we to do as a Church?* Be obedient to Christ.

*4) How are we to do it?* Engage others in the Holy Spirit.

These responses were filed and utilized in developing the EFCOG vision statement. The full report of responses is included in the Appendix of this project.

**Finances**

As pointed in out in Chapters One and Four of this project, depleting finances have been a negative factor in the growth and health of the congregation. This has been true in its recent history as well as its current situation. Verbal reports of members past and present at the EFCOG indicate finances have been a divisive issue and a cause of departure of members. Current financial reports indicate depleting finances. The financial barrier will be discussed later in this chapter under research question number one on barriers.

**Strategic Spiritual Journey**

In December of 2009, Pastor Dave Williams, the Director of Congregational Life

and Development of the ERC, was asked by the congregation to assist in the strategic

spiritual journey. Pastor Williams began leading the congregation toward developing a

Ministry Action Plan. In his initial assessment of the church and community, he made the

following report to this researcher:

> The Elizabethtown Church of God has become an ingrown church. Over the
> course of time it has become more concerned about the welfare of its current
> members to the almost complete desertion of those who do not know Jesus as
> Lord and Savior. This is evident in their decade of worship decline and their
> complete lack of mention of evangelism in their core values. You do recognize
> that outreach must improve, but is this desire to see the kingdom of God grow or
> preserve yourself as an institution? Rediscovering God's mission for the church
> will be critical to the fruitfulness of the church [152]

These were difficult words to hear, but they were backed up by many of the observations

and research findings up to that point.


Church Board Retreat

The inception of the MAP came out of the EFCOG annual board retreat.
Annually, the EFCOG Administrative Council plans a training retreat for its members. In
January 2010, the leadership team of twelve members traveled to a Lancaster,
Pennsylvania church with this researcher to a conference entitled *Transforming Church
Boards.* The conference was sponsored by the ERC of the Churches of God as well other
denominations in the area. As a result of that retreat and the presenter's book, *Seeking the
Pillar of Fire*, the EFCOG's spiritual strategic plan gained a clearer focus. Following the
guidelines, this researcher engaged the core leadership and ministry teams of the
congregation in the process of formalizing a strategic planning committee.

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[152]Dave Williams, assessment to this author, December 22, 2009.

Pastor Retreat

The next step in the process as given in *Seeking the Pillar of Fire*, involved the congregation sending this researcher to a one- to two-day retreat to seek God's vision. This was modeled after Moses going to the mountain to receive the Law in Exodus 19-29. This researcher took input from all the focus groups and Bible studies collected from the congregation up to that time, along with a Bible, for a day away in prayer and seeking God. The desired outcome of the retreat was for this researcher to discern the voice of God for the EFCOG. During the retreat, the elders of the congregation engaged the congregation in a 24-hour prayer vigil in the church sanctuary.

MAP (Ministry Action Plan)

In June 2010, the EFCOG strategic planning committee began the process of writing a MAP. On August 2011, a written four-year ministry plan was completed. During that period of time, Dave Williams and this researcher conducted twelve planning meetings. Attendance was between fifteen and twenty-two. The planning process also included refining the vision statement that began during this researcher's retreat.

The committee made the decision to uphold their previous mission statement in light of the fact that what God desires for his church never changes: *Our mission as the First Church of God of Elizabethtown (I Corinthians 1:2) is to be a witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8) within the fellowship of believers, in our community and beyond (Luke 24:47).*

After much hard work, prayer, seeking God, and discussion, the EFCOG leadership team formulated the following vision statement: *The Elizabethtown First Church of God is a community of believers striving to: 1) Be closer to God today than*

*yesterday. 2) Be outwardly focused. 3) Be God's instrument for changing lives in the Elizabethtown community and beyond. 4) Be a place for all ages and for all seasons of life.* A detailed description of the vision statement is included in the Appendix F of this research project.

The MAP (Ministry Action Plan) containing four to five annual goals was completed with specific objectives and tasks for each goal. The Spiritual Strategic Planning Committee (SSPC) was made up leaders of the various ministries in the congregation and was divided into four groups of people who were gifted and passionate for each particular statement of vision. The large group planning committee met monthly with Pastor Williams and this researcher to formulate the MAP. The individual groups were expected to meet on their own in between the monthly meetings and then report back to the large group monthly. One barrier to this approach was that, at some meetings, the groups lacked a sufficient number of people to create the effective goals as desired. To address this barrier, the EFCOG obtained the assistance of an evangelism coach through the Commission on Evangelism and Outreach of the ERC. The role of the coach was to support and be a resource person for the group that was working on goals to be become outwardly focused.

The planning process was not without its frustrations and setbacks. The SSPC process was expected to last three to six months. Instead it lasted for about fourteen months. At times this researcher and the groups lacked clarity on what was expected of them. This researcher discussed these barriers with Dave Williams at the end of the process as part of the evaluation.

The vision statement and the MAP were first affirmed by the church elders, then the administrative council, and, lastly, the congregation at its annual meeting in November 2011. When the written MAP was completed and affirmed in 2011 by the congregation, this researcher formulated a Guiding Coalition (GC) to oversee its implementation. The SSPC was given the opportunity to submit names of people they trusted, respected, and saw as visionaries to serve on the GC. As a result, seven names were chosen to serve on this committee with this researcher included. It was decided that the role of the GC would be to teach the SMART process for goal-setting and achieving these goals to other teams in the church.

**Workshops**

This researcher will now give a brief summary of the various workshops and seminars attended during this research journey. This researcher will also utilize principles gained from these workshops in answering the three research questions later in this chapter.

Transforming Church Boards

This researcher and the leadership team attended this one-day event designed to increase the effectiveness and impact of leadership boards in the local church. Though this event was promoted by the ERC, it was attended by multiple denominational leaders in the region. This event served as the annual board retreat of the EFCOG for 2009. It was hosted by the Hempfield United Methodist Church, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The lead resource person was Steve Musser, the District Superintendent of the Eastern District of the Evangelical Free Church of America.

Eric Orke was also a resource person for the workshop. Currently Eric serves as a church consultant in the Eastern District of the Evangelical Free Church of America. In this position, he meets with pastors and leads churches in a vision and strategic planning process. Eric is the senior partner in Musser & Orke Associates, a consulting firm which serves a wide range of clients including churches, small companies, Fortune 500 companies, non-profit organizations, and government agencies. There were three main sessions and two breakout sessions for pastors and church boards specifically. This workshop was instrumental in the development of EFCOG four-year plan.

## Transforming Your Church into a Church Multiplication Center

This one day event was sponsored by the Church Planting Commission of the ERC. The resource person was Terry Broadwater, lead pastor of Grace Community Church in the Greater Denver area and Chi Alpha (XA) Network Director. This workshop was predominately attended by Churches of God church planters and commission members. Its theme was how to transform established churches into church multiplication centers.

## Moving Ministry Out of the Building

This researcher attended this one-day workshop along with the EFCOG Outreach Commission chairman at Myerstown Evangelical Seminary. The resource person for the workshop was Drew Williams, senior pastor of the Trinity Church in Greenwich, Connecticut. He introduced the Mission-Shaped Communities concept of which he was the originator. This researcher obtained two resources on Mission-Shaped Communities from that event: *Breaking Out* and *Mission-Shaped Communities: A Field Guide*. This

workshop was attended by pastors and leaders of traditional churches across denominational lines.

## School of Evangelism: Bridge Builders

This all day event hosted by the EFCOG was designated to be their annual board retreat for 2011. Twelve board members attended this workshop along with approximately forty pastors and local church leaders across denominational lines. Stephen Dunn was the resource person for this event. Stephen was the lead pastor for the Landisville First Church of God and served as chairperson and chief trainer for the ERC Commission on Evangelism at the time of this workshop. The theme of this event was helping traditional churches reach their non-churched neighbors.

## School of Evangelism: Sharing Our Faith

This researcher attended this two-hour event with the chairman of the EFCOG Evangelism and Outreach commission. There were six in attendance, all from ERC Churches. The resource persons were Stephen Dunn and Robert Bell, a retired pastor of the CGGC and commission member. The theme of this workshop was styles or ways of sharing our faith. A recommended resource on sharing faith from this event was *Contagious Christian.*

## The City Series

This author observed three one-hour webinars hosted by Zondervan. These events featured presentations by authors of newly released books that often had a missional emphasis. The following are four webinars that this researcher found helpful in

formulating principles toward transitioning a traditional church to become more missional.

*Engaging Imperfect People*

This was presented by John Burke, founder of Gateway Church and author of *No Perfect People Allowed: Creating a Come-As-You-Are Culture in the Church.* This webinar was a conversation on growing your church by engaging imperfect people.

*The Gift of Church*

This was presented by James G. Samra, the senior pastor of Calvary Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Samra is the author of *Being Conformed to Christ in Community*. This webinar discussed the purpose of the church and characteristics of a church.

*Sticky Church: Closing the Back Door*

The presenter of this webinar was Larry Osborne, the lead pastor of North Coast Church. The theme of this webinar is the importance of developing deep relationships in the church which results in long term retention.

Transformational Church

This was a one-day event attended by ERC pastors and leaders at the Enola First Church of God. The theme of this live simulcast was the church as God's tool. There were useful take-a-way points on the leadership needing to bring about transformation in the church. The resource person for this simulcast was co-author of *Transformational Church,* Ed Stetzer.

Evangelism Workshop: Developing an Evangelism Strategy

For You and Your Local Church.

This was a one-day event hosted by the Enola First Church of God and the ERC. The presenter for this event was Chris Walker of EvangelismCoach.org. Topics of the workshop included: 1) Developing confident witnesses, 2) Getting more first-time visitors, 3) Engaging your community in service, 4) Taking your hospitality up a notch, and 5) Developing a culture of prayer.[153]

Child Evangelism Fellowship: Good News Club Training

This writer attended this two-day training in preparation for EFCOG to launch an after school Good News Club in the fall of 2012. Launching a Good News Club in the new Bear Creek Elementary in the Elizabethtown Area School District is a year one goal of the MAP. This was no doubt the first ongoing true missional event the EFCOG has ever attempted. At the time this chapter is being written the EFCOG is entering their second semester at Bear Creek.

Planting Explosion Workshop

This was a one-day event sponsored and hosted in Harrisburg by the ERC to address its 20:20 Initiative. Pastors and church planters of the ERC were in attendance. The resource person was nationally known church planting consultant Glenn Smith, founder and president of New Church Initiatives. The purpose of the workshop was to coach established churches on how to become church planting churches.

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[153]Chris Walker, "Developing an Evangelism Strategy for You and Your Local Church" (lecture, Enola First Church of God, Enola, PA, May 21, 2010).

Intentional Interim Ministry Training:

Introduction to Family Systems Theory - Bowen Theory

This researcher attended this two-hour workshop hosted by the ERC in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, with a member of the EFCOG. The workshop was created for persons doing Intentional Interim Ministries. It was attended by ERC prospective interim pastors and an ERC staff member. The purpose of this workshop was to understand churches as systems and how that can help interims better assess a church going through times of transition. The resource person for this seminar was Jack Guyler who is the lead pastor of the Harmony Bethel First Church of God of the ERC. Jack is a member of the Commission on Church Renewal for the Churches of God.  He has his own consulting ministry, Guyler Associates, which helps churches and leaders of various denominations rediscover their mission and vision.  He is also the trainer and coach for the intentional interim ministry program for the Churches of God.

Kicking the Leadership Lid: Infocus Leadership

This researcher attended this seminar in conjunction with the ERC Annual Sessions. The presenter was Bishop Craig Sider, who at the time of the presentation was the vice president and executive director of the Center for Leadership at Evangelical Theological Seminary in Myerstown, Pennsylvania. The theme of the workshop was to transform inward-focused leaders into outward-focused leaders.

Global Leadership Summit

This researcher attended this leadership summit with the ERC Commission on Evangelism and Church Planting. The summit was a leadership simulcast, hosted by LCBC in Manhiem, Pennsylvania, but conducted by Willow Creek Community Church and Bill Hybels.

## Director Notes

This researcher was able to get a more in-depth look into the assessment process conducted by Robert Logan in the 1990s as a result of obtaining the director notes. This author reviewed those notes and utilized pertinent information in answering the research questions later in the chapter. It was interesting to discover many of the same barriers to becoming more missional that were identified by Logan were also evident in other research sources. Principles drawn from these notes will be used utilized in the evaluation and recommendations of Chapter Six of this research project.

## Archives

The archive materials retrieved by this researcher affirmed much of the interview sources. For example, Logan's five-part prescription for a healthier future was reported in the Churches of God General Conference Administrative Council minutes. They were: 1) Refocus your church purpose, 2) Revitalize your spiritual life, 3) Redirect resources, 4) Retrain pastors and lay leaders, 5) Raise up new church planters.[154] In addition, following Logan's work, CGGC Director William Reist made six recommendations on

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[154]Report and Minutes of the Forty-Seventh Session of the Churches of God, General Conference, Administrative Council Meeting # 4, University of Findlay, Findlay, OH, June 8-12, 1992. B21.

organizational structure also reported in those same minutes.[155] This researcher reviewed the Administrative Council reports and minutes of Logan's process and found them to validate the one-on-one interviews conducted.

**Visionary Sermons**

This researcher preached three series of visionary sermons. The first series was given between October 2009 and November 2010. These messages were given on Old Testament characters such as Moses, Joshua, Nehemiah, and Ezekiel. Between January and February 2010, this author shared another series on the names and images of the church. In these messages, the congregation was challenged to understand the nature and purpose of the church in a more complete way. Names and images of the church shared were the church as: The Building; The Army of God, The Body of Christ; The Bride of Christ; The Church of God, and The People of God.

Then again between August 2010 and October 2010, this writer shared a third series of outward-focused sermons. Scriptures from both the Old and New Testaments were used. Ideas for these messages were also influenced by the book *Externally Focused Church.* A complete list of titles and scriptures for all three sermon series will be included in the Appendix of this project.

**First Research Question**

This researcher will now categorize the research around the three research questions established in Chapter One of this project. In addition sub-points of patterns and common themes will also be listed. Answers to these questions will be utilized in

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[155]Report and Minutes of the Forty-Seventh Session of the Churches of God, General Conference, Administrative Council Meeting # 4, University of Findlay, Findlay, OH, June 8-12, 1992. B26.

forming evaluations and making recommendations in Chapter Six of this project. The

first question posed was *What are the congregational barriers to becoming missional?*

## The Barrier of Being Inward-Focused

Inward-focus is a broad term and includes many sub-barriers. Inward-focused

ministry has been defined on page twenty-three in Chapter One of this project. Inward-

focused ministry has been further described by the term *Christian bubble*. The Christian

bubble "protects" us from the world but separates from every day contacts with our non-

Christian neighbors. [156]

A current ERC staff person reviewed some of the research completed by this

researcher and reported, "The Elizabethtown First Church of God has become an ingrown

church. You do recognize that outreach must improve, but is this desire to see the

kingdom of God grow or to preserve yourself as an institution?"[157]

The research also found the CGGC to be inward-focused. It was that reality that

prompted the renewal efforts of the CGGC lead by Robert Logan in the 1990s. In

describing the CGGC in his assessment, Robert Logan described being inward-focused as

the "disease of koinonitis".[158] The research from that effort was also reported on in this

project in Chapters One and Three. Traditionally, the characteristics of inward-focused

ministry are seen as the following:

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[156]Stephen Dunn, "Bridge Builders Seminar: Helping Traditional Churches Reach Their Un-Churched Neighbors Manual." Workshop*,* Elizabethtown First Church of God, January 15, 2011, 19.

[157]Williams, assessment.

[158]CGGC Executive Director Notes, obtained from Ed Rosenberry by author, Findlay, OH, January 24, 2012.

*Programs verses Ministry Oriented*

The research does indicate that the EFCOG ministry has been program-focused. This was evident by the reports in the Evenings with the Pastor meetings. For example, when asked what they would like their church to look like in three to five years, the groups identified the Christian education department as an area they desire to see grow. In particular more staff and classes in the Sunday school program were mentioned. The researcher has observed the EFCOG member interactions and found that filling program positions, keeping programs running, and raising the budget to be most important. Furthermore, the EFCOG identified effective special events as a top core value.

*Keeping the Family Atmosphere*

The research has also shown that traditional churches can place a desire for a better community and family atmosphere over the fact that people are lost without Christ. One pastor who responded to the research question on barriers said, "[They are focused on] wanting to be family, know, and see everyone."[159] This was affirmed also during the Evenings with the Pastor focus groups where participants identified their family atmosphere as the number one thing they liked about their church. All groups identified the church as having a friendly family atmosphere. However, some expressed they want the church to grow but do not desire it to grow out of the family atmosphere.

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[159]Stephen Dunn, interview by author, June 30, 2011.

*Consumer Mindset*

In an interview, a pastor offered the observations "Too me" and "'Serve me' mentality" as being characteristic of inward-focused ministry.[160] Another comment recorded from interviewees was, "We want their money but not their ideas" as attitudes are that are barriers to becoming more missional. [161]

*Incomplete Measures of Success*

Many churches with a traditional-style ministry have only two or three things to measure their success such as budgets, attendances, and programs. Outward-focused churches measure success by these as well as other things such as the number of disciples made, life-changing stories, and people doing ministry outside the walls of the church. Maintaining the current programs are most important in ingrown or inward-focused churches. The Sunday morning mass gathering gets the most attention even if it has little or no connection with what goes on during the week.

*Survival Mentality*

The research has shown that a barrier traditional churches frequently experience is that they often operate from a survival mode. In *Bridge Builders: Helping Traditional Churches Reach Their Unchurched Neighbors* workshop this was listed as a number one barrier. "Many times traditional churches engage in evangelism because of survival issues."[162] Their focus is paying the salaries, utilities, filling empty positions, and just

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[160]Dunn, interview, June 30, 2011.

[161]Greg Funk, interview by author, April, 27, 2011.

[162]Dunn, Manual, 1.

keeping the doors open. Creating new ministries and moving out beyond the four walls

are things they would like to do at some time, but in many cases some time never comes.

As a consequence of this survival mentality, making the transition to becoming

more missional is a slow and long process that takes great patience. Churches operating

out of a survival mentality often want quick results. Waiting for the missional process to

bear fruit may not be something churches in decline feel that have time to do. The

missional movement is relatively new and has not had time to be proven in the eyes of

some. One long-time pastor and consultant interviewed by this researcher reported,

"Missional is a slow process and the church may not have the time it takes. Hence, the

best option is to be both missional and attractional."[163]

Survival was identified as the number three current value of the Long-Range

Planning and Staff Committee of the CGGC. [164] This survival mentality barrier is

compounded by frequent pastor turnover.

### The Barrier of Frequent Pastoral Turnover

The fact that transitioning to becoming missional is a slow process is complicated

by frequent pastor turnover. One interviewee said, "It is important also to understand that

all of this is done over a period of time, typically seven to ten years. This means that a

pastor must be willing to stay for a long period of time and grow with the

congregation."[165] Pastor turnover can make it very difficult to change the church culture

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[163]Jim Moss Sr., interview by author, Harrisburg, PA, December 7, 2010.

[164]Wayne, Heffner, David Meador, Eddie Boadway, Fred Quade, Al Rockey, and Ed Watson, *Final Report Task Force on Small Conference Concern to General Conference Executive Committee,* Findlay, OH, March 19, 1991, 3.

[165]Jeff Rockey, telephone interview by author, October 26, 2010.

inside, which is needed to become a more missional church. The average number of years a pastor serves a church in America is 3.6 years. When this is seen in light of statistics that show the peak years for pastor effectiveness to be between years five and fourteen, the barrier to becoming missional is evident.

<div align="center">The Barrier of Changing Community Culture</div>

Research completed by this author in Chapter Three (pages 71-76) describes the cultural barrier facing the American church today. Many of the mainline denominational churches have become marginalized and irrelevant because of their failure to respond to the cultural changes. It was also noted in Chapter Three (page 88) the time for measurable "fruit" is much longer because the missional church exists in a post-Christendom environment. As a result, the cultural change from Modernism to Post-Modernism makes change slower than in the past.

In assessing the historical perspective of the CGGC, Robert Logan noted that it is a "different world than when most of the churches were founded."[166] This author would also expand on the idea of the changing cultural barrier by adding that it is a rapidly changing culture. "More changes have come in the last 100 years then the last nineteen centuries"[167] One pastor interviewed reported the need in this culture for churches to do long-term efforts not just one-time events.[168]

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[166]Heffner, Meador, Boadway, Quade, Rockey, and Watson, *Final Report Task Force on Small Conference Concern to General Conference Executive Committee,* March 19, 1991, 3.

[167] Stephen L. Dunn and Robert Bell, "Bridge Builders Seminar: Sharing Our Faith" (lecture Landisville First Church of God, Landisville, PA, March 10, 2012).

[168]Willam Reist, interview by author, Findlay, OH, July 14, 2011.

The Barriers of Traditions and Attitudes

Research also shows that when a church is steeped in long-term traditions and attitudes, change comes slowly. The answer to why that is can be seen in part in Stephen Dunn's discussion on the infections that work against the church's God-given DNA. Particularly relevant to this project are his first two, "We love comfort," and "We value traditions above God's Word."[169] In Bridgebuilders, he also mentions that too many churches want to engage in evangelism without leaving their comfort zone.[170] Traditions are comfortable and the church does not like to step outside them.

This researcher attended a seminar conducted by the Navigators where it was also reported that tradition is a barrier to becoming missional. For instance it was pointed out that making disciples in the past began with evangelizing the world, but now we need to begin by engaging the world.[171]

The EFCOG indicated traditional values such as special events, preaching, and caring for their own in their core value surveys. Likewise, responses from the Evening with Pastor Focus Groups indicated that a full church, family atmosphere, and friendliness are things they desire or like about their church. This researcher made the following observation during the Evening with the Pastor groups regarding the church's motive for growing. "Though the congregation desires to grow, there is a question about

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[169]Stephen L. Dunn, "The DNA of a Servant Church" (presentation for Servant Church Conference, Landisville, PA, October 25, 2008).

[170]Dunn, DNA, 1.

[171]Steve Gilmore, "A Call to Personal Disciple-Making" (lecture, Mt. Joy, PA, August 14, 2012).

the desire of the church to be willing to make the attitudinal changes necessary to make the changes to grow."[172]

One pastor interviewed made this statement about churches and change, "Attitude and mindset within limit ourselves."[173] The same one added that, "The church sees itself as those raised in the church."

The Barriers of Institutions and Organization

The research also indicated that institutions and organization can become barriers. Organizational structures in traditional churches are seldom missional friendly. These barriers were seen to be clear factors upon the Churches of God during the renewal process with Robert Logan in the 1990s.

Several of the leaders and pastors involved with Logan quoted him as saying, "The CGGC out-Presbyterian the Presbyterians in structure."[174] In Robert Logan's notes on the denominational renewal, he cited organizational structure as a barrier to congregational health.[175] The denominational Presbyterian form of government was established to avoid bishops abusing power. In doing, so it eliminated strong leadership. Multiplication of commissions and committees consumes time energy, and money on operations. Logan identified the CGGC as having organizational strangulation. He described the CGGC structure as being bloated with staff and overhead expenses too costly. He also pointed out the CGGC used a costly church planting model. Lastly, he

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[172]Observation by this author during Evenings with Pastor, Elizabethtown, PA, 2008.

[173]Funk, interview.

[174]David Draper, interview by author, Findlay, OH, July 12, 2011.

[175]Heffner, Meador, Boadway, Quade, Rockey, and Watson, *Final Report Task Force on Small Conference Concern to General Conference Executive Committee,* March 19, 1991, 3.

added that leading by consensus can result in collapsing vision. Interviewees also

believed there to be too many layers of bureaucracy, checks and balances that prevented

them from getting the work of God done.[176]

The EFCOG also realized the need to address their organizational structure.

Though their congregational membership declined in numbers over the last decade, their

administrative council structure remained the same. In many cases, persons were put on

the administrative council because a position needed to be filled. As a result, members

were put in positions where they were not gifted or skilled. In 2011, the congregation

approved a by-law to change to reduce administrative council membership from twelve to

eight members.

Other areas of organizational structure noted by Logan as a drain on the

denomination's mission was its current trustee relationship with the University of Findlay

College. The CGGC followed through with Logan's recommendation and relinquished

the majority of their power. In addition, the long-standing denominational

communication literature *The Church Advocate* was a financial and organizational drain

on the denomination. As a result, format revisions were made on *The Advocate* to make it

more affordable and effective.

<div align="center">The Barrier of Clergy-Centered Ministry</div>

When addressing congregational barriers, one interviewee mentioned the need to

"de-clergy the church."[177] In other words, the congregation needs to own ministry and see

themselves as disciples. Clergy-centered ministry is a long-time tradition going back to

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[176]Draper, interview.

[177]Paul Tatum, interview by author, Elizabethtown, PA, October 25, 2010.

the time of Constantine and will need to be addressed if a transition to be more missional is going happen.

This was particularly noted in the area of evangelism, which is often seen as seen as the work of the pastor. This barrier can be seen by the following statement, "Many church people think it is primarily the work of the pastor or that of a few persons with the gift of evangelism." An interesting footnote was added to that statement from Dunn's training materials, "Although he [the pastor] had better not spend so much time on it that he neglects the flock, i.e., he doesn't take care of their needs."[178]

<div align="center">The Barrier of Buildings</div>

The research also indicated buildings can become a barrier. One pastor interviewed said, "Fondness to stuff, especially the building can become barriers."[179] For example, another person interviewed by this writer described that their members see their church as "a place to go" or "something to do."[180] Nevertheless, as many aging traditional churches with significant size facilities know, their buildings are a two-edged sword. During the EFCOG large focus group meeting, the "building" was identified as the second greatest gift from God. However, upkeep and renovations of the facilities at the EFCOG can be a drain to the finances and energy of the church. It is difficult to focus outwardly, when an aging facility requires constant attention and upkeep.

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[178]Stephen L. Dunn, *"Developing a Strategy of Evangelism in the Local Church Manual."* (Landisville, PA, 2012), 4.

[179]Ongley, interview.

[180]William Sloat, interview by author, Elizabethtown, PA, September 22, 2011.

The Barrier of Wrong Motives

This barrier was frequently mentioned in the research. One pastor interviewed stated, "Church, to many, is only about growing the Sunday morning crowd."[181] Another interviewee reported that an attitudinal barrier congregations must overcome is "seeing growth as a way to increase attendance," and he added that, "Leadership must see things with different eyes."[182]

A wrong motive for church growth can be linked to low commitment, which was also pointed out as an infection that works against the church's God-given DNA. "In that it focuses on a desire to grow, to pay bills, etc., we have encouraged a cheap discipleship and a casual Christianity."[183]

An excellent point was made about this in *Developing a Strategy of Evangelism in the Local Church,* "Acts 1-3 makes it clear that their numerical growth accompanies effective evangelism. But that cannot be its motive. Gaining members can be become essentially a self-serving goal that is concerned more with attractiveness than transformation. The ultimate goal of evangelism is making disciples (see Matthew 28) not church members."[184]

During one of the interviews conducted concerning the 1990s renewal effort of the CGGC, one interviewee reported saying, "In the past denominational leaders reacted

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[181]Sloat, interview.

[182]Funk, interview.

[183]Dunn, DNA presentation.

[184]Dunn, *Strategy of Evangelism,* 3.

to the church planting efforts with the company line saying, 'We don't need new churches, because we can't find pastors for the existing ones.'[185]

## The Barrier of Fear of the Unknown

In the DNA of Servant Church seminar, fear is described as a sign of love deficiency.[186] In other words a natural outcome of a close walk with God is love of God and a boldness to share his love with others. In the Navigators seminar, fear was identified as the number one roadblock to disciple-making. The fear comes out of the fact that many pastors and leaders were never discipled themselves.[187] Glenn Smith, in a Planting Explosion Workshop attended by this researcher, said, "Fear and pride are reasons churches and pastors don't reproduce more churches. Churches fear the loss of finances, people, leaders, and momentum. Pastors resist planting churches as well because they fear losing their big church, believe there are enough churches already, believe their church can be revitalized, or that too much risk is involved as well."[188]

## The Barrier of Poor Visionary Leadership

This researcher attended a live simulcast of a *Global Leadership Summit* and heard Bill Hybels caution about vision and leadership that is pertinent to leading long-term transition. Vision is extremely vulnerable in the middle years. You have energy

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[185]George Reser, telephone interview by author, June 20, 2011.

[186]Dunn, DNA presentation.

[187]Gilmore, lecture.

[188]Glenn Smith, "Planting Explosion Workshop" (lecture, Harrisburg, PA, May 24, 2010).

bursts at the beginning (A) and near the end (C). Be careful in those "B" years to practice the spiritual disciplines.[189]

In a document titled *Final Report on Small Conferences* obtained by this research from the CGGC Executive Director, pastoral leadership was mentioned as the number one most debilitating factor to church growth.[190] A pastor interviewed by this researcher added that lack of ownership to go missional is a barrier.[191] One former conference president said what Logan called "sodalic leadership" was pushed out. This left a dearth of leadership with few influencers. The interviewee also added, "New wineskins did not work well with them."[192]

## The Barrier of Lack of Teaching on the Spiritual Disciplines

A lack of practice and teaching on the spiritual disciplines such as prayer and the Holy Spirit were mentioned by the interviewees. Spiritual disciplines will be discussed in more depth under question number two.

## The Barrier of Lack of Teaching Regarding Spiritual Giftedness

A lack of teaching and understanding of spiritual giftedness was indicated as a barrier by the research sources. This was particularly a fact in the denomination in the past. David Draper reported in an interview by this author that the CGGC is now operating their commissions with spiritually gifted people in their areas of work. There

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[189]Bill Hybels, "Global Leadership Summit" (simulcast, Lives Changed By Christ, Manhiem, PA, August 10, 2012).

[190]Heffner, Meador, Boadway, Quade, Rockey, and Watson, *Final Report Task Force on Small Conference Concern to General Conference Executive Committee,* March 19, 1991, 3.

[191]Tatum, interview.

[192]Reser, interview.

was a time when people were asked to volunteer without the needed giftedness for the job.[193]

Jim Moss Jr. reported using the CGGC discipleship course (AIM) Associates in Ministry for the last fifteen years and graduating sixty people from it. An entire quarter of the program is dedicated to spiritual giftedness. The skill of choosing people with spiritual gifts for the task was frequently mentioned in the research. While on the other hand, ungifted or inexperienced staff for positions was noted by those describing the CGGC in the Logan interviews.

<div align="center">The Barrier of Low Koinia</div>

Logan was also quoted as saying that the CGGC called itself a body, but it was not. Everyone did his own thing. Logan used the term "loose confederation of churches" to describe the CGGC.[194] There were turf wars over such issues as the University of Findlay trustee control, doctrine, and the Church Advocate.

Similar dynamics of low koinia were present in the EFCOG as evident in the case study "The Straw That Broke the Camel's Back" completed by this researcher on the EFCOG for the Doctoral Ministry Spiritual Leadership class. In that situation, this researcher and elders attempted to resolve a conflict biblically but could not get one party to cooperate. This resulted in the loss of about a dozen members in 2010.

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[193]Draper, interview.

[194]Fred Quade, interview by author, York, PA, June 29, 2011.

The Barrier of Low Evangelistic Temperature

This has been characterized by resistance and apathy toward church planting in

the CGGC. Pastors interviewed regarding the Logan process described the CGGC as

losing their first love. Logan described the CGGC as evangelical on paper only and not in

practice.[195] In the seminar Moving Ministry Out the Door, the presenter noted that

mission goes hand in hand with spirituality.[196] The EFCOG was a microcosm of the

denomination.

One interviewee stated that many in the church assume everyone there knows the

Lord.[197]Larry Osborne cautioned that churches going missional must be healthy, as they

can experience spiritual and organizational burnout going missional. They need health

underneath as evidenced by unity. Unity needs to be evident within the church and to

those outside the church.[198]

This barrier was also alluded to in *The Gift of the Church*, a webinar in *The City*

*Series* hosted by Zondervan. In answering the question about why so many people are

negative about the church, the presenter points to spiritual warfare and quotes Martin

Luther as saying, "The church is the biggest sinner as some in the church are not

Christians."[199] Robert Logan described the CGGC with the term "nominality" as

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[195]Draper, interview.

[196]Williams, lecture.

[197]Dunn, interview.

[198] Larry, Osborne, "Sticky Church: Closing the Back Door," Webinar, http://www.onthecity.org/ conversations, The City Series by Zondervan [accessed September 30, 2011].

[199] James G. Samra, *"The Gift of the Church,"* Webinar, http://www.onthecity.org/conversations, The City series by Zondervan, December 16, 2010.

evidenced by lack of passion for the lost.[200] As a result, Jim Moss Sr. titled his book on church planting *Returning to Our First Love.*

## The Barrier of Finances

The research indicated that in traditional churches, budgets are more finance-driven than in missional churches. In missional churches, mission more often drives the budget. It was reported in Chapter One of this project that sixty-six percent of the financial contributors in the EFCOG are age sixty-one or older, and fifty percent are over the age of seventy-one. The vast majority of the congregation is in retirement and probably held to a fixed income level.

Research of the expenses verses income of the EFCOGfor the last thirteen years shows a constant excess in expenditures verses income. The church was able to sustain itself because of surplus capital and intersts from wills and estates. However, over time due to rising costs of maintaining an aging building, a depletion of members, capital, and the lack of a strategic plan to make disciples, the church had taken on a survival mentality. The first figure shows the expenses of the church verses its income without the income of invested funds. Clearly expenses exceeded general fund income.

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[200]Reist, interview.
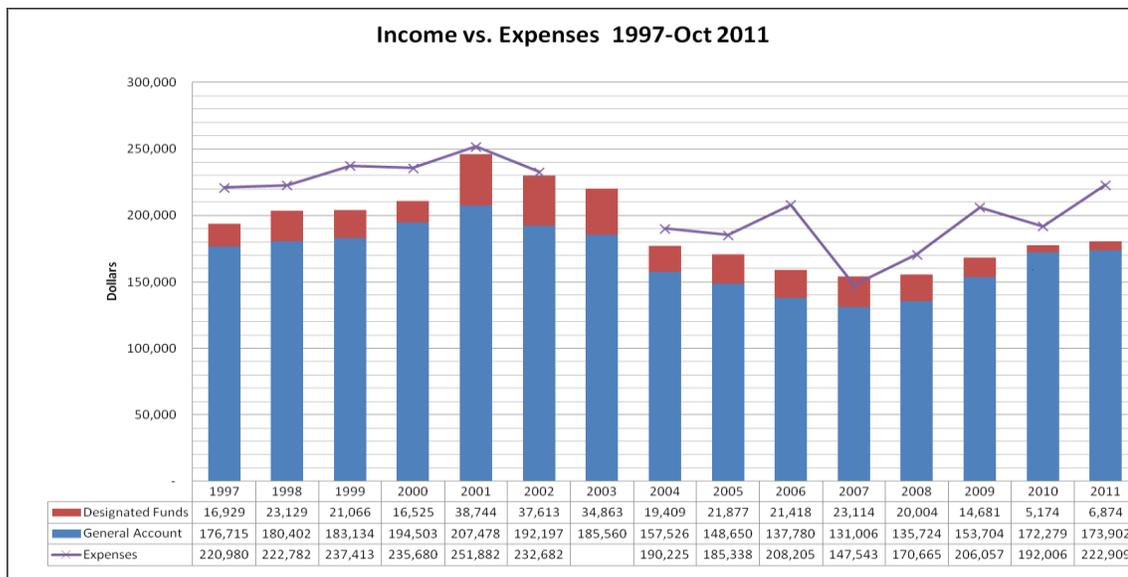
Figure 5.8. Income Versus Expenses Excluding Capital Account 1997-2011

The second figure shows income verses expenses with capital invested interests. Over the years the expenses were not reduced to match depleting income in general fund as well as income from invested funds. As a result, the EFCOG went into the 2012 fiscal year with a budget deficit of over $30,000.00 projected.

Consequently, the congregation was forced to re-evaluate property insurance, utilities, staff salaries, and hours. After these new measures were taken, the 2012 fiscal year closed with only a $2,500.00 deficit. In addition, more volunteers are being engaged to fold bulletins, preparing mailings, and serving as accompanists.

The financial barrier will be discussed and evaluated in greater depth in Chapter Six: Evaluation and Recommendations of this project.

| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Capital Account | 14,101 | 5,616 | 82,417 | 34,088 | 17,716 | 22,431 | 19,534 | 33,445 | 35,935 | 32,710 | 40,941 | 36,962 | 28,446 | 15,264 | 25,360 |
| Designated Funds | 16,929 | 23,129 | 21,066 | 16,525 | 38,744 | 37,613 | 34,863 | 19,409 | 21,877 | 21,418 | 23,114 | 20,004 | 14,681 | 5,174 | 6,874 |
| General Account | 176,715 | 180,402 | 183,134 | 194,503 | 207,478 | 192,197 | 185,560 | 157,526 | 148,650 | 137,780 | 131,006 | 135,724 | 153,704 | 172,279 | 173,902 |
| Expenses | 220,980 | 222,782 | 237,413 | 235,680 | 251,882 | 232,682 | | 190,225 | 185,338 | 208,205 | 147,543 | 170,665 | 206,057 | 192,006 | 222,909 |

Figure 5.9 Income Versus Expenses Including Capital Account 1997-2011

The Barrier of Doctrine

One pastor interviewed believed an inadequate view of the doctrine of Christ is a barrier to becoming more missional.[201] Craig Sider says that not understanding the purpose of Sunday morning and an unclear understanding of what it means to be a follower of Christ are common barriers.[202] In the interviews conducted on the renewal process of the CGGC, the loss of first love was frequently mentioned. One interviewee close to the Logan process also stated that there was very little discussion in the denomination about the role of the Holy Spirit.[203] These barriers will be considered in developing recommendations in Chapter Six of this project. Many of the barriers are also

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[201]Funk, interview.

[202]Craig Sider, telephone interview by author, March 24, 2011.

[203]Dunn, interview, September 22, 2010.

related to the skills the research found to be needed to transition to becoming more missional.

## Second Research Question

The second research question to be posed was *What leadership skills are needed to guide a church to become missional?* Interviewees were asked to answer this question with pastor and laity in mind. As in question number one, the following responses are the outcomes from all the pertinent research in this project. Sources will be cited accordingly.

### The Skill of Shepherding

Research obtained from interviews of experienced pastors of traditional churches noted that shepherding must go on even in the midst of moving missional. Larry Osborne in the *Sticky Church* webinar strongly emphasized that the back door must be closed.[204] A pastor interviewed reported that an increase of pastoral and elder care needs to happen.[205] Pastoral care needs to be relational and loving. Jim Moss Sr. reported that, "A pastor needs to be able to know what it means to pay the rent in order to bring about desired changes. Identify and prioritize the rent factors such as visitation and get them done."[206] Craig Sider adds, "A leader must love the people so he/she can lead them."[207]

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[204]Osborne, webinar.

[205]Dunn, interview, June 30, 2011.

[206]Moss Sr., interview.

[207]Sider, interview.

[207]Smith, lecture.

## The Skill of Storytelling

Jesus was known as a storyteller. One presenter identified storytelling as essential for successfully planting churches.[208]  One pastor interviewed had this to say, "Help break them out of old molds into new molds by what you celebrate and highlight."[209] A good way to celebrate is by telling stories.

## The Skill of Spiritual Leadership

Spiritual leadership is also a very broad skill area. In a workshop attended by this researcher, the presenter emphasized a leader loving God as the foundation for success in making disciples.[210] One pastor interviewed said, "Someone has to say, 'You are not doing your job!' A leader can't be a people pleaser."[211]

In his workshop on *Kicking the Leadership Lid,* Craig Sider reported that leadership begins with the leader taking ownership and leading self.[212] An experienced pastor of a traditional church reports that traditional churches tend to have rigid structure; therefore, a leader needs to be able to work outside of the structure to bring about missional change. He goes on to say, *"*Lead from the front and keep vision out in front of them."[213]

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[208]Sider, interview.

[208]Gilmore, lecture, 13.

[208]Tatum, interview.

[210]Craig Sider, "Kicking the Leadership Lid: Infocus Leadership" (lecture, Eastern Regional Conference Annual Sessions, Doubling Gap Center, Newville, PA, April 27, 28, and 29).

[211]Reist, interview.

It is also important to remember that traditional people need to know you respect them. So adding things is better than taking things away from them.[214] Another successful and experienced pastor reports that a leader needs the ability to move people. Leaders need to have a futuristic perspective (ten to fifteen years). It is important to show them "If we do this, this is the consequence." So remember to focus on where you are going.[215]

Jim Collins listed these leadership behaviors that achieve greatness. 1) The x factor of great leadership is humility. 2) Fanatic discipleship that is consistent. 3) Creativity that is blended with discipline, which specifically means being able to persevere when the going gets tough.[216] Lack of pastoral leadership was listed as the number one factor that came out of the CGGC Task Force for Small Conference Concerns. "What now becomes exceedingly clear is the urgent need to improve the quality and competence of small conference leadership – both pastoral leadership as well as conference level office holders."[217]

Craig Groseschel also mentioned the need for leaders to create ongoing feedback loops. He added the need for mentoring moments and leadership development. These are all important in the handing over of leadership.[218] A retired seasonal pastor and judicatory leader said, "Pastors needs innate leadership abilities. Average ability doesn't cut it

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[214]Mills, interview.

[215]Funk, interview.

[216]Jim Collins, "Global Leadership Summit"( simulcast, Lives Changed By Christ, Manheim ,PA, August 10, 2012).

[217] Wayne, Heffner, David Meador, Eddie Boadway, Fred Quade, Al Rockey, and Ed Watson, *Final Report Task Force on Small Conference Concern to General Conference Executive Committee,* Findlay, OH, March 19, 1991, 3.

[218]Groeschel, webinar.

anymore."[219] Another interviewee says, "Since music is a key component, a pastor should have, or be able to choose people with, some skills in music. It can start with just two or three people, but it must be done with some competency and a level of integrity. The transition needs to appeal to the desire of the older congregation."[220] The question for leaders then becomes, "How do I know if the leadership issue is me?" Stetzer says that you should speak to a confidante who will tell you the truth in love.[221]

*The Skill of Casting and Visionary Leadership*

Visionary leadership was mentioned in nearly all the books, articles, and interviews. Jim Moss Jr. reported vision needs to be caught.[222]This researcher believes it also needs to be taught as evidenced by the visionary sermons given in the past. Steve Dunn said, "vision needs to be articulated."[223] Jeff Rockey concurred with Dunn on the need to articulate vision in his interview.[224] Vision was frequently mentioned by the interviewees in this research project as a needed skill.

*Equipping and Empowering Laity*

Empowering people with the freedom to make decisions and trust them was mentioned as important. A leader needs to give people choices. Craig Sider said, "Your

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[219]Moss Sr., interview.

[220]Rockey, interview.

[221]Stetzer, simulcast.

[222]Jim Moss Jr., interview by author, Newville, PA, May 3, 2011.

[223]Dunn, interview, June 30, 2011.

[224]Rockey, interview.

best work is done in others. Empowering others is the difference between activity verses accomplishment."[225]

*Spiritual Disciplines*

An interviewee believes pastor and leaders need to have a solid prayer life, because God grows the church. This is particularly important in an anxious and broken world. The term *self-differentiation* is particularly relevant to practicing spiritual disciplines in the midst of the daily emotional grind of ministry and transitioning. In the workshop *Introduction to Family System's Theory - Bowen Theory* attended by this researcher, *self-differentiation* was defined as "The capacity to define yourself and yet stay in touch with other people. Congregations become emotionally anxious and need leaders who know themselves amidst those times. Leaders need to look to Jesus during those times, and they will see that he got alone, listened to people, and told stories."[226]

Ed Stetzer called it prayerful dependence. He goes on and says that in transformational churches, prayer is the engine. He then asks the question, "What makes God angry?" He answers his question by saying, earthly activities that replace prayer, which is meant to be the proper use of his house. When Jesus is embraced in spiritual disciplines, so will his priorities be embraced.[227]

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[225]Sider, "Kicking the Leadership Lid."

[226]Jack Guyler, "Introduction to Family System's Theory: Bowen Theory" (lecture, Harrisburg, PA, March 21, 2012).

[227]Ed Stetzer, "Transformational Church: The Exchange Simulcast" (simulcast by Lifeway, Enola Church of God, Enola, PA, September 6, 2010).

*Team Building*

The research also shows that the leadership has to develop a team ministry. Interviews report that pastors need to delegate and not do the entire ministry.[228] The ability to unleash the people's gifts and model what you want from your people is also necessary. What you celebrate, reward, and tell stories about will determine what you become. The pastor needs to celebrate wins along the way. First, he/she must love the people to the point where the congregation knows that they will not be taken advantage of by a pastor.[229] Trust is key, since many of the qualities that a congregation uses to define themselves will become questions during the transition. Ed Stetzer listed these leadership team characteristics: a compelling purpose, the right team, and a conducive culture, a culture that moves people from "It's all about me," to being outward-focused.[230]

Relational intentionality was another factor Stetzer emphasized in building a team. He asked the question, "How do I do it with a congregation of 60 or more years?" In response to this question he stressed the need to develop strategic relationships. Pray that God will help you love the people no matter what. Celebrate early victories and tell them what they are doing well. Understand the principle of matching pains. Then always model leadership and remember somebody is watching. There is a connection between relationship intentionality and spiritual growth. This is why it is important to live out

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[228]Dunn, interview, June 30, 2011.

[229]Mills, interview.

[230]Stetzer, "Transformational Church."

relationships intentionally the first two months. Going into a transitional church, a leader should spend one year developing relationships.

*Discernment*

Pastors interviewed reported these things regarding wisdom and discernment. "[Leaders need] the ability to discern and identify brake pedal people and gas pedal people as well as the ability to recognize what God is doing and his timing.[231] In addition, "Know your strengths and weaknesses." This idea of wisdom and discernment was also mentioned by Craig Groeschel in his presentation at the Global Leadership Summit. His topic on leadership was *The Strongest Link*. He said this about leadership, "We tend to overestimate what we can do in the short-term and underestimate what we can do in the long-term, through faithfulness.[232]

*Patience*

Respondents in the research almost unanimously mentioned that patience is a necessary leadership characteristic for both congregation and pastor to make the transition. A compliment of hard work and good temperament were also mentioned as important.[233] Changing culture takes time. Year one is the honeymoon, years two through five are tough. It takes until year five to begin seeing the greatest growth.[234] Another pastor, who was interviewed and has been successful in leading a traditional church, said,

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[231] Dunn, interview, June 30, 2011.

[232] Craig Groeshel, "Global Leadership Summit" (simulcast, Lives Changed By Christ, Manheim, PA, August 10, 2012).

[233] Moss Sr., interview.

[234] Stetzer, simulcast.

"Change comes slowly for the WWII generation."[235] The process of leading a traditional

attractional model church through the missional process was described similarly by

another long-term pastor in this way, "It takes relentless patience not to give up."[236] To

make the point about this barrier, another pastor, requesting not to be identified, when

interviewed recalled that at his church, which has made significant progress toward

becoming a more missional church, it took eight years to put up a new outdoor sign.[237]

*Skill*

There were some common profile characteristics of these transitional pastors

interviewed. All but one was in their mid-fifties with ten or more years of experience, and

all but two were serving at least nine or more years at their congregation. Terry

Broadwater also echoed the sentiment when he said, "This process is slow and difficult,

and God is using seasoned pastors between forty-five and fifty-five years of age to

transition traditional churches to renewal."[238]

*The Skill of Embodying and Modeling a Missional Life*

This skill is illustrated by this statement, "People need to hear about Jesus, but

they also need to see him. As his ambassadors on this earth, we are to reflect his love,

show his heart, and incarnate his presence wherever God sends us."[239] The trend of

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[235]Mills, interview.

[236]Funk, interview.

[238]Terry Broadwater, "Transforming Your Church into a Church Multiplication Center*"* (lecture, Doubling Gap Center, Newville, PA, September 29, 2010).

[239]Kevin G. Harney, *Organic Outreach for Ordinary People: Sharing Good News Naturally* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 125.

church attendance in Europe is two to five percent as a result of the church leaving their missionary mindset.

*The Skill of Missional Mindset*

Church leadership must have a missionary mindset in the Postmodern culture. In *Growing Your Church by Engaging Imperfect People* webinar, the following barriers are products of the Postmodern experiment of the leaders in the 1960s, of which today's leaders must be aware: There is too much tolerance of right and wrong issues. For instance, the church needs to understand that being gay affects people who are not gay as well. Tolerance in our culture is a cheap substitute for grace.

Secondly, people are no longer putting trust in traditional institutions such as marriage in the Postmodern culture. These once seemly stable pillars of civilization are now being greatly questioned. The church needs to create a culture that helps overcome people's fear. Leaders need to understand how the culture views truth and its idea that there is no absolute truth. The church needs to be humble enough to admit it does not know it all. The brokenness and aloneness of families and a mobile society characterizes our culture. One out of three is involved in abortion, and one out of two couples live together outside of marriage. We need to know that not everyone is on board about what the Bible says about sex.[240]

The research has also found that the skill of exegesis of the community and culture is important. "Effective ministry to the unchurched requires an objective look at

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[240]John Burke, "Growing Your Church by Engaging Imperfect People," Webinar, http://www.onthecity.org/conversation/growing-your-church-by-engaging-imperfect-people [accessed September 14, 2010].

nature, values, and experiences of the people we are trying to reach, never assuming they are just like us."[241] This means listening and going out to the people.

Larry Osborne echoed this same idea in his *Sticky Church* webinar. In answering the question about what the keys to the culture are, he responded by saying, "We must be authentic and help others. In order do this we must be able to exegete their culture."[242]

Glenn Smith, in speaking of planting churches, said, "We must learn to think and behave like missionaries." He adds that, "God's purpose is to keep us in the marketplace as Jesus prayed in John 17:13-15."[243] To be incarnational means a hands-on approach. This means to discover the culture you are in and know your church and your community. Another interviewee says, "Do your prep work."[244] The interviewees add that a pastor must find an avenue to be involved in the community outside of a religious context. If "outsiders" are going to come into the church, then they must know it is a safe place and what to expect before they get there. The best way for that to happen is to know the leaders or pastor. It is important to have leadership that is willing to take some risks, knowing that if the transition succeeds, lives will be added to the kingdom of God. If it does not succeed as imagined, the congregation will be richer in its understanding of God and his infinite love for us.[245]

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[241]Steven Dunn, "Bridgebuilders; Helping Traditional Churches Reach Their Unchurched Neighbors" (manual presented at a seminar, Elizabethtown, PA, 2010, 12).

[242]Osborne, webinar.

[243]Smith, lecture.

[244]Funk, interview.

[245]Rockey, interview.

John Burke asked and then answered the following question, "How do you reach out to them?" He says:

> Create a culture mindset in them, so that when they go they are ready. Create a culture of grace that says, "Come as you are." Go to people and put skin on grace, because people feel condemned by truth and need grace. Model the story of John 4. We have to go to people and show them how Jesus sees them. We need to be real to them and they to us. Help people see how God sees them. When one is connected to God, one is connected to culture.[246]

*A New Scorecard*

The research was clear in showing that there needs to be a new measure of success in the church. "We need to ask, 'How is God working outside the four walls? Where can the church have a low hanging victory so they can celebrate?'"[247] How do you give rewards in church? Emphasize missional acts over attendance, budget, and programs.

*A Call to Repentance*

Interviewees frequently mentioned the need to fall on one's knees, repent, and ask God to forgive the church for failing to fulfill his will. This was also mentioned in the Logan interviews as well. One interviewee added that the church needs to develop a lifestyle of repentance.[248]

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[246]Burke, webinar.

[247]Stetzer, simulcast.

[248]Sloat, interview.

*The Skill of* S*piritual Giftedness and Apostolic Expressions*

One successful transitional pastor mentioned the need to have an entrepreneurial spirit.[249] George Resser reported that apostolic expressions of the body of Christ are as legitimately "church" as the parish/diocesan/congregational expressions.[250]

*The Skill of Making Disciples of Non-Disciples*

A helpful point to this author on this topic was reported in the *Developing an Evangelism Strategy in The Local Church Seminar.* In it, the danger of decisional Christianity was discussed. The Churches of God were formed out of the time of the Second Great Awakening in the days when evangelists traversed the United States getting people to make decisions for Christ. This decisional Christianity soon devolved into getting people "saved" so they could go to heaven when they died.

In the workshop, it was added that George Barna reported early in 2012 that fifty percent of persons who have made decisions for Jesus Christ have fallen away from the faith or simply adopted the position of a casual Christian instead of an authentic disciple of Jesus Christ.[251] After having made this point on the danger of decisional Christianity, a definition was given of an authentic disciple of Jesus Christ. "A disciple is a person who is committed to live daily in obedience to the will and purposes of God, committed to bearing fruit for the kingdom of God."[252] One of the skills that goes into making disciples is to learn how to share your faith in a way that best fits your personal profile.[253]

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[249]Funk, interview.

[250]Resser, interview.

[251]Dunn, *Developing an Evangelism Strategy,* 10.

[252]Dunn, "Bridgebuilders" 2011, 11.

*The Skill of Conflict Management*

The research also indicated that skill in conflict management is helpful in the move to missional. In his presentation *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Conflict,* William Ury said these things*, "*Conflict is natural. The question is, 'Can we deal with it in a natural way?' We need the power not to react. We also need the following skills: 1) To focus on the needs of the people. 2) Be creative. 3) Be fair."[254]

*The Skill of Being a People Person Verses Being Task-Oriented*

It is important to get buy-in and people on board. At one seminar, the presenter said that loving people should include a concern for their spiritual welfare as in Matthew 22:39. Develop strategic relationships with the E.F. Huttons.[255] These are the influencers of the congregation. When they talk people listen.

*The Skill of Preaching*

Traditional and non-traditional churches value quality preaching. The research shows the need to proclaim inspiring evangelistic messages verses informational messages. This researcher would also hypothesize that effective storytelling connects with the culture. Jesus was a great storyteller. Greg Funk believes that churches and sermons need to have a high view of Christ.[256]

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[253]Dunn and Bell*, Sharing Your Faith.*

[254]William Ury, "Global Leadership Summit" (presentation, Lives Changed by Christ, Lancaster, PA, August 10, 2012).

[255]Stetzer, simulcast.

[256]Funk, interview.

**Third Research Question**

This researcher then asked interviewees the third research question: *What are the strategies needed to become a missional church?* Many of the suggestions were responses to the barriers they found common in making a transition to become missional. These strategies will also be valuable to this researcher for making recommendations in Chapter Six of this project.

A Strategy of Leadership Development

The importance of leadership was clearly made in the research. No other item was given as much attention as spiritual leadership. Some of the areas the research indicated needing to be considered when developing a leadership strategy were developing and articulating vision. Included in this is a strategy to communicate to the congregation clearly and redundantly. Mark Ongley recommends speaking to leadership about mission. Do retreats on mission. Emphasize mission and making disciples. Ask the question, "Are we accomplishing making disciples?"[257] Steve Dunn emphasized the need for clearly-stated core values to operate by.[258] Others mentioned a strategy for leadership and leadership training as well as conflict management and teaching leaders how to do it. Interviewees and seminar leaders often mentioned needing a strategy to evaluate "things not inspected."[259]

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[257]Ongley, interview.

[258]Dunn, interview, June 30, 2011.

[259]Dunn, interview, June 30, 2011.

Bill Hybels listed the following works habits of leaders: 1) Focus your energy bursts on things that most impact your organization, 2) Plan your succession. Set up your churches to be stronger after you leave, 3) As leaders we must move people from here to there. We need to show them that they cannot stay here.[260]

## A Strategy of Spiritual Formation

The research was significant regarding the need for a strategy to include spiritual formation. This begins with loving God first by reconciling people individually to God.[261] The disciplines of prayer and the Word were identified as essential in seeking God's will in a congregation. Jim Moss Jr. stated three strategies regarding spiritual formation: 1) A pastor and leaders need to have a solid prayer life because God grows the church. We are his instruments, but God unleashes the power. 2) Be spiritually refreshed and refilled. 3) He recommends the CGGC discipleship course Associates in Ministry (AIM), which he has lead sixty people through during his fifteen years as pastor of Eberlys Mill Church of God.[262]

James Moss Sr. adds that a solid Bible study and in particular the gospels is necessary. Help people get to know Jesus and his claims. The church needs strong individual prayer time as well as groups praying together. Help people see the harvest and the need to pray for harvesters.[263] Earl Mills said, regarding the church he pastored in Chambersburg, "Prayer opened possibilities."[264]

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[260]Hybels, simulcast.

[261]Dunn, "Bridgebuilders", 23.

[262]Moss Jr., interview.

[263]Moss Sr., interview.

Craig Sider had a different twist on spiritual formation. He suggests developing a spiritual formation strategy around service, so he says the church needs to ask some questions of itself:

> What are we looking to produce? Disciples! Is a two-hour slot enough? Jesus' disciple-making process involved action and then reflection about those actions. Discipleship is more effective in doing mission in our community than pulling off Sunday morning, being integrated in our community rather than isolated in our building. Prayer then comes out of those experiences.[265]

Sider goes on and says the church needs to ask, "How are we gifted to address the needs of the community?" Greg Funk believes the spiritual discipline of silence is missing with pastors and needs to be part of a spiritual formation strategy.

Jeff Rockey really got to the heart of what is needed if a spiritual formation strategy is going to be effective with these words:

> But there is one overarching strategy or discipline needed to become a spiritual church. It is vital for a pastor, the elders, and a congregation to gain a heart for the lost and broken that are living among them. Our purpose, simply stated, is "to see people the way that God sees them, to see the hearts of the lost with the compassion of Christ." This is not the discipline of evangelism as much as it is the discipline of prayer and obedience. I challenge people to pray that prayer (our purpose) when they get up in the morning and when they go to bed, as they drive to work and as they drive home, before they read their Bibles or their devotions, live to see people with the eyes of God. There is a great deal that follows that because as God opens eyes then there needs to be action, but becoming missional cannot be programmed or it will not be effective and will not last.[266]

The research suggests that a call to repentance should be part of a spiritual formation strategy.

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[264]Mills, interview.

[265]Sider, interview.

[266]Rockey, interview.

A Strategy of Incarnational Ministry

A strategy of loving one's neighbor needs to be developed also. This can be accomplished through acts of service and building bridges in the community. It is vital for a pastor, the elders, and a congregation to gain a heart for the lost and broken that are living among them. Established pastors needs to spend twenty percent of their time building relationships among non-church people.[267] Stephen Dunn begins his discussion on strategy in *Developing a Strategy of Evangelism in the Local Church* with a quote from Kevin Harney's book *Organic Outreach for Ordinary People* about a strategy of love, "The starting point of effective outreach is not a system, a program, or a specific presentation. It is a heart deeply in love with God and with people. Without love, no strategy will work. With God's love, we can change the world".[268] Invest wisely in people who will pass the baton. This has been the strategy since the beginning of time.[269] When the research is taken as a whole, the strategy is clear. The church is to go! The church and the believers are called and sent by Jesus Christ (Matthew 28).

A Strategy of Small Groups and Assimilation

Closing the back door through small groups was stressed as key in the *Sticky Church* webinar by Osborne. The church needs small groups in order to develop long-term, deep relationships through sermon-based small groups.[270] Transformational churches note the number of new small groups begun as a way of measuring success.

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[267]Walker, lecture.

[268]Harney, 21.

[269]Gilmore, 26.

[270]Osborne, webinar.

A Strategy of Partnering

Partner with other churches and para-churches. The more the church links arms

the more of the church they are.[271] This strategy was mentioned in an interview with

Doug and Don Lamb. Doug and Don are twins who are natives to Lancaster County and

Elizabethtown. Both have been involved in church ministry as layman or pastors for

thirty years. For those thirty years, they have joined with any pastors or churches that

would and prayed for the region. When this researcher asked Doug Lamb how older

churches in the area who are struggling can meet the challenges of the day he responded

by saying:

> Keep connected with the other churches by doing regional events even when it
> doesn't result in more people attending. Look for ways to bless and touch the
> community (which I think you are doing with Manor Care, Poplar Street
> apartments, Block parties....). I believe E-town Church of God is on this path and
> making progress. I believe it will take a little time, but soon there will be more
> young people and able-bodied servants ready to hold up the light of the Gospel.[272]

This researcher asked Don Lamb several questions as well. One in particular was

regarding churches partnering in the community. Below he responded to the following

questions: "What has been your perspective of church/community relations in the past?

What did it look like? What are perceptions of the EFCOG?"

> This is being kindled by strong leadership from the top that is sharing this vision
> with the congregations. Yes, most of the pastors' individual ministries take up
> most of their focus and time, but they have also carved out time for the regional
> ministry opportunities. People are slowly realizing that their church is not pushing
> itself as the "best" church in town, but they are for and supporting the other sister
> churches in the community. This is being seen in the Elizabethtown First Church
> of God. The leaders in this congregation are outward focused and upward
> thinking. They are challenging their people to think differently even if it doesn't

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[271]Sarna, webinar.

[272]Doug Lamb, interview by author, Elizabethtown, PA, January 30, 2013.

seem like it is making an immediate difference in the congregation. This church has hosted regional events that have blessed the whole community.[273]

## A Strategy of Worship

One source of the research noted that worship is most important.[274] The research also indicates that we need to move from style to worship. The issue is beyond style to the purpose of actively embracing Jesus. Teach people how to build community and laugh together. Look beyond one's congregation today, and ask how you are raising up a new generation of music. Other things mentioned by the research were worship planning and worship leaders and leadership.[275] Doug Lamb also said this about changing the church, "I don't think it is just in tweaking the worship, the times you meet, or the topics you preach on."

## A Strategy to Measure Success

As seen in the review of literature, an essential characteristic of the missional church are new measures of success. In the past the predominant measures were attendances, budgets, and programs. There must be a strategy to measure additional things such as changed lives of people. The Postmodern culture loves to hear stories of how lives are changing. Jesus told stories all the time, because it was effective. One interviewee said, "Create a new score card. Reward and celebrate victories. What you reward is what you have in your church."[276]

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[273]Don Lamb, interview by author, Elizabethtown, PA, January 30, 2013.

[274]Sarna, webinar.

[275]Lamb, interview.

[276]Stetzer, simulcast.

**Summary**

The results and analysis of the research have been reported. This chapter began by reporting on the broad spectrum of the research. Then after completing a detailed report on the data, the research was interpreted from the narrower perspective of the three research questions this project set out to answer. The significance of the research in this project, is that the results are not only relevant to the narrower context of the EFCOG, but broader church context as well. Furthermore, the outcomes of Chapter Five were instrumental for this researcher identifying five recommendations to be detailed in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER SIX SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

This researcher officially began this project under the guidance of the Doctor of

Ministry Team at the Winebrenner Theological Seminary in 2010. Nevertheless, much of

the pertinent research began well before in 2008, upon the arrival of this researcher to the

project context. This research project has indeed been a challenging academic exercise.

However, it has been more than an exercise; it has been a faith journey. This researcher

has been living and growing with this project. In a way, this project concludes in Chapter

Six, but in essence it has no ending.

In view of the fact that an in-depth analysis of the research was given in Chapter

Five of this project, only a summary of the findings and conclusions will be necessary in

Chapter Six. The recommendations proposed in Chapter Six are limited to the research

context at the EFCOG.

**Evaluation of the Project**

This project succeeded in its purpose of identifying potential principles, and

examples from those principles, for making a successful transition from attractional

ministry to missional ministry. Barriers, skills, and strategies to become more missional

have been identified and collected in this research. Beyond articulating the methods

involved in making the missional transition, the project itself is a resource that provides a

theological, historical, and practical framework, which can be generalized to any traditional church desiring to become more missional.

## Strengths

The primary sources of research are in the form of qualitative research consisting of one-on-one interviews, focus groups, discovery groups, and lectures at seminars by experts with hands-on experiences and successes with missional transition. This is a definite strength of this project.

Secondly, the length of this project provided the opportunity to field test some of the principles gleaned from the research. The repeat of congregational core values surveys, evaluations from elders, and interviews of local pastors provided valuable feedback and evaluation.

## Limitations

The missional journey of the EFCOG is a slow process and will continue far beyond the time frame of this project. This project is a spiritual journey and it will take a decade to change the church culture. Hence, some conclusions are yet to be determined because of the nature of this missional journey.

## **Summary**

The research problem has been identified as follows: The Elizabethtown First Church of God is lacking a strategic plan for transitioning from a traditional attraction-based church model to a missional model of ministry. The problem is further evident by the sub-problems such as a lack of a clear vision, a tepid evangelistic fervor, and a poor sense of *koinia* that has resulted in unnecessary conflicts. This researcher set the research

problem at EFCOG in the larger church context in order to gain a broader perspective of the problem and to generate solutions to the problem.

<p align="center">The Larger Context</p>

This project began with a discussion of the decline occurring within most traditional churches in America. This is evident particularly among those traditional churches that continued to function from an attractional model of ministry that was no longer relevant in a post-modern culture.

The quantitative and qualitative research indicated that this model of doing ministry was once successful and is now failing many traditional congregations in their responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission. This failure causes many of these congregations to become entrapped in a cycle of self-preservation and ultimately a failure in their kingdom purpose.

As the research has shown, the declines of these congregations are highlighted by the rapid population increase in America at the same time. At a recent seminar, the presenter provided a startling statistic that shows the ineffectiveness and opportunity of the church in America. America is now the third leading receiver of missionaries behind only China and India.[277] It is therefore obvious that the problem at the EFCOG is not unique as seen in the historical context of the broader church.

The research reported that the problem in the American church today can be traced back to the effects of the Constantinian Era. Constantine became the emperor of Rome in AD 306, and converted to Christianity. His conversion had far-reaching effects on the common practice of all present-day religions. Author Reggie McNeal attributes the

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[277]James Moss Sr., "People Spots Seminar" (lecture, Harrisburg, PA, August 4, 2013).

beginning of the problems of inward-focused- and traditional attraction-based ministry to the Constantine Christian era that was characterized by a clergy-dominated religion and centered on designated places of worship.

There were times when primitive Christianity tried to rise out of the influence of Constantine. Such was the era of the Second Great Awakening in the early 1800s. The immediate impact of those revivals was evident by the crowds they drew and decisions for Christ that were made. The research also indicated that the successes of the Second Great Awakening also contributed to the decline of the church, as it stubbornly adhered to its methods even after the time of effectiveness for them had passed.

In this project it was identified in Chapter One on page six that the number of plateaued or declining churches in North America is at an all-time high and that seventy – five to eighty percent of the American churches are in plateau or decline. Statistics show that only twenty three percent of the American population attends church more than once a month, and the greatest decline is in the traditional church. In spite of the fact that more than 91 million people lived in the United States in 2000 that did not live there sixteen years prior, church attendance has declined one to two percent annually.

Dan Kimball reported that the American church has failed to change its ministry approach to address the cultural change from modernism to postmodernism. As a result, the number of Christians and churchgoers began to shrink, and churches began to market themselves to Christians seeking to attract more "consumers" (who were already Christian) for their product. Reaching the lost and serving the community was forgotten or outsourced to a small subsection of the church. The research shows that America has

become more unchurched because the postmodern culture of today makes it more challenging for the church to minister than any time in its history.

To bring it closer to the research context, Chuck Frank, Director of Church Planting and Evangelism for the Eastern Region of the Churches of God General Conference, shared that 3,500 churches in America close every year and eighty-five percent have plateaued or are declining.

## Denominational Context

Research was also reported that in the narrower denominational context, statistics in the CGGC show decreases in membership, morning worship, and new church plants. According to James Moss Sr., the denomination is experiencing a net loss of two and one-half churches annually. This dire situation of the CGGC was also echoed by Robert Logan during an administrative council meeting of the CGGC when he informed the leadership that if renewal and revitalization did not soon occur with emphasis on church planting, the Churches of God would cease to exist as a viable contributor to the kingdom of God. Interviews of those involved in the Logan process confirmed these conclusions. The Churches of God lost the first love of their founder, John Winebrenner.

## Elizabethtown First Church of God

The research then turned to the project context of the Elizabethtown First Church of God. This congregation is the fruit of the revivalist efforts of the Second Great Awakening, pioneered by her denominational founder, John Winebrenner, and others in the 1830s. The early history of this congregation is a story of apostolic zeal and

perseverance. The membership reached its highest in 1973 with a total membership of 501 only to decline over the next four decades.

The first decade of the twenty-first century was particularly challenging for this congregation. In the time period of 2004 through 2008, this congregation has seen three full-time pastoral changes as well as two interim ministers. The Sunday morning yearly average worship attendance reached 170 in 2000 only to drop to an all-time low 101 in 2007. During this decade, the church experienced loss of members and financial support as well as few conversions and baptisms. It is evident that this congregation has had to overcome some seemingly insurmountable odds during its nearly 175-year tenure.

The Elizabethtown First Church of God now exists in a highly competitive church community. This researcher found fourteen established churches in Elizabethtown Borough and forty-one in the Elizabethtown Area School District. This does not include recent church plants or house churches.

As a consequence of these trends nationally and locally, churches that were once considered prominent have plateaued, closed, or declined. Churches that at one time burned with a vision and passion for the non-Christian, born out of the Second Great Awakening, are now just shells of their former selves.

This researcher and the Doctor Ministry Team established the purpose of this research project to develop principles to guide the Elizabethtown First Church of God in their ministry transition from traditional to missional.

Biblical and Theological Foundation

In Chapter One, the research problem at EFCOG was identified. It was also established in Chapter One that there needs to be a new approach to doing ministry than in the past. That new approach was identified as a missional approach.

Chapter Two of this project gave a biblical and theological foundation for transitioning to become a missional church. For Christianity, the Bible is the most authoritative and respected source, directly available for correct theological information regarding missional theology. Therefore, in Chapter Two, key passages were examined from both the Old and New Testaments for the purpose of establishing the viability of transitioning to a missional model of ministry. That examination showed God to be a missionary God, who sent individuals, families, a nation, his Son, and ultimately his church to carry on his mission.

Also in Chapter Two, history and tradition were looked at in terms of how effective and faithful the church has been in accomplishing God's mission. The two-thousand-year history of the church provides a wealth of theological information on the research problem at hand and shows significant periods of time the church departed from its first-century love and its original mission.

Reason was appealed to for transitioning to a missional church. The research has shown that the changing culture and worldviews necessitate this transition. Due to this cultural shift, the church exists in a post-Christian culture and needs to do ministry differently. The project has shown that not all is lost, however, as evidenced through the examples and experiences from the interviews with pastors and judicatory leaders.

Literature Review

Chapter Three of this project offered a review of literature, definitions, and other sources that pertain to the missional church movement. Pertinent terms such as missional, modernism, and postmodernism were reviewed by the literature. The literature review included a discussion of the biblical and theological foundations of the missional movement. The review of literature confirmed that God is a sending God as established by those foundations.

The literature also supported the assumptions that there is a decline in the church in North America, while it flourishes in most other places around the world. A precipitating factor was noted to be a lack of cultural relevance between the church and culture. This is the result of the Western societies' shift from a Christian culture to a non-Christian or an anti-Christian culture.

A sociological factor relevant to the church was observed in the review of literature. It has clearly been seen by the literature that the American church is losing the numbers, influence, and vitality that it once had. The evidence demonstrated this crisis to be true not only in the national context but the local denominational context of this research project as well.

The situation of the American church today challenges the church to do ministry differently in order to regain its relevance. This chapter reviewed literature on a new way of doing ministry known as *missional* derived from the Latin term *missio Dei* or "mission of God".

The literature also demonstrated that the missional movement is not without its cautions and critics. One criticism of the missional shift is that is a slow process with a

new scorecard of measuring success that is not as quickly noticeable. In addition it was pointed out that the missional movement is relatively new and has not had enough time to be tested. In Chapter Three, a case was made for bringing together the attraction-based model of ministry and missional model. It showed that it need not be "either" missional "or" attractional but can be missional "and" attractional.

## Report and Analysis of Research

Chapters Four and Five reported on the methods and analysis contained in this research project. This project addressed three research questions. This researcher collected, analyzed, and categorized all research for the purpose of responding to these research questions. Examples of such research consisted of the biblical material, literature review, documents, statistical records, surveys, focus groups, interviews, and reports from missional seminars.

The first question asked for insight into the barriers traditional churches face in transitioning to become missional. This question assumed that there were common barriers that could be generalized to most traditional settings of which awareness would be helpful. This assumption proved to be correct by the research. These barriers included a broad spectrum of areas including physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual barriers.

The second research question for this project set out to discover what skills were necessary to bring about transition in traditional churches. Again, a comprehensive list of skills were developed and prioritized. Many of these skills were counterparts to the barriers listed in question number one.

The third research question for this project sought to discover strategies needed to bring about a missional transition. Out of these barriers, skills, and strategies this researcher will make recommendations later in this chapter.

## Findings

Chapter Five provided an in-depth analysis and report of the research findings as seen in the interviews, seminars, and research questions. This researcher also was able to receive feedback from the congregational surveys, leadership evaluations, and community interviews as to the progress the EFCOG was making to become missional. Included are some more of the findings that are pertinent to the evaluation of this project.

### Research Questions

The following are a summary of the findings from the three research questions as they pertain to the transition to becoming missional. This author considered all sources of research when responding to these questions:

I.   Research Question Number One: *What are the congregational barriers to becoming missional?*

    A.  The Barrier of Being Inward-Focused

        1.  Programs verses Ministry Oriented

        2.  Keeping the Family Atmosphere

        3.  Consumer Mindset

        4.  Incomplete Measures of Success

        5.  Survival Mentality

    B.  The Barrier of Frequent Pastoral Turnover

    C.  The Barrier of a Changing Community Culture

    D.  The Barriers of Traditions and Attitudes

E.  The Barriers of Institutions and Organization

F.  The Barrier of Clergy-Centered Ministry

G.  The Barrier of Buildings

H.  The Barrier of Wrong Motives

I.  The Barrier of Fear of the Unknown

J.  The Barrier of Low Visionary Leadership

K.  The Barrier of Lack of Teaching on the Spiritual Disciplines

L.  The Barrier of Lack of Teaching Regarding Spiritual Giftedness

M.  The Barrier of Low Koinia

N.  The Barrier of Low Evangelistic Temperature

O.  The Barrier of Finances

P.  The Barrier of Doctrine

II.  Research Question Number Two: *What leadership skills are needed to guide church to become missional?*

A.  The Skill of Shepherding

B.  The Skill of Storytelling

C.  The Skill of Spiritual Leadership

D.  The Skill of Vision and Visionary Leadership

E.  The Skill of Equipping and Empowering Laity

F.  The Skill of Practicing Spiritual Disciplines

G.  The Skill of Team Building

H.  The Skill of Discernment

I.  The Skill of Patience

J.  The Skill of Skill and Abilities

K.  The Skill of Embodying and Modeling a Missional Life

L.  The Skill of Implementing a New Scorecard

    M. The Skill of Calling to Repentance

    N. The Skill of Spiritual Giftedness and Apostolic Expressions

    O. The Skill of Making Disciples of Non-Disciples

    P. The Skill of Conflict Management

    Q. The Skill of Being a People-Person Verses Task-Oriented

    R. The Skill of Preaching

    S. The Skill of Training

III. Research Question Number Three: *What are the strategies needed to become a missional church?*

    A. A Strategy of Leadership Development

    B. A Strategy of Spiritual Formation

    C. A Strategy of Incarnational Ministry

    D. A Strategy of Small Groups and Assimilation

    E. A Strategy of Partnering

    F. A Strategy of Worship

    G. A Strategy of New Measurements of Success

## Feedback

A second area this researcher would like to report on the findings, regards feedback on the EFCOG progress in the missional process. One area of feedback includes this researcher's 2011 and 2012 annual performance reviews from the elders. A part particularly pertinent to this research project regarded the leadership's recognition of progress toward becoming more missional. This is an excerpt from the 2011 review:

> Mark is committed to moving our church from inward-focused to outward-focused, and has guided us as we developed the details of our vision. He has challenged us not only to count "nickels and noses", but focus on our outreach ministry. Often his Sunday message inspires us to "be in the community." We are

seeing the results of these changes as many new people have been attending during the past year.[278]

A performance review of this researcher was also given in 2012 by the EFCOG elders that indicated a continuation of the missional shift. Their recognition of this shift can be seen in the excerpt from that 2012 review:

> Mark continues his commitment to guide our church from a traditional attractional model church to a mission ministry model church. Worship services have become more comfortable for the un-churched to attend as the service flows smoothly from one part to another. We are seeing the results of these changes as many new people have been attending church this past year. Mark has a caring heart and goes out of his way to help families in the community and church who are experiencing difficult times. The need may be spiritual, financial, or physical. He has personally assisted individuals with transportation and daily needs. He shares the gospel with them and has matched people with mentors. His focus on helping others has inspired members to donate to the needs of families in the community through the "Benevolent Fund". Mark's involvement in the Police Chaplaincy program is an additional support to the community. He encourages outreach to the community through the community meal and ministry to Market House apartments. Working on his Doctor of Ministry degree Mark has gained knowledge of the process involved in transitioning from a traditional attraction model church to a missional ministry model church and has spoken to many church leaders concerning this process. This information has been valuable for our transitioning experience. He leads the Guiding Coalition Committee which assures we follow our vision and four year plan.[279]

In a further effort to measure the progress the EFCOG has made in this transition, this researcher interviewed two life-time Elizabethtown residents, Doug and Don Lamb. Doug and Don have lived in Elizabethtown for over fifty years and been involved in ministry for thirty years. They have a passion for unity among the churches in the Elizabethtown region to fulfill God's kingdom purpose. They have been instrumental in engaging pastors in prayer for that purpose for thirty years.

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[278]EFCOG Elders, annual review of Pastor Mark Yarger, 2011.

[279]EFCOG Elders, performance review of Pastor Mark Yarger, 2012.

This researcher interviewed them in order to gain their perspective of EFCOG's progress toward becoming missional. After asking some background questions, they were asked, "What has been your perspective of church/community relations in the past and present?" They were asked to include their perceptions of the EFCOG as well. Don answered the questions as follows:

> Elizabethtown Church of God was the church across from the post office, and I actually had interaction with the associate for a season. I can't say a whole lot. I'm sure there were ways this congregation touched the community, but I was not aware of specific ways the leaders or people were reaching out. He had a vision for this, but the senior pastor did not connect much with the other pastors.
> Lately the Lord has been very merciful to our community, and the walls seem to be coming down. I would say we are still in a delicate season where people are wondering if this is for real. Leaders are willing to step out of the box and do things that their church has never done before. There is a growing atmosphere of trust among the leaders that allows them to do things together even if everything is not according to their exact persuasion, so we are seeing the beginnings of a spiritual climate shift in our community. This is being kindled by strong leadership from the top that is sharing this vision with the congregations. Yes, most of the pastors' individual ministries take up most of their focus and time, but they have also carved out time for the regional ministry opportunities. People are slowly realizing that their church is not pushing itself as the "best" church in town, but they are praying for and supporting the other sister churches in the community.
> This is being seen in the Elizabethtown First Church of God. The leaders in this congregation are outward-focused and upward-thinking. They are challenging their people to think differently even if it doesn't seem like it is making an immediate difference in the congregation. This church has hosted regional events that have blessed the whole community.[280]

Doug Lamb also was asked to describe his historical perspective about the church/community relations in Elizabethtown:

> From the late 50s to the mid-70s, the local churches flourished as Bible studies, expository preaching, and children's programs filled our churches. Most well-established churches had several services Sunday morning, Sunday night and mid-week. By the late 80s and mid-90s, churches' attendance dropped, and so they left off services that were poorly attended. As these churches' populations grew older, some have closed their doors. Others are trying to re-tool. The big

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[280]Don Lamb, interview by author, Elizabethtown, PA, July 25, 2012.

thing is that the people of the 50s and 60s were attracted to preaching/teaching and liked the new Sunday school and children's programs. But the generation of the nineties were not people who would sit in a service for an hour and a half, and they lost interest and stopped coming. I believe the E-town COG fits into this model. It flourished during the golden years of preaching and programs, but of recent that model does not reach this generation. Older folks miss the golden days, while the newer believers want something different. I believe St Paul's United Methodist is in this battle, Emmanuel Baptist, E-town United Zion, Grace Chapel.... So it is a common issue. I believe E-town Church of God is on this path and making progress. I believe it will take a little time, but soon there will be more young people and able bodied servants ready to hold up the light of the Gospel.[281]

Both interviewees are recognizing some missional change going on during the project period at the EFCOG.

## Conclusions

As this researcher sorted, reveiwed, and categorized the data, he concluded that the EFCOG, as many traditional aging churches, has both strengths and needs. Strengths to build on are traditional values, facilities, parking, community demographics, location, desire for growth, and community outreach.

## Strengths

### Traditional Core Values

Feedback from the focus groups and core value surveys show that members of the EFGOG do have a positive image of themselves. For example, participants reported in response to question number one during the "Evenings with the Pastor" that friendliness, family atmosphere, church doctrine, preaching, traditional worship, and music were the things they liked most about their church. This researcher realizes that most churches do think they are friendly to visitors even though sometimes facts may show otherwise.

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[281]Doug Lamb, interview by author, Elizabethtown, PA, July 25, 2012.

Nevertheless, reports by newcomers and observations of this researcher do confirm the warmth and friendliness of the EFCOG.

In addition to those traditional values, the following core values were mentioned in all the 2009 and 2012 "Top 10 Core Value Surveys" of the congregation and administrative council: Effective preaching, effective seasonal special events (such as Christmas Eve, Holy Week, Christmas musical), effective warmth and welcoming attitudes toward newcomers and visitors, effective care for members/attendees during times of life stress, and effective fellowship events and activities were things they most valued.

In 2009, little passion was indicated about prayer. Prayer was mentioned more frequently in 2012 as evidenced by the frequent mention of "Effective teaching of personal prayer habits." This increased emphasis on prayer was also affirmed by an interview of the two EFCOG elders by an ERC staff person on August 25, 2010. In that interview the elders were asked, "How have you seen God move over the last 2 years?" They responded by saying, "The congregation is growing with deeper intimacy as a result of corporate prayer and the Share and Prayer triplets."[282]

A second core value that shows a movement to becoming more missional was identified in the top ten in 2012 but not in 2009. "Effective hands-on involvement in community service efforts" was likely a reflection of the researchers' efforts to serve in the community and engage with local agencies and organizations.

For example since 2008, the EFCOG initiated new ministry efforts with monthly hymn sings at Manor Care Nursing Home, a Stonecroft Ministries ladies Bible study at the Market House Apartments, Angel Food Ministries, weekly Bible study at Rheems

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[282]EFCOG Elders, interview by ERC staff, observed by this author, August 25, 2010.

Nursing Home, providing facilities for Cornerstone Community Youth Ministries, movie night for the Boys Club, volunteering at The Lights of Hope Thrift Shop, assisting the Elizabethtown Borough, pastor's enrollment in Regional Police Department Chaplaincy Program, engaging the Elizabethtown Area School District, associate member of the Chamber of Commerce, and this researchers membership in Elizabethtown Rotary. Through these efforts, the EFCOG is building partnerships and bridges for the purpose of making a difference in lives. The local pastors and churches of Elizabethtown have also developed a very positive partnership with the community and are earnestly engaged together in prayer and service.

Participants in "The Evenings with the Pastor" indicated that their traditional worship and music was also something they liked. With this being said, the area of music and worship was also mentioned in all the groups as an area they would like to see changed. The EFCOG has been blessed with three quality musical instruments in the sanctuary: piano, organ, and digital piano. In addition they have four individual accompanists with gifts and talents to play these instruments.

*Facilities*

The congregation reported a favorable opinion of their facilities in all the focus groups and surveys. During the large focus group meetings, the increased use and more effective use of the facilities were mentioned as the greatest opportunities God is presenting the church at this time.

The facilities are the focus of statement number four in the vision statement, "A place for all people and all seasons of life." The EFCOG believes their location and

facilities to be a gift from God. There have been some specific strategies being implemented to make the facilities more missional.

The facilities of the EFCOG consist of a sanctuary built in 1916 and an educational building added in 1962. This researcher conducted a People Spots analysis on the facilities in 2012. This People Spots analysis form will be included in the Appendix G of this project. The assessment indicated sufficient sanctuary, Sunday school rooms, and parking space for future growth. Using the People Spots guidelines, the sanctuary will seat 201 comfortably. The current two morning worship services and active nursery ministry reduce the immediate need for more space. A People Spots principle says that when sanctuary occupancy nears sixty-five percent sanctuary seating capacity, resistance to growth begins to occur. At this point in time, this is not a concern for the EFCOG.

Another People Spots principle proposes that the number of Sunday school classes and auxiliary groups directly impact the average morning worship attendances. The analysis indicated that the current educational wing is able to accommodate seven more Sunday school classes for further growth.

*Parking*

A third area of assessment addressed by the diagnostic tool was parking spaces. The EFCOG has fifty on-campus parking spaces available on campus. There are another eight street spaces available directly next to the building. Members are also aware of three other alternative parking lots located within nearby walking distance of the church. The current schedule of two morning worship services also relieves parking problems verses a one-service schedule.

James Moss Sr. was invited to visit the EFCOG for the purpose of doing an on-site assessment of the facilities and Sunday morning worship services. After Moss's visit on August 19, 2012, he submitted a report. Some of his comments are as follows: "The building was neat and cared for well. There were forty-nine lined spaces in the parking lot. There is an elevator available.... The signage was good. The bulletin boards were attractive." [283] This evaluation will also be included in the Appendix H of this research project. The sanctuary space, additional Sunday school rooms, and parking space availability are strengths at the EFCOG.

*Community Demographics*

Early in the project, this researcher hypothesized that the decades of decline in the morning worship attendance at EFCOG was not a result of any decline in population in Elizabethtown. That hypothesis proved to be true as the census information from the Lancaster County Planning Commission indicated that in 1970, the projected population in Elizabethtown was 8,072 and it was projected to be 13,924 in 2020. Furthermore, the 2000 demographics for the Elizabethtown Region projected a 19.4% population increase between 1990-2000. This trend was true for long-term projections for Elizabethtown and Lancaster County into 2030. As a result of the upward trending population and strong business presence in the community, this researcher concludes that the demographic factors are a positive for future growth potential for the EFCOG.

*Location*

Reports from the large focus group also indicated that the congregation believes their location on Market Street to be a strength of the church. Located in the center of

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[283]James Moss Sr., assessment of Elizabethtown First Church of God, August 19, 2012.

town, the church is within walking distance of businesses, apartment buildings, a college, parks, and the United States Post Office. It is located in the heart of a mission field.

*Desire for Growth*

The research indicates that the EFCOG does have a desire to grow. Examples are seen in the responses to question number three during the "Evenings with the Pastor." Sixteen individuals expressed a desire to grow with younger people. The groups also labeled the Christian Education department as an area they would like to see grow. In particular more staff and classes in the Sunday school program were mentioned. Statements were also positive in the large focus group regarding a desire to grow. The answers to question two, "What is your God-given dream for this church?" indicated a desire to grow inwardly as well as outwardly. The feedback from that large group is included in Appendix L of this research project. This report clearly indicates that the congregation has not only a positive image of themselves but a vision for a better future.

This researcher also obtained a ten year strategic plan of the EFCOG entitled, "Footprints to the Future" dated in the 1990s. This document indicated an aggressive plan for growth. However the hypothesis of this researcher is that frequent pastoral changes resulted in little or no follow-through of the plan.

*Community Outreach*

The EFCOG has a twenty-year Thanksgiving Day tradition of serving a free meal to the community. In 2011, they set a record by serving five hundred meals to shut-ins, elderly, disabled, disadvantaged, and families. This event has received local television

and newspaper attention. In 2010, the EFCOG discontinued their long-time ministry of serving Christmas morning meals to approximately one hundred shut-ins, elderly, and disabled people in Elizabethtown and beyond. However, the EFCOG promotes and advertises for another local church who has taken over this ministry. These acts of service and more have been made possible by a state of the art kitchen and a member who is a professional cook.

<div align="center">Needs</div>

EFCOG has experienced four decades of decline. As is true for many aging, declining, traditional churches, there are several possible causes for the loss. Areas of need are to: become more out-ward focused, reach a younger generation, address aging facilities, increase the evangelistic temperature, intentional disciplemaking, increased leadership over worship and music, improved conflcit management skills, develop lay-leadership, longterm pastoral leadership, and develop new measurers of success.

*To Become More Outward Focused.*

Inward-focused ministry is a common problem for many declining, traditional congregations. Inward-focused is often described in contrast to being outward-focused and missional. In Chapter One, on page twenty- three under definitions, inward focused ministry was defined as:

> Like persons, local churches are sometimes introvertive. Following the introvertive pattern in human personality these churches turn their interests and their energies upon themselves. They are concerned primarily with their own affairs. Sometimes they devote most of their attention to spiritual introspection which results in a neglect of spiritual expression in their communities.[284]

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[284]John C. Miller, *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 27.

In contrast to an inward-focused ministry, an external focused ministry has also been defined in Chapter One, and page twenty-three of this project as "A ministry model that is focused on the non-church, service to community and beyond.

The research of this project on the EFCOG does indicate that they have been serving out of an inward-focused ministry and that it has been attractional. The fact that little or no mention was made in the research samples about winning lost people or reproducing harvest-making disciples was as telling as the things that were mentioned.

The core values the congregation mentioned were mostly traditional and inward-focused. The Evenings with the Pastor reports indicated the congregation's desire to keep the family atmosphere. Though a desire to grow was expressed, there was a hesitation about possibly losing the family atmosphere.

*Reaching a Younger Generation*

Graphs were shown on the congregational age of the EFCOG in Chapter One of this project indicating an aging congregation. Sixty-six percent of the financial contributors of the church are sixty-one or older and now living on fixed incomes. Many of the elderly who at one time left estates to the church are now being transferred to nursing homes. It has also been observed by this writer that the church exists in a more highly competitive culture now than in early years. There is a higher number of faith-based, as well as non-faith-based, non-profit organizations aggressively asking for financial contributions than ever before. Therefore the church must have cast a clear vision of making disciples if it is to flourish and grow. One longtime pastor and judicatory leader said the church most often does not have a money problem but a people

problem. The people problem is because the traditional church has failed to make disciples.[285]

This has resulted in a not only a financial vacuum but a leadership vacuum as well. Many of the leaders are now becoming less mobile and available to serve in leadership roles. As a result there are too few leaders.

*Need to Address Aging Facilities*

The aging facilities will continue to challenge EFCOG and most traditional churches' ability to be outward focused. The following is a review of just some of the significant building expenditures over the years. In 1962, an educational wing was added. Then again in 1999, a major renovation project was undertaken to renovate the facilities. The project consisted of major renovations to the Old Fellowship Hall, installation of central air conditioning, and an elevator to the basement. The goal for the project was set at $625,000.00. A significant amount of the member's energy and resources were spent on assisting in the renovation and raising money to complete the project.

The rising oil prices, two aging and inefficient boiler systems installed in the 1960s, and outdated weatherization at the EFCOG caused the church to re-evaluate its energy system. The oil budget for 2013 was projected to be $26,000.00. This did not include the rising maintenance bills on the outdated boilers. In 2012, the church voted to convert from oil to natural gas at the cost of $150,000.00.  Members did step up and gave generously as well as provided low interest loans to the church. The projected energy cost for the EFCOG due to this conversion to natural gas is estimated to be only $5,000.00 for

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[285] Moss Sr., interview.

2013. Though the potential short term and long term savings will be welcomed, the need

for financial resources to pay for the conversion will still be a challenge.



| | Admin. | Treasurer | Deacons | Personnel | Education | Missions | Nurture | Outreach | Property | Worship |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2004 | 7.3% | 5.5% | 8.3% | 47.9% | 3.9% | 5.6% | 0.4% | 0.9% | 19.1% | 1.1% |
| 2005 | 6.7% | 5.7% | 9.2% | 44.1% | 3.0% | 2.9% | 1.0% | 0.5% | 25.4% | 1.3% |
| 2006 | 0.0% | 7.7% | 13.7% | 66.9% | 4.0% | 5.9% | 1.2% | 0.6% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| 2007 | 7.7% | 5.0% | 9.6% | 29.3% | 2.9% | 3.5% | 0.7% | 0.2% | 38.6% | 2.5% |
| 2008 | 9.4% | 2.3% | 8.1% | 39.9% | 1.6% | 2.8% | 1.4% | 0.4% | 32.9% | 1.3% |
| 2009 | 5.5% | 0.1% | 7.9% | 42.8% | 2.2% | 2.2% | 1.0% | 0.9% | 35.5% | 1.8% |
| 2010 | 5.3% | 0.8% | 7.8% | 47.1% | 2.3% | 3.1% | 1.8% | 0.3% | 30.1% | 1.4% |
| 2011 | 4.3% | 0.4% | 9.4% | 42.2% | 1.3% | 1.5% | 1.8% | 2.3% | 35.7% | 1.2% |
| 8 Yr Avg | 5.8% | 3.4% | 9.2% | 45.0% | 2.7% | 3.4% | 1.1% | 0.7% | 27.2% | 1.3% |

Figure 6.1 Breakdown of expenses from 2004 - 2011

Added to the rising energy costs, are a projected ten percent increase in the cost of the church's insurance premium in 2013, a deteriorating parking lot, and a leaky roof on the eductional building. The challenges of an aging building will continue to be a common barrier for all traditional churches unless creative plans are implemented. Figure 6.1  shows that over seventy percent of the budget was spent on facilities and staff salaries over the last eight years. This leaves very few resources for ministry areas such as outreach and missions, which are crucial to the growth of the church.

It is the belief of this researcher that excesses in capital reserves may have given the congregation a more positive financial picture then its reality. The EFCOG continued operating over budget for over the last fifteen years. At the same time, membership, contributions, and capital funds decreased. With a combination of depleting finances, deficit spending, and aging facilities, the EFCOG has become inward-focused and has, at times, been operating out of a survival mentality.

This researcher has begun to engage the financial team of the EFCOG to look at the expenditures from a missional point of view. In other words, a missional budget differs from a traditional budget in that it factors in the staff's time invested in various ministries of the church. For example in the traditional budget, only 2.3% of the total budget was invested in outreach. However, when the pastor's time and salary he spends in the outreach area of the church is considered, the picture is quite different.

*Increase the  Evangelistic Temperature*

A need to increase the evangelistic temperature of the congregation is evident by the fact that there have been no reported in-house conversions outside the efforts of this researcher during the research period. This includes no reports on decisons for Christ to

this researcher from children or youth ministries during this project time frame. Furthermore, there was no mention of a desire to become an evangelistic church mentioned in the core values or within the focus groups conducted.

*Intentional Disciple-Making Plan*

There is a need to develop a discipleship culture in the church that extends beyond a one-hour Sunday morning time slot during Sunday School. Little to none one-on-one discipling or mentoring is occurring even though this was an expressed goal stated by the EFCOG in their the Ministry Action Plan.

*Increased Leadership Over Worship and Music*

There is need for a clear leader with skill, training, experience, and giftedness to co-ordinate as well as enhance the music and worship ministry of EFCOG. This need has been affirmed by key music and worship leaders of the congregation.

*Improved Conflict Manangement Skills*

There is a need for skills in conflict management as evidenced by unnecessary conflicts of the past. The congregation has continuously lost members over the last decade over poor conflict management. Included in any plan should be clear lines of communications and systems of evaluations and feedback.

*Develop Lay Leadership*

Due to the aging congregation and long-term attrition of members, there is a need for a plan to develop new lay leaders with missional DNA. Spiritual formation needs to

be an emphasis of any leadership plan. This need will be addressed in the

recommendations portion of this chapter.

*Longterm Pastoral Leadership*

In order to make the transition to operating as a missional church, there is a need

to retain pastoral leadership for the long-term. A clear statement of  mission, vision, and

core values, as well as a missional job description needs to be communicated presently

and to any future pastoral candidates.

*Develop New Measures of Success*

Reggie McNeal challenges the church to measure success by a new scorecard. In

the past, success was measured by attendances, budgets, and number of programs. In the

future, the church needs to add the number of servants sent, lives changed, and stories

told. For instance, the College First Church of God in Findlay, Ohio, a very traditional

church in the past, has grown from 350 to 500 in average morning worship attendance.

One of the impactful decisions that they made was beginning a new worship service at

the Winebrenner Theological Seminary campus for the seminary and college community.

This was a change from past where all the services were conducted in the walls of the

main church campus. Another change the College First Church is undergoing is a goal to

have twenty to thirty mentors go to local schools to serve breakfast to the teachers.

College First has a plan to address the community hunger problem and poor tests scores

of their local school students in Findlay. These ministries are a break from the traditional

way of measuring success.

**Recommendations**

This researcher has identified five recommendations specifically targeted for the EFCOG. Nevertheless, what makes this project valuable is that the recommendations can be applicable for most traditional churches that have been operating from an attractional-based model of ministry who are not effectively ministering to their cultural context.

These recommendations have also been listed in order of priority for the EFCOG. These recommendations and priorities are not meant to be a cookie-cutter answer for all churches. It is this researcher's advice that each church conducts its own assessment of its ocal ministry context and applies the recommendations that seem applicable.

*1) A recommendation to the leadership of the EFCOG to call a solemn assembly of biblical prayer and repentance for decades of failing to fulfill the Great Commission of making reproducing disciples.* The research mentioned frequently the need to fall on one's knees, repent, and ask God to forgive the church for failing to fulfill his will. In light of the fact that the problem at the EFCOG did not occur in a vacuum, this writer recommends that the EFCOG consider inviting the ERC and even the CGGC into this process. They could provide mature teaching on the problems that have contributed to the decline of the local church and the church in the larger context. They could provide an explanation of God's ways and answers. Any process needs to include times for participants to respond by humbling themselves, praying, seeking God's face, repenting, and pledging to submit to God's way on that specific point.

This researcher recommends the process be individual, corporate, and public. Making it into a public resolution that calls the congregation to repentance should be considered. Regardless of the exact process, the leadership must be reminded that the progress to spiritual health and repentance will come slowly and patience will be required. It is therefore recommended that the initial process take at least one year. The research indicated that repentance needs to become a lifestyle and not a once and done occasion. This means that once there is a sense of breakthrough on an issue, the congregation should move on to the next issue with teaching followed again by fervent prayer and repentance. They must methodically work through issue after issue for however long and however many meetings it takes. The problem that needs confronted is that God's people have lost their first love.

*2) Recommendation to implement a comprehensive ministry of lay caregivers.* The research indicated that shepherding must go on even in the process of becoming a more missional church. Addressing the physical and spiritual needs of the congregation with quality care and nurture will be essential to sustaining a missional transition. One such resource this author recommends for consideration is Stephen Ministry, where leaders are trained and return home from the training to recruit, select, and equip a team of members from the congregation to serve as Stephen Ministers. Each Stephen Minister is matched to a person in need of care and meets with his or her care receiver for about an hour a week to provide one-to-one Christ-centered care and support.

Stephen Ministers care for people inside and outside the congregation, including those experiencing grief, divorce, job loss, terminal illness, loneliness, spiritual crisis,

hospitalization, relocation, and other life difficulties. Men are matched with men, women with women. Caring relationships last for as long as the person needs this level of care.

*3) Recommendation to create a discipleship culture.* The research emphasized the need to move beyond the decisional Christianity of the past that focused on the ultimate goal of "getting people saved" to the exclusion of making authentic disciples of Jesus Christ. As a result, it is the recommendation of this researcher that the EFCOG develop an intentional plan to create a discipleship culture. This author recommends utilizing one of two possible processes to accomplish this goal.

The first recommendation is to follow through with current plans to partner with the Navigators Church Discipleship Ministry in a one-to three-year plan to create a discipleship culture at the EFCOG.

The Navigators walk alongside Christ's followers on their spiritual journey supporting them as they search the Word of God to chart the course of their lives. The hallmarks of their ministry are small-group studies and one-to-one relationships focused on discipleship. They also assist churches in developing small group infrastructure needed for sustaining a growing discipleship culture.

In a recent interview with Steve Gilmore, this researcher discussed the overall benefits of this process as it relates to the recommendations in this research project. This researcher did identify numerous potential spiritual leadership skills that can be an outcome of this effort. The first of two key areas that this discipleship process will foster is that the believers walk with God in multiplying lives lived for Christ. The second area is working together as a team in modeling life-on-life discipleship.

A two-or three-year plan has been recommended by the Navigators to the pastor and elders of the EFCOG. The ultimate goal of this process is to bring about spiritual maturity and the fulfillment of God's mission. At the time of the writing of this chapter, the church elders and administrative council are considering this partnership with the Navigators.

The second recommendation this researcher would like to make if the partnership with the Navigators does not seem feasible is the implementation of Life Transformation Groups (LTG) as described by Neil Cole. The LTG system is a grassroots tool for growth. Through this simple system, the most essential elements of vital spiritual ministry are released to common Christians without the need for specialized training. It taps the disciple's internal motivation and provides the support needed to grow in the essentials of a spiritual life. LTG empower the common Christian to do the uncommon work of reproductive disciple-making. A Life Transformation Group is made up of two to three people of the same gender who meet weekly for personal accountability in the areas of their spiritual growth and development. A group should not grow beyond three but multiply into two groups of two rather than a single group of four. There is no curriculum or training needed for the LTG. The LTG accountability consists of three essential disciplines for personal spiritual growth: a steady diet of Scripture, confession of sin, and prayer for others who need Christ.

Both of these efforts aim for the same purpose of reproducing disciples. The Navigator effort may bring more accountability and support to the process. They also bring an expertise to the process that is valuable. However there is expenditure in the Navigator process that will not be a factor with LTGs.

*4) Recommendation to implement leadership training for the purpose of enabling leaders to advance the vision effectively.* To be included are the elders, members of the administrative council, and ministry team leaders. The research indicated a need to raise the evangelistic temperature of the congregation. Due to observations, this researcher contends that though there has been some shift toward an outward focus in the congregation, there is a need for more of the leadership to gain ownership. This researcher recommends that a minimal training requirement of these leaders be participation in the ERC Bridgebuilders Seminar and the People Spots Workshop during their tenures in leadership.

The vision of *Bridge Builders*, subtitled *Helping Churches Reach Their Unchurched Neighbors,* is that in many churches there are people with a deep heart for the lost who believe that a traditional *matured* church can effectively reach new people – even those with no Christian roots. The barrier for many traditional churches is that they are insulated from non-Christians with little or no significant contact or relationships with the un-churched. As a result, the culture has marginalized established churches to the point that they find themselves as foreigners inside their own communities.

*Bridgebuilders* seeks to help traditional churches end that isolation by equipping them to reach the growing population in America who do not know God. In the past, traditional churches' evangelism efforts often consisted of reaching persons who were once churched or who have abandoned their Christian roots for a time. Through this seminar, leaders will be equipped, trained with proper skills, and led to better understand that the mission field begins at their church's front door. It is the expectation of this researcher that when more of the leadership team gets invested in the vision of the church

with their participation in *Bridge Builders,* the EFCOG will multiply the Kingdom beyond their own church.

A second required training recommended by this author for the church-wide leadership team is the People Spots seminar. The research has also indicated the need for incorporation and assimilation of attendees and visitors. The evangelism and outreach process is not completed until members are assimilated and discipled. People Spots was originated by James Moss Sr. for the traditional church. A "People Spot" is: 1) a physical space or chair to sit upon, 2) where relationships are developed, and 3) where felt needs are being met.

People Spots lends itself to a traditional church that is becoming outward-focused as they all have buildings and programs. A concept of People Spots is that most traditional churches are limiting the number of People Spots with the current way they are structured with their facilities and programs. Due to its small group emphasis, this is an excellent complement to a churches' outreach and evangelistic efforts. Many of these trainings can be attended locally or even in-house for only a few hours on a day.

It is also a recommendation of this writer that the EFCOG follow through with their year two strategic goal of two to three members annually completing the ERC School of Evangelism. This author recommends that these members complete the minimum five core classes. There are benefits for doing this beyond the local church. Those completing the School of Evangelism will also be capable of being evangelism coaches for other churches in the ERC as well. The five core classes of the School of Evangelism are as follows: *Explaining the Faith, What is the Gospel?, Developing a Strategy for Evangelism, Sharing Jesus With Postmodern Generations,* and *Coaching.*

*5) Recommendation to increase missional uses of the current property and facilities.* The EFCOG believes their location and facilities to be a gift from God as shown by a portion of their statement of vision being relevant to this area. In *Missional Renaissance,* Reggie McNeal talks about the missional use of facilities by asking churches with facilities the following question, "How can we use what we already have to be a blessing in the community?"[286]

It is the recommendation of this researcher that the EFCOG continue to shift to an externally-focused perspective on church facilities. This will mean becoming educated on the community needs that may be a fit for EFCOG's mission and facility capacity. There are numerous facility-use possibilities to be considered such as use by other churches, schools, social organizations, and sports teams. The church can be used for trainings, after school labs, recitals, AA meetings, art galleries for local artists, start-up businesses, and concerts. It is the recommendation of this researcher that the church use its lawn and parking lots to serve and minister to the community. The ultimate goal is that the church tells the community that God is a welcoming God and that, "You are welcome here!"

To complement this effort, it is the recommendation of this researcher that there be an intentional effort to address signage, handicap accessibility, lighting, cleanliness of restrooms, and so on. This could be accomplished with the assistance of a hospitality audit conducted by a task force formed for this purpose. A free downloadable tool entitled *A Hospitality Audit for Your Church* that can be used as a beginning point for such a purpose is available at Evangelismcoach.org.

The audit is to be done as a first-time visitor to the church. Members have blind spots that keep them from seeing things that are out of place. Therefore, it is helpful to

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[286]McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scoreboard for the Church*, 80.

look at these things from the perspective of a person driving by on the street visiting for the first time. This tool is meant to be a brainstorming tool rather than an all-inclusive checklist for all churches. As the church goes through this audit, participants will notice things that are not on this list and let creativity flow. They should go through this list slowly and deliberately to discover areas needing improvement.

## Recommendations for Further Research

This researcher became aware in the process of doing research that there are questions that arose that would be valuable to this project, but due to limitations do not always get addressed. Those limitations may be of time or beyond the scope of this project. For example, numerous interviews of pastors who have seen successful were conducted and many insights were gained from them. Nevertheless, more interviews of pastors in traditional churches who have struggled or were unsuccessful in implementing missional efforts may have been helpful to the project.

Secondly, it may have been beneficial to have interviewed more of the laity in these churches researched. Comparing and contrasting the laity's perspective of the missional efforts in their congregation to that of the pastor would have been both interesting and possibly insightful.

Lastly, it may have enhanced this project if more un-churched residents in the community would have been surveyed as to reasons they do not attend church or what would they look for in selecting a church. This could have possibly given a better perspective of the postmodern culture and its impact on the traditional church.

## Missional Reality

The idea of this project came about from the researcher's love for the traditional church. In no way has this project meant to bash traditional churches; in fact, quite the opposite. This researcher's has never pastored any church but a traditional church. This project comes out of a love and respect for established churches and the countless lives they have changed.

This project was also conceived out of a hope and faith for a brighter future for the traditional church and the EFCOG in particular. That hope is implied by the question of the ancient prophet Ezekiel, "He asked me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?' I said, 'O Sovereign LORD, you alone know.'"[287]

At the beginning of this project, this researcher believed in his heart the answer to that



"The Vinman"

Figure 6.2 Vinny Photo 1

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[287]Ez. 37:3 [NIV].

question regarding the traditional church plateaued or in decline was "Yes, these bones can live again!" At the end of this research project, the belief remains. Yes, if there is a determination to faithfully obey God's mission, perhaps they may live again. This hope is seen in stories of changed lives that have occurred at the EFCOG since 2008.

Vincent Young was his name or just "Vinny" by his friends. This researcher called him "The Vinman". When this researcher met him, he played bass guitar for a rock band and rode a Harley Davidson motorcycle. He was brought to the EFCOG not long after this researcher arrived to the EFCOG by a Baptist girlfriend who was concerned about his physical well-being as well as his salvation. At first he looked like a fish out of water in the old traditional congregation. Shortly after meeting him, the researcher was made aware that he was living out of his car. While attending EFCOG, Vinny returned to the Lord, served older men of the church, and was befriended by them. Vinny lived with this researcher and spouse for a winter. He became part of the family as he spent a Christmas, Easter, and his birthday with them. He loved to fish, so this researcher took him fishing the first day of the season in 2010.



Figure 6.3 Vinny Photo 2

When this researcher sent Vinny pictures from that day together, he responded back that it was one of the happiest days of his life. As that day of fishing was Vinny's happiest day, the Sunday morning he was baptized was one of the happiest days of this researcher's life. He always called this researcher "Chief". He could not believe a church or a pastor would give him the time and attention he received from the EFCOG. He grew spiritually amazingly with a few setbacks along the way.



Figure 6.4 Vinny Photo 3

Eventually Vinny, with the church's assistance, was able to find a permanent home. Subsequently, his health deteriorated and his car broke down, making contacts with him fewer. In February 2013, this researcher invited Vinny over on a Sunday evening to watch the Super Bowl. After some reminiscence about all the ups and downs experienced together, this author asked Vinny if he would mind if his spiritual journey story was shared in story in this research project. He responded by saying he would be honored.

This researcher planned the next fishing trip with him on the drive back to his home at the end of the evening. On the way home, Vinny talked about all the elderly men who had befriended him in the church and had now passed away. As he was getting out of the car, this researcher said, "Vinny, take care of yourself so something doesn't happen to you, and we miss that fishing trip." He turned and said, "Well, if anything happens, I am ready because of you and the church!"

At 6:00 am the following Wednesday, just two days later, this researcher got a call from Vinny's brother saying Vinny had experienced a massive heart attack and passed away on the way to the emergency room. A week later, to everyone's amazement, eighty-five people (mostly community and family) came to his memorial service at the EFCOG. At that service, this researcher shared Vinny's spiritual journey that culminated in his being baptized at church. After the service, a group of his friends and family approached this researcher and said, "Looking at this church from the outside, we would have never thought this would be the kind of church that would have accepted someone like Vinny."

This researcher believes that Vinny's story probably would not have happened a few years ago at the EFCOG. The Vinman's story is a story of what it means for a church to become missional. Perhaps at this point in time if one would visit the EFCOG on a Sunday morning, they would see that these dry bones are living again! O Sovereign LORD, you alone know!

APPENDIX A

IN PERSON AND PHONE INTERVIEWS

Dr. David Draper
Winebrenner Theological Seminary
Interviewed in Findlay, OH

Dr. Stephen Dunn
Landisville First Church of God
Interviewed in Landisville, PA

Dr. Michael Walker
Bowmansdale First Church of God
Interviewed in Bowmansdale, PA

Dr. William Reist
College First Church of God
Interviewed in Findlay, OH

Dr. William Sloat
Faith Community
Interviewed in Elizabethtown, PA

Dr. Earl Mills
Chambersburg First Church of God
Interviewed on phone in Elizabethtown, PA

Pastor Craig E. Sider
Brethren In Christ Church
Interviewed by phone in Elizabethtown, PA

Pastor Don Lamb
Life Gate Community
Interviewed in Elizabethtown, PA

Pastor Doug Lamb
Life Gate Community
Interviewed in Elizabethtown, PA

Pastor Jim Moss Jr.
 Eberly's Mill First Church of God
Interviewed in Newville, PA

Pastor Jim Moss Sr.
Retired
Interviewed in Harrisburg, PA

Pastor Lance Finley
CGGC Director Transformational Ministries
Interviewed in Findlay, OH

Pastor Mark Ongley
Ashes to Life Ministries, Beaver Falls, PA
Interviewed on phone

Pastor Greg Funk
Manhiem Brethren in Christ
Interviewed in Elizabethtown, PA

Pastor Paul Tatum
Shippensburg First Church of God
Interviewed on phone

Pastor Tom Mahas
Bethel Unite Brethren, Elmore, PA
Interviewed on phone

Pastor Jeff Rocky
Tulip First Church of God
Interviewed on phone

Pastor George Resser
Retired
Interviewed by phone

Pastor Fred Quade
Retired
Interviewed in York, PA

Chuck Mummert
Mayor of Elizabethtown
Interviewed in Elizabethtown, PA

Susan Fritz
Homes of Hope
Interviewed in Elizabethtown, PA.

APPENDIX B

SONG LICENSE

**EMI** Music CMG Publishing

LICENSE NO: 540021

DATE:     2/22/2013 10:10:39 AM

**LICENSEE:**

Elizabethtown First Church of God

144 S. Market St

Elizabethtown, PA 17022

Attn: Mark Yarger

**LICENSOR:**

EMI Christian Music Publishing

P.O. Box 5085

Brentwood, TN 37027

A. SONG TITLE: see Schedule A

B. TERRITORY:

   PRODUCT TITLE:

   FORMAT:

North America

LEADING THE TRANSITION FROM A TRADITIONAL ATTRACTION-BASED MINISTRY MODEL TO A MISSIONAL MODEL OF MINISTRY

Lyric Reprint in Book

C. PER COPY FEE:

   NUMBER OF copies:

   PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

   TOTAL ROYALTY PAID:

$40 per song

1 copies

Flat

$40.00

**Song ID: 46145**

Song Title: I Will Go

Writer(s): Allen Salmon, Jon Neufeld, Tim Neufeld

Label Copy:

Copyright © 2008 Birdwing Music (ASCAP) Fieldstar Music (SOCAN) Free The Salmon Music (SESAC) Stonebrook Music Company (SESAC) (adm. at EMICMGPublishing.com) All rights reserved. Used by permission.

EMI CMG Percent Control: 100%

Song Rate: $40 per song

APPENDIX C

60 DAY SHARE AND PRAYER TRIPLETS GUIDE 2009

## Six Conversation Guides for Your Triplet Time

**First Conversation:**

*Share* ... How did you come to know Jesus Christ? What are some of the

differences He has made in your life?

*Share again* ... What are some important events going on in your life? How can

we pray for those?

*Pray* ... Spend some time thanking God for how He has saved each person in your

group and changed their life. Also pray for the requests each of you shared.

**Second Conversation:**

*Share* ... What does the word "church" mean to you? What is a church? How

does Elizabethtown First Church of God compare to how you define church?

*Share again* ... Have you seen God work in the events you shared at the last

meeting? Are there any updates or new prayer requests?

*Pray* ... Pray specifically for each other and the updated requests. Also pray that

God would guide your group to *see* what *God* wants the church to be.

**Third Conversation:**

*Share* ... one or two things from your memory of how the ministry of the church

has impacted your spiritual growth toward Jesus Christ.

*Share again* ... How is EFCOG providing similar opportunities today for people

like yourself to have transformational moments?

*Pray* ... Spend some time thanking God for the ministries of the church that have

changed each others' lives. Pray that God would guide EFCOG to carry on and

start ministries that would make differences in their walk with Jesus Christ.

**Fourth Conversation:**

*Share* ... What are the ministries that you think EFCOG is doing well? What are

the ministries you think EFCOG shouldn't be doing and why shouldn't we?

*Share again* ... What defines whether a ministry is worthwhile or not? Does

this definition change your response?

*Pray* ... Pray that God would help EGCOG to continue doing her good ministries

well. Also pray that God would guide leadership to discern which ministries are

worthwhile. Continue to pray for one another.

**Fifth Conversation:**

*Share* ... What is the most important ministry of the church *or* If EFCOG could only

do one single ministry, what should that ministry be?

*Share again* ... How have you been impacted by that ministry, and how do you

see yourself helping that ministry flourish?

*Pray* ... Pray that God would guide EFCOG to do what is most important. Pray

that EFCOG can increase her effectiveness in those ministries mentioned, and

pray for each others' involvement in those ministries base upon what you shared.

**Sixth Conversation:**

*Share* ... Based upon your previous conversations and how God has been leading

you, have your group come up with a dream for EFCOG. Jot this dream down.

*Share again* ... How can each of us here help make this dream into a reality? What

can you do to help?

*Pray* … That God would guide the other triplets in dreaming big for the

Elizabethtown First Church of God. Also pray for each other, that you can all

participate in God's dream for what Elizabethtown can be for Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX D

60 SHARE AND PRAYER TRIPLETS 2010

Welcome to Share and Prayer Triplets!

## Session 1

Have you had any prayers answered recently?

Topic for the Day
Reflect together on the programs and ministries of *Education Commission* that you believe to be strong.

Where do we do a good job in Christian education as the body of Christ? Where can we do better?

Spend time in Prayer

Personal Prayer Concerns

Prayer Concerns of the Day; *Please pray for our Education Commission, goals, members, and ministries.*

Prayer Concerns for our Church

Prayer Psalm- Psalm 30

What are you going to take with you as a result of the time you've spent together?

## Session 2

Have you had some prayers answered since the last time we met?

Topic for the Day
What do you believe God Called the E-town COG to do and be 6-8 years ago?

Where do you see Gods hand in the last 5 years?

Spend time in Prayer

Personal Prayer Concerns
Prayer Concerns of the Day; *Please pray for our Worship Commission, goals, members and ministries*

Prayer Concerns for our Church

Prayer Psalm- Psalm 95:1-7

What are you going to take with you as a result of the time you've spent together?

<u>Session 3</u>

Have you had some prayers answered since the last time we met?

Topic for the Day
Reflect together on the blessings of our building (additions, remodeling). What does it offer us? What does it offer God? What does it offer this community? How might it affect our ministry and our future?

Spend time in Prayer

Personal Prayer Concerns

Prayer Concerns of the Day; *Please pray for our Property Commission, goals, members and ministries.*

Prayer Concerns for our Church

Prayer Psalm- Psalm 100

What are you going to take with you as a result of the time you've spent together?

<u>Session 4</u>

Have you had some prayers answered since the last time we met?

Topic for the Day
How well do you think we know our community here in Elizabethtown?

Does our congregation "look like" our community? Are we representative of our community? Who in our community could best be served by our congregation?

Spend time in Prayer

Personal Prayer Concerns

Prayer Concerns of the Day; *Please pray for our Missions Commission, goals, members and Ministries*

Prayer Concerns for our Church

Prayer Psalm: 108-1-6

What are you going to take away from the time we've spent together?

<u>Session 5</u>

Have you had some prayers answered since the last time we met?

Topic for the Day
What has been your biggest surprise about the church in the last few years? Where do you see God moving and shaking in our midst? Where is our destination going to be? Where is God taking us?

Spend time in Prayer

Personal Prayer Concerns

Prayer Concerns of the Day; *Please pray for our Outreach Commission, goals, members*

*and ministries.*

Prayer Concerns for our Church

Prayer Psalm- Psalm 117

What are you going to take with you as a result of the time you've spent together?

<u>Session 6</u>

Have you had some prayers answered since the last time we met?

Topic of the Day
Reflect together on the excitement and the challenges of church growth? Does growth require change? Does change create friction?
How ready is E-town COG ready for growth—of all kinds? What makes you think so?

Spend time in Prayer

Personal Prayer Concerns

Prayer Concerns of the Day; *Please pray for our Nurture Commission, goals, members and ministries to the church.*

Prayer Concerns for our Church

Prayer Psalm- Psalm 121

What are you going to take with you as a result of the time you've spent together?

APPENDIX E

TOP 10 CORE VALUES SURVEY WITH ALL 30 CHOICES

Top Ten Core Values

___ Effective teaching of personal prayer habits

___ Effective advocacy of social justice issues in the community, nation, and world

___ Effective recognition of people who provide volunteer service

___ Effective fellowship events and activities

___ Effective adult Sunday school classes

___ Effective weekday, adult Bible study, prayer groups, and life-skill (parenting,

marriage or relationship development) groups

___ Effective seasonal special events (such as Christmas Eve, Holy Week, Christmas

Musical)

___ Effective teaching of personal financial stewardship

___ Effective financial support of community service efforts

___ Effective hands-on involvement in community service efforts

___ Effective relationships and teamwork among clergy, staff, and members

___ Effective care and concern for members/attendees during times of life stress

___ Effective junior high Sunday school classes

___ Effective senior high youth Sunday school classes

___ Effective junior high youth group

___ Effective senior high youth group

___ Effective traditional style worship

___ Effective contemporary style worship

___ Effective blended style worship (includes both traditional and contemporary singing)

___ Effective encouragement of attendees to invite community residents to visit worship

___ Effective encouragement of attendees toward personal sharing with others regarding

their faith

___ Effective system for involving all new members in a group and a ministry role

___ Effective printed materials and communication systems

___ Effective nursery/preschool and elementary Sunday school classes

___ Effective children's ministries (such as weeknights, after school, or Saturdays for 5th-

6th grades)

___ Effective financial support of world mission efforts

___ Effective hands-on involvement in world mission efforts

___ Effective warmth and welcoming attitudes toward newcomers

___ Effective, quality facilities

___ Effective preaching

___ Other (Add in the space below *only* if you believe one of our top ten core values is

*not* on the above list)

APPENDIX F

MINISTRY ACTION PLAN (MAP)

A Spiritual Strategic Journey

4 Year Plan

Year 1:                                                              Fall 2011- Spring 2012

Implement a yearlong celebration of 175 years of existence as a congregation.

2) Recruit seven to ten persons to launch a Good News Club at Bear Creek Elementary

school in fall 2011.

3) Continue to improve existing Buzz Club ministry

4) Reach out to entire family of Buzz Club participants and encourage family interaction

and relationships.

5) Differentiate between 8:00 & 10:30 bulletins.

6) Property commission to review facility use policies to reflect vision statement and

continue to support other groups from the church

Year 2:                                                              Fall 2012- Spring 2013

1) Develop mentoring ministries that challenge Christians to grow in Christ.

2) To enroll and graduate three participants from our membership into the ERC School of

Evangelism.

3) To complete a formal volunteer program to be revised and evaluated annually that

encourages and tracks participation in Community ministries and makes members

aware of volunteer opportunities.

4) Produce a video file of people from church to use with announcements.

Year 3                                                                    Fall 2013- Spring 2014

1) Begin an alternative worship service to reach new families.

2) Choose and implement one or two witnessing tools and train congregation in using

   them in their personal lives and ministries.

3) Update or add user friendly interior and exterior church signs where needed.

4) Add fence and playground equipment on vacant lot.

5) Make contacts at E-town College to increase our influence there.


Year # 4                                                                  Fall 2014- Spring 2015

1) Help people find their area of spiritual giftedness.

2) Develop a system of networking designed to effectively place individuals in God's

   ministry based upon areas of talent and giftedness.

3) Develop a deliberately focused prayer ministry.

4) Long term strategy to raise money for parking lot renovation, Educational building

   roof, winterization.

APPENDIX G

PEOPLE SPOTS ANALYISIS REPORT 2012

People Spot Analysis Form 2012

*(A Diagnostic Tool)*

Name of Church     __Elizabethtown First Church of God_____

Name of Conference:   _Eastern Regional Conference_____

How many Church Members?  _152__     What is Sunday School Enrollment?   __79_

What is the comfortable seating capacity of the sanctuary?      _201_  (sanctuary)

                                                                     __15_  (choir seats)

*(Please calculate the comfortable seating capacity by measuring the linear feet of pew*

*space...convert the length of pew space to inches...divide by 25...equals the comfortable*

*seating capacity.)*

Do you have multiple morning worship services?  Yes  __X___  No  _____

If yes, how many current morning worship services per Sunday?  __2___

Do you have a "Children's Church" apart from the sanctuary? Yes __X___ No

_____(Children are taken out half way through the 10:30 service)

If yes, what is the average attendance of children's church?  __5__

How many classes could you start in your Sunday School with the current design of your

program and facility? _7_

What percentage of your congregation has attended your church for seven or more

years? _approx. 70%_

How many parking places do you have available? _50 (Church Parking lot)_ (+ 8 on

Washington Street)   (+ potentially 18 on back lawn) (Susqhehanna bank/ P.O  parking

across Market St)

What percentage of your congregations is 35 years of age or older? _approx. 73%_

Carefully provide the following accurate information regarding small group life:

**List the last two Sunday School classes that have been started:**

Name Berean Class          For Whom  30-70          Date: Fall 2011

Name Young Adults          For whom  20-30          Date: Fall 2008

**List the last two auxiliary groups that have been started.  (i.e. Bible studies, support groups, choirs, athletic teams.)**

Name Men's Weekly Breakfast    For whom:    Men        Date 8/5/2009

Name Tuesday evening Youth Group for whom    Jr./Sr. High    Date Jan. 2011

Name: Ladies Bible Study in Market House apt (Stonecroft)            Date 2010

Name:  Ladies Bible study in homes                    Date 2012

Name: Home Intercessory Prayer group                    Date Fall 2011

Name : Thursday Mens Bible Study                    Date Fall 2010

**List the last two Sunday School classes that have been closed or merged.**

Name   Congenial          For whom    Adults          Date  Aug. 2008

Name   Sr. High          For whom    Sr. High          Date  2007

Name Young Adults          For whom    20-30          Date Fall 2010

Name Truth Seekers          For whom    40-60          Date April 2009

**List the last two auxiliary groups that have been closed:**

Name   Pioneer Club          For whom   Elementary Age        Date 10 yrs. +

Name: Home Intercessory Prayer group                Date Spring Fall 2012

Name : Thursday Men's Bible Study                Date Fall 2010

| Years Ago | Average Worship | Average S.S. | Auxiliary Small | Sunday School | AWAPSG+ | AAPC * |
|-----------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|---------|--------|

| | Attend. | Attend. | Groups | #Classes | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | 144 | 67 | 7 | 14 | 7 | 5 |
| 9 | 147 | 83.4 | _____ | 14 | 6 | 6 |
| 5 | 101 | 38.7 | 4 | 12 | 6 | 3 |
| 4 | 105 | 25.7 | 3 | 10 | 8 | 2.57 |
| 3 | 112 | 38.9 | 4 | 9 | 9 | 4.322 |
| 2 | 104 | 38.9 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 3 |
| 1 | 114 | 43.7 | 4 | 9 | 9 | 4.856 |

Current Year to Date:

| | Attend. | Attend. | Groups | #Classes | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 112 | 32 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 3 |

#Small groups such as: Women's, men's, youth, Bible studies, senior life, singles, or other support groups, choirs, softball team, or other sports teams.

+Annual Average Worship Attendance divided by the sum of auxiliary small groups and Sunday School classes equals AWAPSG. *Do not count governmental groups unless that have a strong fellowship aspect.*\*Annual average Sunday School attendance divided by the number of functioning Sunday School classes equals AAPC. *Please count all classes from nursery through the oldest adult class. Should you have the remains of several classes meeting in one room with one teacher per Sunday that counts as one class.*

APPENDIX H

ETOWN EVALUATION

JAMES MOSS SR.

A Visit to the Elizabethtown Church of God

It was my privilege to visit the Elizabethtown Church of God on August 19, 2012. I arrived at 7:47.

I know that the church has had some difficult moments in recent years, but there appeared to be a very sweet spirit present. There was no apparent tension between people or between the pastor and people.

I was greeted warmly both by some people who didn't know me and those who did.

The building was neat and cared for well.

Music was playing which can sometimes stifle conversation.

The bulletin was very attractive.

The prelude started promptly at 7:55 and the service started on time.

The church does take attendance during the worship services and does the bulletin ministry.

The technology is up to date and the services were videotaped. The projector and power point was used in the service.

A layman and lady served as the worship leaders for the service.

There were 49 lined spaces in the parking lot.

There were 21 cars in the lot for the first service. It is obvious a number of persons in both services come one person to a car.

There was a prayer circle in the early service for a long term member who was sick. That was positive.

There were 34 in the early service. There did not appear to be many under the age of 65.

The sermon was practical and useful. People seemed to be attentive.

There was a lot of positive interaction after both services between the people and between the pastor and people. The pastor made himself available to the people.

It was obvious that denominational ministries are being supported.

There is an elevator available...

There were two adult discussion classes. There were 19 in the one and 14 in the other. They both appeared to be healthy. I saw two children's classes. There may have been more.

The signage was good. The bulletin boards were attractive.

There were 37 cars in the lot at 10:30.

There were 60 in the sanctuary for the second service. There were 6 children who went up for the children's talk. They went to children's church after the talk. The congregation is principally older with a sprinkling of younger families.

### *Suggestions:*

There are many positives in the above report.

1. Identify and implement 3 strategies in the coming year to make the community aware that the church exists and walk people through the door.

2. Don't look at the age profile of the church as a negative. Look at it as a positive opportunity for ministry to older folks who need Jesus. Begin two new ministries for seniors with the goal of reaching other seniors for Christ and the church. Fact: a number of seniors who had a church background years ago are returning to church when invited.

3. A church most of the time doesn't have financial problems. The problem is there are not enough people to give and support the church. It is not that you pursue people to have enough to pay the bills. You pursue them because they need Christ and your church.

4.  Should you begin to have more people in the second service, you should have a

parking lot attendant to assist people to find a spot.

APPENDIX I

CASE STUDY

## The Case of the Straw that Broke the Camel's Back

### Background

This is a case study of a church conflict issue I had to address at the Elizabethtown First Church of God. I had been a pastor there for less than 2 years at the time. In the past the church has not been very successful in dealing with conflict in its fellowship. At issue was Mrs. X, a long time active member, causing disruption in the congregation over her resentment toward one of the church elders for an answer the elder gave when asked, "Why am I never nominated for Ad Council?" This issue was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back in a long history of disruptions on the part of Mrs. X that was building with intensity and frequency lately. At that point Mrs. X began a campaign to destroy the elder by sowing half truths and complaints about the elder, Mrs. Y, to everyone she came into contact with. Mrs. Y is a long time member and greatly respected by the congregation.

### Description

When Ms. X asked Ms. Y why she is never nominated for an office on the board, she was hesitant to answer. But when Mrs. X pushed the issue Mrs.Y told her, "We are looking for team players on Ad Council, spiritually gifted for the job and people with a positive attitude. That answer was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back for Mrs. X. She was a long time member and felt entitled to be at least asked to serve. I spoke to Mrs. X one Sunday morning and asked her to come in and talk with the elders about her concerns. I was told she was called in years earlier for inappropriate language with her Sunday school class, so I assumed she would not want to meet with us now. She said she would talk to her husband and get back to me. I was correct because later that day I had a phone message saying that she and her husband had talked, and they decided not to come in. Secondly, she was going to resign as Education chairperson but keep teaching Sunday school. The elders and I did not feel the matter was resolved and decided to have me go back to her once again and ask her to meet with us. They also requested that I invite her to bring in her husband, father, and mother as a support to her. She declined once again by putting a letter on my desk handing in a leave of absence (keeping control) from her teaching responsibilities. We in turn drafted a letter accepting her resignation (Mrs. X. later pointed out to us it was not a resignation but a leave of absence) and expressing regret she would not meet with us. We also expressed our love and concern for her family and kept the door open for them to reconsider and meet with us. We also thanked her for her many years of service to the church and informed her we would be praying for God's will for her family. This letter was sent to the conference leadership for review and approved. Mr. & Mrs. X and their sons did leave the church and have not been back since January 2010. Her mother and father also left a month later. Mrs. X and her family did work the phones and tried to undermine this pastor and elders saying such things as the pastor sent her a nasty letter asking her family to leave the church.

**Analysis**

Something had to be done! If this issue was not addressed in an appropriate manner the problem would just continue to escalate and another split in the church would occur that may do irreparable harm. However, on the other hand it wasn't certain how many allies Mrs. X may have in the congregation. She was continuing to hold the power over this congregation and call the shots and make the terms. Many long term members said this is how Mrs. X has been for years, but no one wanted to deal with the problem. They believed her to have been the cause of many people to leave the church over the years. She is the only and adopted daughter of a prominent couple of the church who also contributes greatly to the church. No one wanted to stir them up. Mrs. X has two young sons who were growing up in the church. No one wanted to do anything that might cause them to be driven from the church. No one wants the guilt of that on them! Mrs. X could not understand that Mrs. Y was not just speaking for herself but that all the elders and most of the congregation were in agreement.

**Evaluation**

I was personally impressed with the balance of compassion but firmness the elders were showing toward Mrs. X and her family. I was also pleased with the professionalism everyone had shown by keeping the issue confidential. It was difficult because Mrs. X. was spreading false rumors that she was asked to leave the church. As pastor and elders we spoke with one voice. The elders honestly wanted to resolve and reconcile the differences in a face to face meeting. They were planning on offering to pay for any counseling she might need since we concluded many of her problems may have been unresolved spiritual and mental health needs. The plan the elders and I developed was for me to meet with the conference leadership, update them on the matter, seek their counsel, and pray for the family. This happened and everyone was in agreement with the plan. One other thing that we agreed on was not to allow Mrs. X or any of her family members to pull us aside in church and discuss the matter individually as we realize that she has been attempting to divide the elders and conquer that way. The pastor and the other three elders expressed their 100% support of Mrs. Y during the elders' meeting. The elders and this pastor worked as a team and spoke to the questions of the congregation in one voice. The door remains open to Mrs. X to return to leadership if she chooses to agree to the plan recommended to her by the pastor, elders, and conference leadership. Initially, there were some questions and struggles among the congregation about the departure of these long-time members. However there has been a new movement of prayer in our congregation amidst these troubles. There seems to be a sense of new found peace and relief among our membership for not allowing this problem to be swept under the rug once again.

**Theological Reflection**

In the fall of 2009, a group of 24 members of the Elizabethtown First Church of God entered a 60 day period of prayer and share triplets. Many participants reported this was the first time our church ever prayed so intentionally. As I look back now I don't think the timing of the conflict with our prayer effort was accidental. I don't know if Satan intensified his effort to destroy the testimony of the congregation as he had so many times in the past as a reaction to our prayer effort or not. I do believe spiritual

warfare is real, and I believe if our congregation had not been in this period of prayer, things could have turned out differently. The members have expressed that our congregation is now stronger and more unified than ever before as a result of the leadership shown in this situation. Our elders' handling of the conflict was flavored with understanding and grace. They were willing to go the extra mile to bring about reconciliation and fellowship with Mrs. X and her family. They chose not to respond in like manner. My question would be what could we have done differently to bring about our ultimate goal of reconciliation and restoration with this family?

APPENDIX J

VISIONARY SERMON SERIES

Visionary Sermons

| Text | Title |
| --- | --- |
| Exodus 2-3 | Vision: God uses the Unlikely (Moses) |
| Numbers 13:25-30; 14:7-9; Prov.23:7 | Vision: God Goes Against the Odds Joshua and Caleb |
| Neh. 1-2 | Vision: God Challenges the Status Quo Nehemiah |
| Ezekiel 37:1-14 | Dream the Impossible Dream: Ezekiel |
| Eph. 2:19-22 1 Co. 3:9,16 | Names and Images Of the Church: The Building |
| Eph. 6:10-18 | Names and Images Of the Church: The Army Of God |
| Eph. 4:1-16 | Names and Images Of the Church: The Body of Christ |
| Eph 5:22-23 | Names and Images Of the Church: The Bride of Christ |
| 1 Cor. 1:1-9 | Names and Images Of the Church: The Church of God |
| Ex. 6:6-7; Rev. 21:3 | Names and Images Of the Church: The People Of God |

APPENDIX K

LARGE FOCUS GROUP

1. **What do you believe are two or three of the greatest gifts God has given this church?**

   *1.* The Location

   *2.* The Building/Facility

   *3.* The People – A solid foundation of caring, kind, loving compassionate, dedicated, talented, enduring people who have a willingness build upon a legacy to serve together in reaching out to our community and beyond in missions.

2. **What do you believe are two or three of the greatest opportunities God may be presenting this church at this time?**

   1. Serve Youth/Young Adults

       A. College

       B. High School

       C. Network/Evangelism with churches

       D. Opportunity to connect with young people/children

       E. Opportunity to mentor young people

       F. Opportunity to use this facility more

       G. More effective use of building

       H. Expanded Buzz Club

   2. Serve people seeking due to world events

       A. Community/Downtown

       B. Clothing

       C. Soup Kitchen

       D. Depression

    E. Children

    F. Better system to help people get food/help (personal)

    G. Reach out to grow our church

    H. During difficult times, we continue to serve

    I. Needs out there

    J. Reach out to them in love and with discernment

3. Deeper faith inwardly.

    A. Individual groups within the church to grow

    B. Real worshipping experience

    C. Open worship for everyone

    D. Styles/People

4. Church at a breaking point. (readiness)

    A. Thirsting for leadership/shepherd

    B. Vision readiness

    C. Opportunity for change

**3. What is your God-given dream for this church?**

1. Have the knowledge to move people to Christ-likeness.

    A. Allow our desires/agenda to get out of the way

    B. Heart closer to Christ

    C. Go deeper, revival

    D. Spiritual fire that doesn't goes out

    E. Energy to make it happen (God's Power)

    F. Deeper commitment, outside and inside

G. More in tune with Him everyday

H. Unified body

I. Work for same God!

J. Focus on Word of God/no distractions

2. Huge Burden for Lost People

A. Be obedient, witness, be open to people.

B. Follow the Lord's direction in everything we say or do

C. Expand/Move out of comfort zone.

D. Get out, get dirty and go to show God's love

E. Community to find acceptance here/needs met.

E. Share God's love in community

F. Assess community needs

G. Pick up people with van

H. Build relationships

I. Do things for right reason/community (Phil. 2:3)

3. Close relationships/family

- Mentor kids/teach skills

4. Churches grow together/come together

A. Network with ministerium

5. Be the next Hanover Church of God.

A. Pews full = more people to serve, more groups

B. (Clarification) Ministry vs. Masses

APPENDIX L

PERMISSIONS

Original message

Jim,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you. I have included the two sections where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission.If you would ―reply‖ to this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Pastor James Moss
Eberlys Mill Church of God
Interview Newville Pa

Response

to me

Mark,

I am happy I could help in some small way with your project. You have my permission to use the thoughts I expressed as stated in the paragraph below…

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Pastor James Moss
Eberlys Mill Church of God
Interview Newville Pa

Original Message

Mark Yarger <yargermark@gmail.com>                    6:01 PM (14 hours ago)

to Dave

Hi Dave,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my
asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written
statement from you, granting me permission to cite you.  I have included the two sections
where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented you
(hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would —reply‖ to this
message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your
permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks


 I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in
the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow
the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.



Pastor David S. Williams
Director of Congregational Care & Renewal
Eastern Regional Conference of the Churches of God General Conference


Response

Dave Williams
to me

Mark
I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in
the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary.  I agree to allow
the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.
Pastor David S. Williams
Director of Congregational Care
Eastern Regional Conference, Churches of God General Conference

Original Message

Mark Yarger <yargermark@gmail.com>
to Doug

Hi Doug,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you. I have included the sections where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would ─reply‖ to this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Pastor Doug Lamb
Life Gate Community
Interviewed in Elizabethtown, Pa

Response

doug@douglambconstruction.com  6:53 AM (57 minutes ago)

to me

Mark,

I attest that I was interviewed by, you, Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of your research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in your final doctoral project.

Pastor Doug Lamb
Life Gate Community
Interviewed in Elizabethtown, Pa

Original Message

May 7

Mark Yarger <yargermark@gmail.com>
to Donald

Hi Don,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you. I have included the section where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would ―reply‖ to this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Pastor Don Lamb
Life Gate Community
Interviewed in Elizabethtown, Pa

Response

Don and Net Lamb
to me

Mark – you have full permission to quote or use anything I have given you.

Don

Original Message

Mark Yarger <yargermark@gmail.com>                    8:49 PM (11 hours ago)

to glcdirector

Hi Earl,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my asking
you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written statement
from you, granting me permission to cite you. I have included the five sections where I quoted
you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented you (hopefully) I would
appreciate your written permission. If you would —reply‖ to this message with the statement
below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your permission to identify you as an
interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the
Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the
information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.


Dr. Earl Mills
Director of Great Lakes Conference of the Churches of God
Interviewed on phone

Earl Mills
to me


                                    Response
Mark,

Congratulations on being in the final stages of your DMIN project.  I know the kind of
work that this involves and I applaud you for the perseverance that you have
displayed.  There are all kinds of skills and qualities needed to complete a DMIN but the
one quality that has to be present for sure is perseverance.  You have
persevered.  Congratulations.  I feel honored that you interviewed me for your project and
included some of the quotes in the final copy.  Thanks for including me.

I affirm the following statement concerning my interview:
I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in
the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow
the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.
Dr. Earl E. Mills

Original Message

Mark Yarger <yargermark@gmail.com>
To: Fred Quade <fmq1976@aol.com>

Hi Fred,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall
my asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a
written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you. I have included the
section where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented
you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would ―reply‖ to
this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had
your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

Response

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research
in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to
allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.


Pastor Fred Quade

Former CGGC Associate

Interviewed in York, Pa

Original Message


Hi Greg,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you.  I have included the sections where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would —reply‖ to this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.


Response

Greg Funk
to me

Mark
I remember and you have my permission to use the statements as written. Good luck with the thesis.
Greg

Sent from my iPad
<Greg Funk.docx>

Original Message

Mark Yarger <yargermark@gmail.com>

to tulipchurch

Hi Jeff,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you.  I have included the sections where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would ―reply‖ to this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

 I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.


Pastor Jeff Rockey

Tulip First Church of God

Interviewed on phone

Response

tulipchurch@juno.com
to me

 I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

I have read the quotes, thanks for making me sound intelligent!  Good luck!

Pastor Jeff Rockey
Tulip First Church of God
Interviewed on phone

Original Response

Mark Yarger <yargermark@gmail.com>

to Mark

Dear Mark,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you. I have included the three sections where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would —reply‖ to this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it. Thanks

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Pastor Mark Ongley

Ashes to Life Ministries, Beaver Falls Pa

Interviewed on phone

Response

Mark Ongley

to me

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Sincerely,

Mark Ongley
Ashes to Life Ministries
Beaver Falls, PA
Interviewed on the phone.

Original Message

Mark Yarger <yargermark@gmail.com>

to Stephen, Steve

Hi Steve
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my
asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a
written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you. I have included the
sections where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented
you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would —reply‖ to
this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had
your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in
the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow
the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Dr. Stephen Dunn
Interim Pastor Shippensburg First Church of God
Interviewed in Landisville Pa

Response

Stephen Dunn
to me

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in
the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow
the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Dr. Stephen Dunn
Interim Pastor Shippensburg First Church of God
Interviewed in Landisville Pa
--

Original Message

Mark Yarger yargermark@gmail.com                    to paulltatum

Hi Paul,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my
asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written
statement from you, granting me permission to cite you. I have included the three
sections where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented
you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would ―reply‖ to this
message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your
permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in
the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow
the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Pastor Paul Tatam
Shippensburg Church of God
Interviewed Phone

Response

Paul Tatum
to me

Yes, Mark that is fine. Feel free to use my name.

Blessings on you as you finish out your work.

Paul

Original Message

Mark Yarger <yargermark@gmail.com>
to disciples

Dear Lance,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you.  I have included the three sections where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would ―reply‖ to this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Pastor Lance Finley
Director of Youth and Family Ministries
Interviewed in Findlay Ohio

Response

Lance Finley
to me

Mark,

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.
Thanks so much for the opportunity to be a part of your research and your heart for such an important topic.

Christ's Peace,

Lance Finley

Original Message

Mark Yarger <yargermark@gmail.com> May 7 (4 days ago)

to bigfisherman100

Hi George,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you. I have included the three sections where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would ―reply‖ to this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Pastor George Reser

Retired
Interviewed on phone

Response

- **George Reser**

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Pastor George Reser

Original Message

Mark Yarger <yargermark@gmail.com>
to Kathryn

Hi Kathryn,
am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you. I have included the section where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would ─reply‖ to this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Prof Kathryn Helleman
Winebrenner Theological Seminary Faculty
Interviewed in class

Response

Kathryn Helleman
to me

Mark,

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.
Kathryn Helleman

Original Message

Mark Yarger <yargermark@gmail.com>
to craig.sider

Hi Craig,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you. I have included the four sections where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would ―reply‖ to this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Craig Sider
Bishop in the Atlantic Conference
Brethren in Christ


Response

Craig Sider

to me

Congratulations on your work, Mark. You certainly have my permission as written below. God's best to you in every way!
Craig Sider

Original Message


Mark Yarger <yargermark@gmail.com>
to William

Hi Bill,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you. I have included the  three sections where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would ─reply‖ to this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Pastor William Reist
College First Church of God
Interviewed in Findlay Ohio



Response

William Reist
to me



I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.


Pastor William Reist
College First Church of God
Interviewed in Findlay Ohio

Original Message

Mark Yarger <yargermark@gmail.com>
to Bill

Hi Bill,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you. I have included the three sections where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would ―reply‖ to this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Dr. William Sloat
Faith Community
Interviewed in Elizabethtown, Pa

Response

Bill Sloat
to me

Mark,

Sorry for the slow response. Lots going on here.

---------------------------

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

William Sloat
Faith Community

Original Message

Mark Yarger <yargermark@gmail.com>
to Rissey

Mark Yarger <yargermark@gmail.com
to Melissa Young

Hi Melissa,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. I would like your permission to use three photos of your father Vincent Young in Chapter Six of my project. I need to include a written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you. I have included the three pictures for your review (see attachment).  I would appreciate your written permission. If you would —reply to this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

I grant permission to Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary to use the three pictures of Vincent Young. I agree to allow those pictures to be included in his final doctoral project.

Melissa Young
Daughter and POA


Response

Rissey Rose

to me

It's Marissa Young and yes I give permission :)

Original Message

Hi Chuck,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you. I have included the three sections where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would ─reply‖ to this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Pastor Charles P. Frank,
Director of Church Planting & Evangelism
Interviewed over phone


Response

        10:18 AM (4 minutes ago)
Chuck Frank

to me


I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Pastor Charles P. Frank,
ERC Director of Church Planting & Evangelism
Interviewed over phone

Original Message

**From:** President
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 08, 2013 9:07 AM
**To:** David Draper
**Subject:** FW: DMIN Project

**From:** Mark Yarger [mailto: ]
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 07, 2013 7:45 PM
**To:** President
**Subject:** DMIN Project

Hi Dave,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you.  I have included five sections where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would ―reply‖ to this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.

Thanks

Response

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.

Dr. David Draper
President of Winebrenner Theological Seminary
Interviewed in Findlay, OH

*Pastor Mark Yarger*
*Elizabethtown First Church of God*
*Church 717-367-7060*
*Cell 724-771-0742*

Original Message

**From:** "Mark Yarger" <yargermark@gmail.com>
**To:** walker80@comcast.net
**Sent:** Monday, June 10, 2013 12:00:24 AM


Hi Mike,
I am in the final phase of writing my doctoral research project. You hopefully recall my asking you to allow me to cite you as a source for my research. I need to include a written statement from you, granting me permission to cite you. I have included one section where I quoted you as a source (see attachment). If I have not misrepresented you (hopefully) I would appreciate your written permission. If you would ─reply‖ to this message with the statement below, I will keep it with my files to verify that I had your permission to identify you as an interviewee. I appreciate it.
Thanks

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.


Response

I attest that I was interviewed by Pastor Mark Yarger for the purposes of his research in the Doctor of Ministry program at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. I agree to allow the information from that interview to be included in his final doctoral project.


Dr. Mike Walker
Bowansdale Church of God
Interviewed in Bowansdale, PA

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———. Interview by author, Landisville, PA, September 22, 2010.

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