ABSTRACT

New Life for Old Churches:
A Multi - Case Study of Four Turnaround Small Free Methodist Churches

Andrew M. Haskins

Some small Free Methodist churches grow but most do not. Churches over thirty years old rarely grow. Most churches over thirty years of age have plateaued and become maintenance organizations or entered into a state of decline. The purpose of the proposed study was to identify factors for growth among Free Methodist churches in New York State which are over thirty years old and have grown from an average worship attendance of eighty or smaller to become a church with an average worship attendance of 125 or more, having completed this turnaround in a ten year period or less. Four Free Methodist churches in New York State fit the criteria for the study and were interviewed.

The researcher used descriptive analysis as the methodology of the study. He compiled a Turnaround Church Survey which was used to interview the pastors of the four churches studied. The survey was also used to interview three key lay leaders from the churches. The researcher then identified correlating factors identified by the respondents.

Twelve factors are identified as being important in the turnaround of the four formerly small and declining churches. The instrumental factors discovered are: Visionary leadership, quality in music and worship, a willingness to change, warm reception of visitors, attending growth seminars, the removal of obstacles, equipping laity for ministry, prayer, tithing, spiritual renewal, the addition of staff, and intentional ministry.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

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Table of Contents

Tables

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CHAPTER 1

Overview of the Study

In July of 1991, I was in my second year as the associate pastor for outreach and evangelism at the Free Methodist Church in Gowanda, New York. I did not understand the nature of my work as the pastor of outreach and evangelism. The church had plateaued over the past twelve years averaging just under two hundred people in worship on a weekly basis. My task was to bring people into the church, thus helping it to grow. I began to research why the church stopped growing. I identified ten reasons why the church was on a plateau. By immersing myself in the church growth literature I learned to understand the issue well enough to identify two missing elements which would help the church to reach new people and to begin to grow once again. This whole process awakened a passion within me to understand more fully why churches grow as well as why churches stop growing. This new found passion motivated this study.

<u>The Problem and Its Setting</u>

Most churches do not grow, yet some do. Why is this? More specifically, churches over thirty years old seldom grow (Dale, Schaller). This is a study of mature churches that defy the norm.

Lyle Schaller has said that the most difficult assignment for a minister is to design and to implement a strategy that will move the long-established congregation off a plateau in size (*44 Steps* 12). Many Free Methodist pastors face this challenge in their own local congregations.

A church thirty years old or older tends to plateau or to decline (*To Dream Again* 14). Free Methodist churches in North America are no exception to this rule. The majority of these churches are small with an average of seventy-three people worshiping on the average Sunday (*The Small Membership Church* 50). Out of 1,237 Free Methodist churches in existence in 1993, 959 had an average attendance of 100 or fewer. Out of the total number of Free Methodist churches, 19 percent of the churches had a worship attendance of twenty-five or less. Two thirds of all Free Methodist congregations averaged seventy three or less in worship attendance. Many of these are in decline or plateaued. Most of these congregations are over seventy-five years old. The church population grows older and younger people do not join. If this trend continues, these churches have a limited future.

My former conference in Central New York, the Susquehanna Conference, serves as an example of this problem. Twenty-four of the twenty-eight churches have eighty or fewer people worshiping on an average Sunday morning. Fourteen of these churches have fifty or fewer. Ten churches have between fifty and one hundred in morning worship.

Presently I pastor in the Genesee Conference at the Allegany Free Methodist Church in Allegany, N.Y., which was established in 1860. The church declined from 1983 until June of 1994. In 1983 the church had a peak average Sunday School attendance of ninety and a morning worship attendance of 146. Attendance slowly dropped to a low of 103 for the yearly average in morning worship attendance for 1991 and plateaued at that level until 1994.

A few Free Methodist churches have begun to grow and can no longer be classified as small churches. The changes which have taken place within these churches have resulted in a reversal of their decline. In 1991, fifty-four of the Free Methodist churches in the northeastern portion of the United States (17%) had an average attendance between 100 and 185. Twenty years earlier, the number of churches in this category was only thirty-two or slightly over 9 percent. This increase is noticeable, but the majority of the churches in the Northeast have yet to grow.

The large number of small, plateaued, or declining Free Methodist churches warrants a study of those churches which have begun to grow to discover correlating factors which account for their growth and transferable principles which might help other Free Methodist churches in the northeastern United States grow.

Statement of the Purpose

Some Free Methodist churches grow but most do not. Churches over thirty years old rarely grow. Most churches over thirty years of age have plateaued and become maintenance organizations or entered into a state of decline. The purpose of the proposed study, therefore, was to identify factors for growth among Free Methodist churches in New York State which are over thirty years old and have grown from an average worship attendance of eighty or smaller to become a church with an average worship attendance of 125 or more, having completed this turnaround in a ten year period or less.

My aim is to contribute to the understanding of the factors associated with church growth, specifically the growth of Free Methodist churches in New York State over thirty

years old by identifying the correlating factors contributing to growth.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

1.   What is the demographic profile of these growing Free Methodist churches in

New York State?

2.   What are the ten year growth trends of these growing Free Methodist churches

located in New York State?

3.   What factors do pastors and lay leaders identify as being instrumental in the

reversal of declining attendance patterns in their church?

4.   How do pastors and lay leaders differ in their perception of the factors behind the

turnaround?

<u>Definition Of Terms</u>

Church growth is the science that investigates the nature, function, and health of

Christian churches as they relate specifically to the implementation of God's Commission

to "Make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:9). Church growth is simultaneously a

theological conviction and an applied science, striving to combine the eternal principles

of God's Word with the best insights of contemporary social and behavioral sciences,

employing as its initial frame of reference the foundational work done by Donald

McGavran and his colleagues. (Wagner, *Church Growth, State of the Art* 284).

A *small church* is a church with fewer than one hundred people in attendance.

Lay ministry is a term referring to involvement of non-ordained persons in the

work and ministry of the church.

A *declining church* is one which shows a net decline of 10 percent or more in the composite figure from the composite five years earlier.

The *composite* is an average of total membership, morning worship attendance, and the higher of Sunday School attendance or midweek attendance.

A *shepherd* is a term used to describe a pastor who does most of the ministry personally.

A *rancher* is a term used to describe a pastor who is primarily a leader and does ministry primarily through delegating responsibility to lay people who have been trained and equipped for that ministry.

A *mature church* is a church having been in existence more than thirty five years.

Methodology

The method of the study was a multiple case study in the descriptive mode. This involved studying those particular churches which have turned around from a small declining congregation and have become a growing church of 125 or more within a ten year period or less. This information was gathered primarily through interviews with the pastor during the period of the turnaround and three key lay people who made up part of the leadership of the church. Church attendance records were also examined by the researcher. The information was studied to determine correlations of factors cited by each of the growing churches. It was also studied in the light of what the church growth authors have determined as factors for the turnaround of small declining churches.

The Population and Sample

The population of this study was limited to caucasian Free Methodist churches in New York State which are at least thirty years old. These churches which have a history of smallness and decline have turned things around significantly enough to grow past 125 people. The Genesee Conference has two ethnic churches and thirty-six caucasian churches for a total of thirty-eight churches within its boundary. The Susquehanna Conference has no ethnic churches and has twenty -five caucasian churches within its boundary. The New York Conference has ten ethnic churches and thirty-six caucasian churches for a total of forty -six churches within its boundary. The four churches being studied represent 3.6 percent of the churches in these three conferences and .37 percent of the 1,067 Free Methodist churches in the United States.

The four churches which fit these criteria are as follows:

Cattaraugus Free Methodist Church, Cattaraugus, NY
East Williamson Free Methodist Church, East Williamson, NY
Harvest Chapel Free Methodist Church, Fredonia, NY
Liberty Free Methodist Church, Liberty, NY

Pertinent Variables

The primary dependant variable was the growth of the four churches studied in membership, morning worship attendance, Sunday School attendance, mid-week attendance, and small group attendance. The correlating factors identified for the growth of these churches serves as the independent variables. Ten factors were identified from reviewing the precedents in the literature, they are: (1) A desire for growth and change must be present. (2) Obstacles keeping the church from growing must be removed. (3)

The church must identify it's true purpose for existence. (4) The pastor and the people must begin to pray for growth and renewal. (5) The church needs to have an outreach focus. (6) The church needs to discover the needs of their community. (7) The church needs to concentrate on doing just a few things well. (8) A way must be found to generate visitor flow and those people must be followed up. (9) The pastor must lead. (10) Equipping and training lay people for ministry and service was also identified as a factor for growth.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The primary instruments used in this proposed study are the interview using the researcher designed interview protocol (Turnaround Survey) and review of statistical records. The data was collected through the use of a researcher designed semi-structured interview protocol with pastors and three key lay leaders such as, the Christian Education Director, the Lay Delegate to Annual Conference, the Church Treasurer, or members of the Pastor's Cabinet. The interviews were approximately an hour long and were conducted at each of the church facilities. One interview was conducted by telephone because of distance. The rationale for interviewing the leaders of the church rather than interviewing new people in the church was the researchers belief that the leadership would have a greater awareness of the changes which took place resulting in the growth of the church than new people. The statistics were received from the present pastor of the churches being studied. Those figures were then checked and verified by the researcher from denominational records published in the denominational yearbooks from the years examined in this study.

Delimitations and Generalizability

The delimitations of this study limit the applications of the findings to Caucasian

Free Methodist churches in the northeastern portion of the United States over thirty years

of age. The findings, then, are not necessarily pertinent outside of the Free Methodist

church or any churches which are less than thirty years old. Nor are ethnic churches

meant to be addressed or helped by the findings of this proposed study. However, this

study may prove to be helpful to mature churches in similar denominations and

demographic settings as well.

Theological Reflection

In chapter thirty-seven of the book of Ezekiel, God asks the prophet a very

pointed question. "Son of man, can these bones live (v.3)?" The researcher believes this

question to be essentially the same question as the one addressed in this study. Can new

life be brought to dead or dying old and small churches? Ezekiel demonstrated much

wisdom in his response, "O Lord, only you know (v.3)." The truth of the matter is only

God knows if an older, dying small church can be turned around and once again bring

forth fruit for the kingdom of God. God then asks Ezekiel to:

> Prophesy to these bones and say to them, `Dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord!
> This is what the sovereign Lord says to these bones; I will make breath enter you,
> and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord (vs. 4-6).'

The small church that experiences new life will be the small church which has recently

embraced the word of God and desires for Him to bring new life into it. God reveals that

it is His desire to bring life to dead and dying institutions that they might be alive and

serving Him. The question that remains is, "How does this happen?" It happened

because Ezekiel prayed to the Lord, seeking the Lord's leading for the people of Israel.

The new birth of life for the old and dying congregation begins when a person or a group

of people start to pray and to seek God's direction and leading for their church.

> So I prophesied what I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live." So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood on their feet a vast army. Then He said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the house of Israel. They say our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off." Therefore prophesy to them and say to them: "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord." (vs. 7-14)

In verse 11 God explains what is happening. The Israelites believe they are

without hope. Many older, small churches also feel the same way. God explains to

Ezekiel that people who are without hope will receive new life from God through the

power of His Holy Spirit. New life is available for smaller churches. The source of that

new life is not found in techniques or through self effort. Rather, it is the result of a

resuscitation of life from God, who breathes life once again back into the congregation.

A primary reason for the decline of many small churches is a loss of God's vision

for the church (Dale, Warren). Lack of growth usually indicates an unhealthy situation,

and possibly a disease. Proverbs 29:18 says: "Where there is no vision, the people perish.

. . (KJV)" The decline of churches is almost always linked to a lack of an awareness of

God's vision. In *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren speaks of the "Nehemiah

Principle": "Vision and purpose must be restated every 26 days to keep the church

moving in the right direction (111)." Warren gives an account of Nehemiah 4:6-15:

> Like many churches, they lost their sense of purpose and, as a result, became
> overwhelmed with fatigue, frustration, and fear. Nehemiah rallied the people
> back to work by reorganizing the project and recasting the vision. He reminded
> them of the importance of their work and reassured them that God would help
> them fulfill his purpose (111).

Chuck Swindoll quotes A.W. Tozer in *Hand Me Another Brick*,

> Let the owner neglect for a while his prized and valued acres and they will revert
> again to the wilds and be swallowed by the jungle or the wasteland. The bias of
> nature is toward the wilderness, never toward the fruitful field (12).

The loss of vision often leads to a self-serving mentality. People seek their own

interests instead of the interests of others. What the people of the church desire for their

own benefit tends to affect the decision making process when the Lord's vision is absent.

The two passages of scripture which contain the great commandment and the great

commission are:

> '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.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two
> commandments' (Matthew 22:36-40).

> Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been
> given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in
> the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to
> obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to
> the very end of the age' (Matthew 28:18-20).

> Loving God, loving the people around us and making disciples for God are always

a part of understanding God's vision for the church. When these elements are forgotten,

the church begins to decline and stops bearing fruit. The alternative to God's vision is often a self-serving vision. Jesus said, "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it" (Matthew 16:25). This explains why churches begin to decline when they make survival their goal. God does not desire for us to survive, but to serve. This author is making the assumption that when God brings new life to a church, with it He also brings a renewal of a vision to reach the lost. It is the renewal of spiritual life and vision together which transforms a lifeless church into a life-giving station for the lost people which come into contact with the church. Thus new spiritual life and new vision will result in new conversion growth for the church.

Six principles for renewal can be identified in the book of Nehemiah. The first principle comes from Nehemiah 1:3-4:

> They said to me, 'Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.' When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

Principle 1-- renewal comes to us after we have a broken and a contrite heart. Nehemiah fasted, prayed, and wept before God on behalf of his people. His heart was broken because of the sin of Israel and he expressed his great remorse to the Lord. The small church which is in decline and which has not been bearing fruit also needs to have its heart broken and to express remorse for its lack of obedience to God and for its failure to serve the Lord.

The second principle is found in Nehemiah 1:5b-7:

> O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, let your ear be attentive

and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you. We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

Principle 2 -- there must be corporate repentance before God for our sin and our failures.

Just as Nehemiah expressed a spirit of repentance to God for himself and for his people,

the pastor and people of the small declining church also need to have a spirit of

repentance and sorrow for their failure to be obedient to God's word.

The third principle is found in Nehemiah 1:11:

O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man.

Principle 3 -- Without prayer, and the help of God, renewal is not possible.

Nehemiah realized that his success was in the hands of the Lord. He also knew that

without requesting the Lord's help in prayer he would not be successful in achieving his

objective. The small church seeking new life and new fruit must also begin by going to

God in prayer so that they might receive His blessing.

The fourth principle is found in Nehemiah 2:17,18:

Then I said to them, 'You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.' I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon me and what the king said to me. They replied, 'Let us start rebuilding.' So they began this good work.

Principle 4 -- in order to achieve the goal of renewal or turnaround, a clear strategy must

be developed first. Throughout the third chapter Nehemiah gives details of how the work

was to proceed and who was responsible for each task needing to be done. In the process

of renewing and turning around the small church there needs to be a God given strategy

to accomplish the task set before the people. It does not happen unless intentional steps

are taken to bring about the desired effect.

Nehemiah 2:17-18 also reveals the next principle: "Come, let us rebuild the wall

of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.   They replied, `Let us start

rebuilding.' So they began this good work."

Principle 5-- The small church in decline must not only have a strategy for renewal but

must begin to implement it and to take positive, intentional action. Beginning is half of

the battle.

The last principle is found in the fourth chapter of Nehemiah where the Israelites

are receiving opposition to the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. "So we rebuilt the

wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart." (4:6)

Principle 6 -- In order for the members of a small church to successfully turn around their

decline and once again begin to bear fruit for the kingdom of God, they must persevere in

spite of opposition and difficulties. It requires hard work and continuous effort, but

perseverance has its rewards.

In summary, there are eight steps the members of a small or declining church can

take in order to bring a new period of life, growth, and fruit to their church. The first

involves embracing God's word afresh, seeking God and the new life that only He can

bring. Second, the people of the church need to begin to pray as they study God's word,

asking God to show them the way forward to new life and growth. Third, the members

of the church need to rediscover God's purpose and mission for the church as they pray

and read the scriptures. Fourth, the people of the church need to demonstrate genuine repentance for their lack of vision and obedience to God's word. Fifth, the members of the church should seek the Lord's help through continual prayer. Sixth, the people of the church need to develop a clear strategy to accomplish the task which God has revealed to them through His word and through prayer. The next step is for the members of the church to implement the strategy. Lastly, the people of the church need to persevere and endure the hardships involved in the process of turning around the small or declining church.

Overview

Chapter 2 will reviews selected church growth literature looking at both those who have previously contributed to the field of study as well as the church growth principles which have been identified. A section describing the nature of the small church will be included as well as a section dealing with the strategies for growing or turning around a small church.

In the third chapter the problem and purpose are restated in summary form. The research and operational questions are stated. The population and sample are established. The interview is explained in detail and information is provided concerning the reliability and validity of the instrument used for the interview. A detailed explanation of the process of data collection is also given. Definitions of the independent and dependent variables are given along with an explanation as to how they will be measured. Lastly, the data analysis methodology is explained.

The fourth chapter presents the findings of the study including tables.

The fifth and last chapter includes a summary and interpretation of the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 2

Precedents in the Literature

Over the last five years the author has read widely in the field of church growth.
This reading has enabled the researcher to develop a better understanding of the subject
matter as well as serve as an introduction to those who have made significant
contributions in the area of church growth. The following is a sample of selected church
growth literature to highlight precedents in the literature.

The Birth of Church Growth

In the early part of this century, two missionaries began to research the subject of
why churches grow and what hinders a church from growing. Anglican Roland Allen
and Methodist J. Waskom Pickett were missionaries in the early part of this century.
They explored reasons churches grow or fail to grow through field research. Christian
Church (Disciples of Christ) Superintendent Donald McGavran said of Pickett, "I lit my
candle at Bishop Pickett's fire" (*Church Growth Strategies That Work* 14).

George Hunter tells how McGavran made less use of the questionnaires used by
Picket in favor of interviews. To this he added observation and historical analysis.
"Those four methods, though refined, remain as the major methods of Church Growth
research" (*To Spread The Power* 23). The movement known as "church growth" had
begun. Up until this time the church growth movement was limited to overseas. By
1970, the ball was rolling and McGavran explains how others began to join in the effort
(Understanding Church Growth vi.). McGavran established the Institute of Church
Growth in the mid-sixties, and then moved Fuller Theological Seminary to found the

School of World Mission in 1965 (Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow* 14). Hunter tells

how by this time McGavran had some high-powered company in this research quest such

as Alan Tippett, Ralph Winter, and Peter Wagner. In the 1970's, having discovered that

North America was a mission field as well, leaders as diverse as Win Arn, Wendell

Belew, C. Peter Wagner, Paul Benjamin, Lyle Schaller, Charles Channey, Ron Lewis,

Eddie Gibbs as well as George Hunter began championing church growth possibilities for

churches on this continent (*To Spread the Power* 24).

One of the first systematic attempts to apply the scientific principles of church

growth discovered by McGavran was found in C. Peter Wagner's book *Your Church Can

Grow* (Regal Books, 1976). In this work Wagner emphasized the importance of pastoral

leadership coupled with lay participation in ministry. Wagner also examined why

churches die. One of his chief contributions was the identification of the Celebration,

Congregation, and Cell as essential parts of the growing church (111 - 125). In 1984

Wagner published *Leading Your Church to Growth*, a book focusing on church

leadership for growth. In this work he looks at such topics as the cost of church growth,

the role of the pastor as the leader/equipper, as well as the importance of the role of the

laity in the growth of the church. Wagner has been a major contributor to the field of

church growth through his writing, teaching at the Fuller Institute of Church Growth

since 1971 as well as speaking at seminars sponsored by Fuller to train pastors and

church leaders.

Lyle Schaller has been a parish consultant since 1971 with the Yokefellow

Institute, in Richmond, Indiana. He has conducted approximately 800 workshops on

church growth, parish planning, leadership, and other related subjects (Wagner, *Church Growth, State Of The Art*, 260). Schaller authored over 40 books, at least 25 of which are on the subject of church growth. Schaller stresses the need for churches to reassess what business they are in. He suggests churches make a change from a dominant member orientation to a much stronger outreach emphasis (*Growing Plans* 59). He also classified churches by size and began to look at the needs and personalities of churches according to size (Looking In The Mirror).

Win Arn, the president and founder of the Institute for American Church Growth, is widely respected as a pioneer and spokesperson for the American church growth movement. He has conducted more church growth seminars and training sessions for pastors, churches and denominations than any other person. He has produced or co-produced almost every film now in use in the church growth field (*State of The Art* 230). His son Charles Arn is one of the foremost designers of church growth training curricula (229). Win and Charles Arn developed a model for bringing people into the church through their social networks in *The Master's Plan For Making Disciples* (Church Growth Press, 1982). The authors give five steps for expanding the process of making disciples:

1. Utilize new Christians.
2. Expand the disciple making process to all present groups in the church.
3. Begin new groups.
4. Start new churches.
5. Reach across cultures (162-167).

George G. Hunter III is dean and professor of Church Growth of the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism at Asbury Theological Seminary.

Hunter has added to the field through identifying six "Mega-strategies" which resulted

from a distillation of known church growth principles. They are as follows:

1. Identifying and reaching receptive people.
2. Reaching out across the social networks of the believers.
3. Multiplying units as recruiting groups and ports of entry.
4. Ministering to felt needs of people.
5. Building culturally indigenous forms of ministry
6. Prayerful planning (Hunter, *To Spread The Power* 204).

Elmer Towns made his first significant contribution to the field of church growth

with the research and publication of *The 10 Largest Sunday Schools in America,* (Baker).

Towns has published a number of books that have researched growing local

congregations and shared the findings of his study.

Theology of Church Growth

The theological foundation for the movement known as church growth is found in

Luke 19:10 where Jesus said: "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that

which was lost." Peter adds to this foundation when he informs us in

2 Peter 3:9 that God is: "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to

repentance." These two verses establish that the God whom we serve and worship is a

seeking and a finding God. C. Peter Wagner says:

> Immediately after Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit and fell into sin, God
> called out to Adam in the garden, 'Where are you?' (Genesis 3:9). Ever since
> then, he has actively been seeking people separated from Him by sin. He was so
> serious about it He finally sent 'His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in
> Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16) (*Your Church Can
> Grow* 38).

The bottom line is God wants lost people found and saved from their sins.

Church growth is both scientific and pragmatic. It seeks to use the human mind to research, understand, plan, strategize and implement, all under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Yet, at the same time, church growth seeks to look for what is presently working and is effective in bringing people to Christ. Next, those situations are studied in an effort to identify transferable principles. God wants Christians to multiply and He wants churches to be multiplied. Church growth works to that end. Church growth is both a systematic and pragmatic attempt to fulfill the Great Commission. Peter Wagner says of Church Growth:

> It tries to explain, in a reasonable and systematic way, why some churches grow and others decline, why some Christians are able to bring their friends to Christ and into church membership and others are not, or what are the symptoms of a terminal illness in a church (43).

Ultimately, Church Growth looks around to see how God is working and what methods He is using around the world to bring people to Himself. Once this question has been answered, Church Growth people seek to become a part of what God is doing and they also seek to put into practice what is working at the present.

<div align="center">Small Churches</div>

The small church exists because, beyond a certain size, it is difficult for people to know everyone (Dudley, Schaller). One fourth of all Protestant congregations on the North American continent average fewer than thirty five at the Sunday morning worship service. At least one-half average less than seventy five. One third of all the congregations in the United States fit in the category of a small church (Schaller, *Growing Plans* 18). Small churches remain small for many reasons, not the least of

which is the desire to continue as "one happy family" (Sullivan, Dudley, Schaller). The most natural size for a church is around 40 people (Schaller, *The Small Church Is Different* 9). The natural size of the worshipping congregation is that of the small church (Schaller 10). The small church can be compared to water which naturally runs downhill. For water to run uphill it requires sustained effort to accomplish the feat. So it is with the small church. The small congregation, like water, will stay at the same level year after year and decade after decade (12). In the small size church everybody knows everyone else and a high level of intimacy or "Koinonia" can be experienced.

The small church lives within the American culture but it also has a very distinct culture of its own. The culture of the small church is predisposed to sentimentality rather than rationality, to habit rather than to a purpose. One of the main goals of the small church is to preserve the traditions, practices and habits that make up the small church which the members have come to know and to love. A goal of the small church is to make sure its members remain happy and continue to be a part of the "family" type gatherings (*Help For The Small Church Pastor* 41). A fear of losing control plagues the people of the small church. The leaders of the small church have a strong desire to maintain the status quo and to preserve the traditions of the church (Bierly, Dudley, Schaller). Small churches tend to be lay owned and operated. The priorities of the lay people are survival and institutional loyalty (Buttrey, Schaller). Schaller sums up the small church's priorities when he states:

> The small congregation places a high priority on relationships, on the importance of everyone's being able to call all other members by name, on the rights and privileges of each individual, and on making sure all the bills are paid (*The Small Church Is Different*, p. 15).

The heart and soul of the small church is the primary group in which the members are united by common interests, beliefs, tasks and territory. They are not self-conscious about their relationships and they are bound together more by sentimental ties than by contractual agreements. This primary group can best be described as a "caring cell" (*Making The Small Church Effective* 32). Lyle Schaller describes the small church as a "second commandment" church. He bases this on Matthew 22:37-38 where Jesus states the greatest commandment is to love God with all of our heart, soul, and strength, and the second is like it, "Love your neighbor as yourself." (*The Small Church Is Different* 52). The small church has made its goal and purpose to love and care for each other as one big happy family. Most decisions in the small church are made by consensus (Dudley, Schaller, Burt, Roper).

Lyle Schaller describes the small church of thirty five or less as a cat church. The reason for this being a cat has nine lives and always lands on its feet. Cats are very independent creatures and are very self sufficient. These same traits can also be attributed to the small church. Cat churches are labeled as fellowship churches because they resemble an overgrown small group more than they resemble a stereotype of what a church should be like (Schaller, *Looking In The Mirror* 15). Schaller also mentions the fact that these churches often do better without a pastor than with one (17). The small church between thirty five and one hundred is referred to as a "Collie Church" by Schaller and as a "Pastoral Church" by Rothauge (Burt and Roper, *Raising Small Church Esteem* 25). Churches of this size enjoy being loved and they return the affection. Collie churches tend to be friendly to members of their own family but have a tendency to bark

at strangers. One priority of this size church is to love its pastor. People of the small

church have a strong desire to know their pastor personally. Having a personal

relationship with their pastor becomes a higher priority than the pastor having any

particular skills, which is a secondary consideration (Dudley, *Making the Small Church*

Effective 72).

The Single Cell Church

Organizationally, the small church operates in a single-cell manner -- most often

as a participatory democracy. The people all try to attend all of the church's fellowship,

worship, and educational functions (Burt, p.25). The typical small-membership church

resembles an overgrown small group. Everyone knows everyone and the people are held

together by their face-to-face relationships rather than shared goals or objectives. Carl

Dudley classifies the small-member church as a primary group in that they are united by

common interests, beliefs, tasks, and territory. Their bond comes from sentimental ties

and relationships (*Making The Small Church Effective* 32). The small church offers

intimacy and a sense of family. Personal relationships are the basis of this primary

group. The basic obstacle to the growth of the small church lies in the satisfaction of the

present membership (Dudley, Schaller, Bierly). The small church cannot grow without

forfeiting its sense of intimacy (Dudley 49). The small church cannot grow and remain

a small church. In order to grow it must give up its comfortable identity to become

something new and foreign. In the small church the strong commitment of the members

to one another, to kinfolk ties, to the meeting place, and to the concept of one big happy

family tend to reinforce the single-cell character of the small church. When combined

with the intergenerational character of the small church, these forces tend to enhance the caring nature of the fellowship, at the cost of potential numerical growth. These unifying principles tend to make the small church an exclusionary institution (*Different* 52). The result of this is the more closely knit the fellowship ties of the congregation, the less likely the church will be able to achieve significant numerical growth.

Conserving

Preserving memories is important to the small church. Small churches are not necessarily opposed to change, they just make conserving the past a higher priority. These small churches affirm their past as their source of identity in three ways: Time is defined by significant events that shape the image and the expectations of the congregation. Space becomes a sacred place when experienced with important people who remain as anchors to the past or guides to the future. Annual events and personal passages remind a caring cell of the length and breadth of the Lord's concern throughout their lives and beyond (*Effective* 75-76).

Obstacles to Growth

The most fundamental growth restriction for the small church is change (Schaller, Sullivan). The typical small church is not organized to grow, but is organized to remain on a plateau in size. The primary reason that small churches remain small and do not grow is because they are too inward-oriented and most of their resources are concentrated on serving themselves. These small churches tend to focus on nurture and survival rather than on mission. Other obstacles are, having a problem solving focus, having a vision only large enough to make sure the bills get paid, being comfortable with

the status quo, a strong sense of nostalgia that longs to return to the "good old days", and a lack of a vision or burden for lost people (Schaller, *Growing Plans* 18).

One other major obstacle to growth in the smaller church is the desire for the pastor to be a chaplain or an employee of the church. Most long established small-membership churches are often "lay owned and operated," rather than minister centered; and the greater the lay control in any size congregation, the less likely it is that the congregation will grow. The pastor is not seen as an initiating leader, but rather as an individual hired by the church to work for them. The pastor is seen as one of the leaders but not as the leader. Chaplains rarely posses the authority to bring about change (Schaller, Burt, Roper).

The loss of a sense of vision and purpose is probably the most common obstacle to growth. This usually occurs after a congregation has been in existence for more than thirty years. When this occurs the people of the church find themselves majoring on minor issues. Budgets and bills become more important than souls being reached with the good news of the gospel. Tradition becomes more important than the leading of the Holy Spirit and committee meetings become more important than prayer (Rainer, *Eating The Elephant* 21).

Age of the Congregation

The age of a congregation is a factor in the lack of growth in a congregation. Most small membership churches have been in existence for more than thirty years (Schaller, Dale). Like machinery, organizations tend to wear out, decline in their effectiveness, and cease to be (Shawchuck, *Leading The Congregation* 157). Churches

have a tendency to go through a life-cycle of birth, getting established (beliefs, goals, and structure), active ministry, a period of nostalgia, polarization and decline (Dale, Baker, Brown). Churches have a tendency to forget their original goals and purposes after about thirty years of existence. Preservation of the tradition and status quo become the new purpose by default. Survival and maintenance become the new goals. Unless the true biblical purpose of the church is rediscovered the disease almost always proves to keep the church from being effective in ministry and from bearing much fruit. Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser explain this phenomenon in this way:

> Congregations, like all human organizations, have a life cycle. In passing through their life cycle, some congregations learn to renew themselves and thus extend their life cycles from one cycle to another. Other congregations do not learn. They remain blind to the changes, or choose to ignore them, claiming that their theology or ecclesiology is right for all time. These churches are candidates for stagnation and demise. When a congregation is no longer able to interpret reality, that congregation is headed for serious trouble (*Leading the Congregation* 158).

Likewise Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus have said:

> Organizations are born, grow, age, and die. At each stage of development, from inception to maturity, certain challenges must be overcome if the congregation is to survive. First, the challenges stem from the fact that the congregation itself is changing. There is a continual march of internal changes to which the congregation must adapt. Second, the challenges stem from the fact that the congregation's environment is continually changing. If the church does not learn to adapt to these internal and external changes, it will not survive. Finally, however, the congregation will grow old and die. A simple sketch of the life cycle of most organizations may be drawn to depict the major organizational life cycle stages: inception, growth, maturity, and decline (*Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge* 28).

Small churches need to be aware of the natural life-cycle of their church and take steps to renew their vision and rediscover their biblical purpose if they are to avoid decline.

Frequent Pastoral Changes

Another significant factor is the tenure of the present pastor. Rarely will one find a growing church without the benefit of a long pastorate. Relatively few small-membership churches have the same leadership for more than three or four years. The frequent changes in pastoral leadership tend to undermine the possibilities for growth in the small church (Dudley, Schaller).

Low Morale and Low Self-Esteem

Low self esteem is another trademark of many small churches. They frequently see themselves as small, weak, unattractive, powerless and frustrated, having a limited future at best. This attitude leads to a priority of institutional survival and maintenance rather than one of outreach (*Growing Plans* 20). Low morale in small churches is caused by such things as negative attitudes which choose to see only the bad and fail to notice any good which may be occurring. This type of thinking also leads to a problem based approach to planning which tends to reinforce a sense of gloom, pessimism, and despair. One of the most discouraging events in the life of a small church is the frequent change of pastors. This can cause a real sense of loss as well as a grieving process; this also has is the effect of reinforcing the low self-image already present in the small church (Burt, Roper, Schaller, Dudley).

The Ability to Survive

Small churches are tough and have an amazing ability to survive. The small church is basically an independent and autonomous group which places its emphasis on reinforcing a sense of community. This sense of independence allows the members to be

self-sufficient and they will work hard and give sacrificially to maintain that

independence. Because the small church is a single cell type church, its members have a

great number of shared experiences which has a tendency to strengthen them as a group.

Worship tends to be the focus of the small church and becomes a very cohesive force.

The small church focuses most of its energy and resources on the centrality of worship.

This becomes the greatest single source of institutional strength in the small

congregation.

Because small churches tend to be lay dominated they also tend to have a high

survival rate. The pastor tends to be seen as a transient at best and the lay people feel a

need to maintain a sense of control. The congregation as a whole becomes the focal

point for loyalty as apposed to loyalty only to a sub-group of the church (*Different* 130-

135). Survival mentality is a disease of vision deficiency. The church having been in

existence for many years has forgotten its God given purpose and has substituted survival

as its new focus and mission (Buttrey, *Bringing Your Church Back To Life: Beyond*

Survival Mentality 42).

How a Small Church Grows

In this section I will look at how small churches grow and then look at various

strategies that have been proposed by authors who have written on this topic. Each

strategy will be explained individually.

The first step in the growth process of the small church is for the church to decide

it wants to grow. Rapid membership growth can be a real possibility for many small

churches. This growth depends less on community potential and more on the values and

attitudes of church members. The congregation must want to grow so much that they are willing to give up the satisfaction of knowing, or knowing about, everyone in the congregation. They must sacrifice the satisfaction of being a small church where everyone knows everyone and feeling and functioning like a family (*Making The Small Church Effective* 51).

The second step is to decide if the people of the church are willing to pay the price for growth because growth means change. The real issue is planned change from within. In order for the small church to grow, the leadership of the church must be willing to chart a course in a new direction. One way to put it is the saying, "If we always do what we have always done, we will always get what we have always gotten". The changes which need to take place might range from a change in the church's priorities to a change in the location or the structure in which the church meets. Growth will not come without change and when growth does come it always brings more change (Schaller, *Strategies for Change* 10).

Small churches must be transformed from a single celled group to a multiple-celled church with several single-cell groups in order to grow. Once again, the key barrier to growth is change. Pastors play a key role in the process of bringing about this change in the small church. The pastor must move the church from family type relationships and comfortable traditions and an informal decision making process to more structured relationships, a highly organized way of doing things, and a formal decision making process (Ray Ellis, *Breaking Barriers To Growth*, a workshop on church growth). The pastor must pay a price for such growth. He or she must accept the fact

that a pastor cannot provide all the pastoral care in a growing church beyond 100 people

(Wagner, Ellis, George, Sullivan). The pastor cannot have close relationships with all

the people. The leaders role shifts from doing the ministry to equipping the people of the

church to become ministers.

The members of the church also must pay a price for growth. They must step

aside and let new people into leadership positions. New social groups need to be formed.

The church grows by multiplication of groups. This concept represents a major change

for the single-cell family type small church.

Ray Ellis suggests a strategy for planning to break free from the growth barriers

found in the small church by:

    a.   Seeking the Lord in prayer.
    b.   List current ministries.
    c.   Determine effective ministries.
    d.   Replace ineffective ministries.
    e.   Multiply small groups.
    f.   Develop a long range plan.

Some of the questions to be answered by the small church that seeks to grow are:

    1.   Who is our target group and how are we going to reach and disciple them?
    2.   What do we do best?
    3.   What areas do we need to improve?
    4.   How do newcomers view our facility and ministry?
    5.   How will we assimilate new people into our church?
    6.   How can we have an effective small group ministry?

(A Workshop by Ray Ellis, *Breaking Barriers To Growth*).

Lyle Schaller's strategy for the growth of a small church is referred to as the

"pastor plus allies" strategy. This strategy is designed for the new minister coming to a

small church seeking to grow. Schaller shares four basic assumptions. First,

transformation from a single-celled unit into "a congregation of groups, classes, choirs, circles, and organizations" must take place. This can be done by the addition of new groups as opposed to the division of present groups. Second, the initiative for this change does not come from the people. Third, there may be people who are dissatisfied with the present state of the church which the pastor can enlist as "allies" to assist him or her in implementing the strategy for the growth of the church. Fourth, in most small churches, a wide spectrum in the decision making process exists; with approval at one end and disapproval at the other extreme, but with a varied range of permissions between the two points. This means the new minister need not seek approval for every innovation, but it also becomes very crucial that disapproval and permission withholding be avoided (*Growing Plans* 23).

The initial components of this strategy can be summarized in four steps. First, the recently arrived pastor must earn the confidence and trust of the people and even the passive support of the influential people in the church. Second, the new pastor must establish relationships with residents of the larger community who do not have any active relationship with any worshiping congregation. Third, the pastor must identify possible "allies" within the congregation. This step should include: (a) identifying the unmet religious and personal needs of the potential allies, to which the congregation might be able to develop a programmatic response, and (b) identifying and affirming the distinctive gifts, talents, skills, and strengths of each of these potential allies, including some latent gifts. These three steps require six to ten months of the new pastor's time. The last step requires two to four years. During this process the new pastor enlists the

help of allies to establish new groups in the church. This strategy includes:

> (a) avoid including people who would veto the idea,
> (b) establishing a central leadership role for the pastor,
> (c) enlisting one or more allies from the "inner circle" as legitimizers,
> (d) including two to four members from the outer circle of members,
> (e) inviting three to ten nonmembers to help create the new group,
> (f) continuing a central leadership for the minister for at least two years,
> (g) developing new leadership for older groups after a year or two to free up the minister to help organize a new group.

What Will This Cost?

This strategy, of course, assumes that the pastor's tenure in the church will be a long one. According to Schaller a pastor must be at the church for a minimum of five to seven years. Second, this strategy works best with a pastor who is predominantly person-centered, entrepreneurial, extroverted, high-energy, hardworking, and ambitious. The pastor must also have a high level of skill for instituting intentional change. Third, this strategy works best for a new pastor rather than for one who has already been serving the same congregation for a number of years. Fourth, as the years pass, the pastor will have less time for visitation, for pastoral care, and for identifying and building relationships with potential members. Fifth, this strategy will not bring automatic and continued growth. Schaller gives the following rationale:

> by the time the congregation has doubled in size, the pastor has run out of discretionary time. The minister is too busy with the new people and the new groups to have any time left over to continue to cultivate and start new groups (*Growing Plans* 33).

Typically this strategy can double the size of the congregation, but at that point, unless changes are made, the congregation will plateau in size. Sixth, if the church desires continued growth, a radical change needs to take place in the pastor's leadership role.

The pastor's role must change from one of "doing it" to one of "causing it to happen". Seventh, some of the "pillars" of the church may become alienated and choose to leave the church (*Growing Plans* 21-43).

Peter Wagner believes in order for churches to begin to grow a strategy for growth is necessary. Having a strategy will do four things: (a) increase efficiency, (b) help measure effectiveness, (c) permit mid-course corrections, and (d) unite the team (*Strategies For Church Growth* 33). The strategy begins by identification of receptive people who will be targeted as potential members of the church. George Hunter calls this "soil testing" the "Church Growth Movement's greatest contribution to this generation's world evangelization" (*The Contagious Congregation* 104). According to Wagner, the way we think about our task makes a great deal of difference in the way we execute it. Edward R. Dayton and David Frazer agree with that statement in their book *Planning Strategies for World Evangelization*, where they outline a 10-step planning model for going about the strategy of planning: (1) define the mission, (2) describe the people, (3) describe the force of evangelism, (4) examine the means and the methods, (5) define an approach, (6) anticipate outcomes, (7) decide our role, (8) make plans, (9) act, and (10) evaluate (43). The number one requirement for having real church growth is to set goals. (*Strategies* 159).

Leadership Styles

A change in leadership style is usually required for the small church to begin to grow. Lyle Schaller popularized the concept of ranching. He credits the Rev. John F. Anderson, former senior pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Dallas, Texas, for coining

the term. Schaller goes on to say:

> The more common image is of the shepherd who is directly concerned about and personally involved with each member of the flock. A radically different image is reflected by the comment. . 'When you're the pastor of a congregation as large as this one you can't be a shepherd; you have to be a rancher! (Schaller, *Survival Tactics in the Parish* 51).

One of the most important responsibilities of the senior minister is to help the lay leadership realize the church is like a ranch and must be operated like a ranch. The primary responsibility of the rancher is to see the larger picture, to operate within a long time frame appropriate for a ranch and to resist the pressures and the temptation to plunge in and "do it myself" The rancher spends less time "doing" and more time making sure the job gets done by someone else (Schaller, *Looking in the Mirror* 31).

> Peter Wagner has observed that:
>
> Many churches today expect the ministry of the church to be done by the pastor, not by themselves. The bulk of the pastoral work should be done by the lay people. Research shows that the chief cause of burnout among pastors has been the tendency of pastors falling into the trap of not being able to say no to the demands on their time. How can a pastor say yes to any and all who need help without entering the burnout syndrome? The only way is by delegating the ministry of pastoral care to gifted and trained church members who can often do a better job than the senior pastor (Ver Straten, *A Caring Church*, forward).

Similarly Wagner also adds:

> The shepherd mode can function well up to the 200 Barrier, but not above it. A rancher mode can take the church through the 200 Barrier. The essential difference between the shepherd and the rancher is not whether the sheep are cared for - they are in both cases if things are going as they should. The difference is who takes care of the sheep. The shepherd must do it personally; the rancher delegates the pastoral care to others (Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* 113-114).

Bill Sullivan clearly states "The church that grows beyond the 200 Barrier is the church that decides to minister to its people in a comprehensive organization rather than a family-type fellowship." (*200 Barrier* 14).

Lyle Schaller points out that the shepherding role tends to inhibit the evangelistic outreach of small congregations (*Survival Tactics In The Parish* 52-52). Two shifts are necessary for a small church to break through the 125 Barrier. First, the pastor must shift from establishing deep one-to-one relationships to establishing group relationships. Second, the pastor must shift from being a foreman to a supervisor. An effective supervisor delegates responsibility. To grow past this barrier requires a shift from "doing it all yourself" to "getting others involved" (Fowler, *Breaking Barriers of New Church Growth* 55-56).

Eddie Gibbs says "Church growth cannot be sustained unless the laity are mobilized to fulfill their distinctive ministries both in the church and the world" (*I Believe In Church Growth* 380). The first vital sign of a growing church is a pastor who is using God-given gifts to lead the church into growth. The second is a well mobilized laity (Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow* 52). No church can grow beyond the ability of the pastoral leader to delegate responsibility to staff and lay ministers. Lay ministers must become a mobilized force in the church if significant growth is to occur (Charles Chaney and Ron Lewis, *Design for Church Growth* 53,55). Carl George sums it up well in saying "An effective leader accomplishes the work through others. A higher priority for pastors of a growing church is to produce other leaders than to perform personal ministry" (Carl F. George, *How To Break Growth Barriers* 23). He also contrasts the

behavior of a shepherd with that of a rancher. Shepherds behave in the following

manner:

1. They are primary care givers.
2. They overestimate their significance.
3. They attempt to meet all expectations.
4. They try to always be available.
5. They are performance oriented and feel they must do ministry.
6. They are comfortable in their present role.
7. They have poor skills at delegating responsibility.
8. They are known for poor planning.
9. They tend to see the church as being made up of individuals.
10. They are ignorant of current trends and live in the now of experience. (*Growth Barriers* 90-91).

Ranchers in general give greater and more careful attention to organizational needs than

to personal and professional needs and behave in the following manner:

1. They place their emphasis on the big picture.
2. They take charge and set the expectations for the church.
3. They set the expectation that the people of the church will give and receive care among themselves.
4. Ranchers perceive the church in terms of groups.
5. Ranchers delegate work and then supervise others.
6. They focus on what something will look like when it is completed.
7. They maintain a large-picture focus by screening requests for their services.
8. They create roles and then fill those roles by assigning jobs and delegating them to other people.
9. A goal of a rancher is to develop non-dependency enabling people to function without the pastor.
10. They possess managerial skills and have developed the competence of managerial behavior (97).

This author is assuming that shepherds can become ranchers if they choose to. If

they make this choice they are in a better position to help their church to grow. If they do

not make the transition they will hold the church back and not allow it to grow.

Turning Around the Declining Small Church

More than two-thirds of all Protestant congregations in North America founded
before 1970 now report a consistent year-after-year decline in membership and
attendance (Schaller, <u>Net Results</u>, April 1996).

Less than one out of five churches grew by 10 percent or more during the 1987 to
1992 period (Rainer, <u>Eating The Elephant</u>, 4).

Church growth consultant Lyle Schaller reports that 65 to 85 percent of all
churches over ten years old are shrinking in membership or plateaued (Schaller,
44 Steps Up Off the Plateau 23).

The need for a current strategy to turn around the decline of small churches is

easily seen in the material quoted from these authors. My reading over the past five

years has introduced me to many authors who have made significant contributions to the

strategy I am proposing.

Ten Steps for New Life

In order for a declining church to experience a significant turnaround and to begin

a new and fruitful chapter in its life, a strong desire for growth and change must be

present. The desire must be present or the required changes will never take place. Lyle

Schaller helps explain why this is necessary:

The need to initiate and implement planned change from within an organization.
That is the number-one issue today for most congregations, denominations,
theological seminaries, parachurch organizations, and reform movements
(Schaller, *Strategies For Change* 10).
"The big issue is change. The central issue in any effective strategy for numerical
growth--whether by a congregation, a denomination, a theological seminary, or a
parachurch organization--is change. Reversing a period of numerical decline
requires changes. Numerical growth also produces change (Schaller 11).

The changes that are required will never happen unless a desire on the part of the people

to change exists. John Maxwell offers three reasons why people are willing to change.

He says: "People change when they hurt enough they have to change, learn enough that they want to change, and receive enough that they are able to change" (Towns, *10 Of Today's Most Innovative Churches*, 31). The desire to change is a part of the corporate repentance that was noted in the theological reflection on Nehemiah. The beginning of any turnaround starts with a dissatisfaction with the status quo.

Removing the obstacles which are holding it back is the next step a church must take in order to turn around a declining situation. Howard Snyder addresses this when he says:

> The key to renewal therefore is always a matter of identifying and removing hindrances to vitality, never a matter of simply finding the right method, program, or success formula (*Signs of the Spirit; How God Shapes The Church* 300).

In a church setting it is important to identify what is holding the ministry back. It could be a lack of leadership or of vision; it might be a strong desire to preserve the traditions of the church and the status quo. Thom Rainer believes a significant obstacle keeping churches from growing is majoring on the minors. He says:

> When a traditional church loses its direction and focus, relatively insignificant items grow in importance to the detriment of the real important needs. Budgets and bills become more important than souls and eternity. The order of worship becomes more important than the hours of prayer. And constitutions and by-laws provide more leadership than the Holy Spirit (*Eating The Elephant* 21).

Negative attitudes and resistance to change will also keep a church from turning around its decline. For some churches the major obstacle holding them back is an old or run down facility. In order for a turnaround effort to succeed, any obstacles must first be removed.

The third step in revitalizing a congregation is to identify and clearly define the church's purpose. Robert Dale says for a church to be revitalized it must first define and then act upon its fundamental purpose (*To Dream Again* Forward). He continues to say:

> The quickest way to reinvigorate a plateaued or declining church is to reclaim God's purpose for it and help the members understand the great tasks the church has been given by Christ (87).

Fourthly, the pastor and the people of the church must begin to pray, asking God to bring new life to their church. Rainer, Barna, and Sullivan all agree that without a vital prayer link with God any thought of building a great church for the glory of God is only wishful thinking. Sullivan adds:

> Not every individual member in the church must pray earnestly, but there must be a concerted group effort in prayer that God will help the pastor and church accomplish what He has called them to do (*Ten Steps to Breaking The 200 Barrier* 25).

Barna also believes:

> Until the church owns prayer as a world-class weapon in the battle against evil and cherishes prayer as a means of intimate and constant communication with God, the turnaround efforts of a body are severely limited, if not altogether doomed, to failure (*Turnaround Churches* 97).

If the people of the church are serious about turning around their decline they will embrace prayer as a major resource and weapon for that endeavor.

The fifth step in turning around the declining church is for the church to be transformed from a self-serving organization with a survival mentality to an outreach focused church. Barna points out that declining churches typically have an inward focus rather than an outward focus. He continues:

Because they had committed all of their resources to internal service, people outside the walls of the church were unaware that the church existed. The prospects for numerical growth, much less spiritual growth, are virtually nil in such a climate of self-contemplation and selfishness (*Turnaround Churches* 36-37).

He also adds:

One of the primary lessons Jesus taught His disciples, though, was that health is a result of demonstrating love for one's neighbor. When a congregation cannot shift its eye off its own needs and onto the needs of others, it is fatally diseased and of limited use to God (98).

Buttry quotes Mark 8:35 "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and the gospel will save it." He also says:

Churches bound by survival mentality strive to save their lives and hold onto what they value. But the result is that the churches will die and all will be lost anyway (*Bringing Your Church Back To Life* 77).

Rainer sums it up when he says:

Moving from entrenched structures to vital ministries requires not a specific vision at this point, but a new mind set. The church must move from an inward focus to an outward focus (*Eating the Elephant* 41).

Jesus said: "I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:27). In order for a declining church to be turned around the people of the church need to once again be among the people of their community as ones who serve.

In order to effectively serve the community in which the people of a declining church are located, the church must first discover what the needs of those around them are. Once the needs are identified the church can then begin to select a target group for ministry. Warren has said:

The practice of evangelistic targeting is especially important to small churches. In a small church with limited resources, it is vital that you make the most of

what you've got. Focus on reaching the people your church can best communicate with (*Purpose Driven Church* 159).

Likewise, Hunter observes that churches grow as they minister to the felt needs of undiscipled people and this is usually done by developing new ministries designed to meet the newly discovered needs (*To Spread the Power* 35). Declining churches are able to stop their decline and begin to grow when their church becomes aware of the needs of the unchurched around them and then begins to minister to those needs.

The seventh part of this strategy to turn around the small and declining church is to concentrate on doing a few things well. Warren has made the observation that people are attracted to churches with quality worship, preaching, ministry, and fellowship (*Purpose Driven Church* 51). It is not possible for a small church to do all things well. The wise choice is to concentrate on those things they are able to do well or that which needs to be done well. Warren also makes the observation:

> I have observed that one reason so many churches remain small is because there is little quality in the life and ministry of those churches. There is no correlation between the size and the quality of a ministry (52).

Schaller also agrees with this observation making the claim that:

> One of the most promising steps off the plateau in size may be to improve the quality in every facet of church life (*44 Steps* 52).

Barna's advice to the church seeking to turn around its decline is to "Do just a few things, but do them with excellence" (*Turnaround Churches* 77). The small church can increase its effectiveness by concentrating on a few areas of ministry and doing them with excellence.

In step number eight, the church needs to generate visitor flow and then follow up on those people. One of the best ways to do this is by word-of-mouth. George Barna says:

> It is word-of-mouth, not radio broadcasts and newspaper advertisements, that brings newcomers in the door (96).

Reeves agrees and adds:

> But the most important single ingredient in a small church's plan for evangelistic effectiveness, according to the pastors surveyed, still centers around what people do most naturally when they are excited about what God is doing in their lives, and that is invite people to church (*Preparing Congregations For The 21st Century* 94).

One of the most effective ways to generate visitor flow has been through the use of special days such as "Friend Day". Crandall notes:

> Probably the most productive invitational approach involves designating special Sundays as "Invitation Sundays" or "Friendship Sundays." - Greeters, a fellowship time with coffee and baked goods, name tags, an easy-to-follow bulletin and order of worship, special music, a straightforward yet sensitive message about the gospel, lay persons prepared to assist in the service, a children's time, no requests for operating funds, a brief testimony or mission moment, cards for visitors to fill out, a visiting team ready to make follow-up calls, a quality special program scheduled that night or the next week to which guests could be invited back, and so on (*Turnaround Strategies* 95).

Once these people have visited the church then they need to be followed up within the next thirty-six hours. The goal of this follow up procedure is to successfully invite them to join you for worship a second Sunday. If the visitor returns for a second time and receives a followed up contact, they are three times as likely to become a part of the church on a regular basis than a person who visits only once. Arn states:

> An incorporation strategy that focuses on these second-time visitors specifically will result in seventy to seventy five percent of these visitors joining within a year (*Church Growth, State of The Art* C. Peter Wagner 101).

The combination of visitor flow and follow-up is an essential part of any strategy to turn around a declining church.

The next important requirement to turn around a declining church is for the pastor to lead. Crandall has observed:

> One of the most important factors impeding turnaround is, simply put, "pastors who don't lead." Pastors must lead if churches are to change (*Turnaround Strategies* 32).

Barna adds that "A successful turnaround pastor is a strong leader." He continues on to say:

> A turnaround church requires a leader who seeks to obey God by doing the extraordinary difficult work of leading hard-hearted people into God's presence on a consistent basis (*Turnaround Churches* 50).

Any turnaround attempt must be led by the pastor. The pastor's leadership is crucial to the turnaround.

The tenth step to turn around the declining church is to equip and train the laity for ministry. This requires a change of mind set with the pastor being seen as the leader and the people of the church are seen as the ones who do ministry. This is a crucial change, and a turnaround will not be successful without this transition. Barna says that "Turnaround pastors give top priority to equipping the laity for effective targeted ministry (Barna 49). Crandall also says:

> Pastors of turnaround smaller churches have a deep commitment as transformational leaders to developing leadership in others. In addition, they highly value the biblical mandate to "make disciples" and they define success in terms of developing mature disciples as well as reaching out to make new disciples (Crandall 118).

The crucial word in all that has been said about turning around the decline of the small church is change. In order for a turnaround to occur the church must undergo institutional change from within.

CHAPTER 3

Design of the Study

This study is a Cross Sectional one, and is designed to help the researcher

discover insight into why some Free Methodist churches which are over thirty years of

age and have formerly been in a period of decline or on a plateau, have experienced a

turnaround and a new birth of life and vitality. The growth of a church thirty years old or

older is very rare. To turn around a declining church over thirty years of age is rarer yet.

The researcher proposed this study in order to identify correlating factors for growth in

older Free Methodist churches which have experienced a significant turnaround.

The purpose of the proposed study is to identify factors for growth among Free

Methodist churches in New York State which are over thirty years old and have grown

from average worship attendance of seventy-five or smaller to become a church

averaging 125 or more, having completed this turnaround in a ten year period or less.

My aim is to make a contribution to the understanding of the factors associated with

church growth, specifically the growth of Free Methodist churches in New York State

which are over thirty years old by identifying the correlating factors contributing to

growth.

Statement of Research Questions

Research Question 1

What is the demographic profile of these growing Free Methodist churches in

New York State?

Operational Questions

What is the demographic profile of these growing Free Methodist churches in

New York State, including: age, gender, socio-economic status, years attending this Free

Methodist Church, and the current population in a ten mile radius of the church?

Research Question 2

What are the ten-year growth trends of these growing churches located in New

York State?

Operational Questions

What increases were seen over the last ten years in: morning worship, Sunday

School, small group ministry, giving, conversions, and total number of full members?

Research Question 3

What factors do pastors and lay leaders identify as being instrumental in the

reversal of declining attendance patterns in their church?

Operational Question 1

What changes were made to bring about new growth?

Operational Question 2

What ministries or programs were started resulting in new growth?

Operational Question 3

What were the obstacles which had to be removed for the church to begin to

grow?

<u>Research Question 4</u>

How do pastors and lay leaders differ in their perception of the factors behind the turnaround?

<u>Population And Sample</u>

The following four Free Methodist churches in New York State were chosen for this study:

Cattaraugus Free Methodist Church, Cattaraugus, NY
East Williamson Free Methodist Church, East Williamson, NY
Harvest Chapel Free Methodist Church, Fredonia, NY
Liberty Free Methodist Church, Liberty, NY

These four were selected because they are the only Free Methodist churches in New York State which fit the following three criteria:

1. a church having been a small church with an average attendance of eighty or less.
2. a church having experienced a turnaround and are no longer in decline or on a plateau.
3. a church that is once again growing, having an average attendance of 125 or more for morning worship.

Churches in New York State were selected because they were located within a day's drive from the author. These churches also represent three of the four Free Methodist annual conferences in New York State. Cattaraugus and Fredonia are from the Genesee Conference in Western New York. East Williamson is in the Susquehanna Conference in Central New York. Liberty is in the New York Conference in Eastern New York. The author has some personal knowledge of the turnarounds which occurred in three of the four locations, having worked in both the Genesee and the Susquehanna Conferences in the last ten years.

The individual persons who were selected to be interviewed are: the current pastor, the pastor at the time of the turnaround, a delegate to annual conference, the church treasurer or financial secretary, and the Christian Education Director. These persons have been selected because of the vital role they have in the leadership of the church and because the office they hold places them on their church's Official Board.

The Genesee Conference has two ethnic churches and thirty-six caucasian churches for a total of thirty-eight churches within its boundary. The Susquehanna Conference has no ethnic churches and has twenty-five caucasian churches within its boundary. The New York Conference has ten ethnic churches and thirty-six caucasian churches for a total of forty-six churches within its boundary. The four churches being studied represent 3.6 percent of the churches in these three conferences and .37 percent of the 1,067 Free Methodist churches in the United States.

<u>Instrumentation</u>

A survey is a method of collecting information directly from people about their feelings, beliefs, and perspective (*How To Conduct Surveys* 10). The interview is a form of survey where the questions are asked directly to the respondents. Interviews can be conducted in person or by telephone (13). Surveys and interviews are used when information must come directly from a specific group of people. In this study, the author is the researcher and the interview is the tool being used to assist in the collection of information. Pilot testing is a process of testing the survey on a group of people in order to test validity, i.e. does it measure what it was intended to measure, and reliability, ie. is the information received consistent or does it keep changing?

One of the benefits of using the interview is that follow-up questions can be asked for clarification as well as for further information. Interviews also allow the respondents to provide much more complex information than what would be available in a survey (20).

The instrument to be used for this study (See Appendix 1) is a researcher-designed semi-structured interview protocol. This instrument was designed to seek answers for the research questions and the operational questions listed in this proposal. A survey/interview used by Crandall for his research on the small church was used as a model for this instrument. Some of the questions were taken directly from his instrument when deemed appropriate by the researcher. The portions of the survey/interview taken from the Crandall instrument are being used by permission from Crandall.

Five people were selected by the researcher to review the instrument in order to determine face validity. Four of the five have training as church consultants, the fifth is a pastor of a growing church which has doubled in size under his tenure as pastor. Each person selected received a copy of the instrument and reported back to the researcher that it was an adequate instrument for measuring the necessary factors for this study. Three of the five reviewing the instrument made suggestions for minor revisions or additions. A question was added to determine if any remodeling or relocating of the church had occurred. Another question was added to determine the year of the last pastoral change. A third question was added to inquire about what changes the turnaround pastors had to personally make in order for the church to grow. One question was perceived as redundant and was removed from the survey. A second question was removed because it

did not fit. An additional question was included in the section on the church's statistical

information to determine the number of people involved in small groups.

The instrument was tested on five lay people from the Allegany Free Methodist

church, who were in leadership in their local church during a period when they went

from an average attendance of under seventy five to an average attendance of 146. The

instrument was given to these persons to assist in determining validity and to see if the

questions were easily understood or provoked an appropriate response for this study.

One of the lay persons interviewed was not familiar with the distinction between a

mission statement and a vision statement. One question was found to be difficult to

understand and was rewritten for the purpose of clarity. All five of the respondents were

able to understand the questions as they were read to them by the author.

The instrument consists of two major parts. In part one, the current pastor is

asked to give general information on the church and the community, as well as various

statistical information concerning the church's last ten years. This information was

mailed to the current pastor to fill out two weeks prior to the scheduled interview. The

actual interview of the current pastor and the former pastor begins on page 4 of the

instrument at letter D (See Appendix 1). The interview began by asking for personal and

professional information from the pastors. The main section of the interview begins on

page four letter F In this section the instrument was designed to discern the pastors'

perspectives on ministry. The heart of the interview is in the section. The thirteen

questions in this section are designed to seek information on how and why the turnaround

occurred.

In part two, information was collected from three key lay leaders in each of the churches. This section consists of two segments. The first segment asks for personal background information. The second segment asks twelve of the thirteen questions on ministry perspectives found in part one. One question was not included in this section because it asks a personal question of pastors which would not fit a lay person.

Data Collection

The data for this study was collected through two methods. Fifteen interviews were collected in person at the site of the church being studied. Three interviews were conducted at the site of the turnaround pastors new appointment. One pastor was interviewed by telephone because he had moved from the area. All of the interviews were recorded in order to prevent the loss of any information or responses given. The researcher set up appointments with each of the four churches and also set up specific times to meet with each of the respondents separately. All of the interviews were conducted by the author. The author's experience in conducting these types of interviews consists of having previously done one church consultation in which the author personally interviewed sixteen respondents. In order to prepare to do these interviews the author read *How to Conduct Surveys*, by Arlene Fink and Jacqueline Kosecoff as well as *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, by Robert K. Yin. The author has been a student of Church Growth literature over the past six years and has read widely concerning the topic being researched in this study. The data received from this instrument is found in Chapter 4.

Pertinent Variables

The primary dependant variable was the growth of the four churches studied in membership, morning worship attendance, Sunday School attendance, mid-week attendance, and small group attendance. The correlating factors identified for the growth of these churches serve as the independent variables.

Control

Steps have been taken to control the variables by gathering data on demographic variables which permits the researcher to assess possible influence such things as age and gender might have had on the data.

Data Analysis

"Data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial purpose of a study" (Yin, *Case Study Research* 102). The researcher has chosen case description as a strategy to provide a descriptive framework for organizing the case study. The researcher describes the factors cited by each of the four churches. The data from each church is listed and tabled as appropriate. The next step was to look for a correlation of factors listed from the respondents of these four churches looking for a general explanation of what factors played a role in the turning around of the small churches being studied. Special attention is given to discovering recurring factors given for the turnaround of the specific churches. Because this study is a multiple-case study, the author has concentrated on cross-case analysis. The procedure followed is primarily descriptive analysis. The author examines the data, lists it according to the research question it answers, looks for

correlating factors, and makes general and specific observations on the data collected. After the correlating factors have been identified, the author compares and contrasts these factors with the 10 factors compiled from the experts listed in the second chapter. The analysis and comparison of the data is found in Chapter 5. The last research question is discussed in Chapter 5 as the author examines what differences exist between the factors cited by pastors and the factors cited by lay leaders. A summary of what the author has learned is also found at the end of the fifth chapter.

CHAPTER 4

Findings of the Study

A variety of factors have been cited by the respondents of this study as

being instrumental in the process of turning around what was once a small and declining

church. This chapter will be a presentation of that data.

Demographic Profile

The Cattaraugus Free Methodist Church is located in the Village of Cattaraugus

in Cattaraugus County, New York. The church has been in the same location since its

birth over a hundred years ago. In 1993 the church built a new sanctuary which seats

over 200 people and remodeled the original facility.

The East Williamson Free Methodist Church is located in the village of East

Williamson in Wayne County, New York. The church built a new sanctuary which seats

200 people and remodeled the original facility in 1987.

The Fredonia Free Methodist Church is located in the city of Fredonia in

Chatauqua County, New York. The church built a new sanctuary which seats 200 people

and remodeled the original facility in 1992.

The Liberty Free Methodist Church is located in the village of Liberty in Sullivan

County, New York. The church has been at that location for the past 41 years. In the

last ten years the church has remodeled its original facility and built a new sanctuary

which seats 325 people.

Research Question 1

What is the demographic profile of the churches studied?

<u>Profile of lay leaders being interviewed</u>

Six men and six women were interviewed as lay leaders. All were married.

Table 1 shows the breakdown according to age of the lay people interviewed.

Table 1

**A Comparison of the Age of the Lay Leaders Interviewed From
the Churches in the Study.**

Age category	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70
Number of leaders	0	2	8	1	1

The most frequent age listed was between the ages of forty to fifty. Two people were in their thirties and two were over the age of 50 (Table 1). The leadership in each of these churches was led primarily by people between the ages of thirty and fifty. Each of these churches were successful, at least in part, in bringing new people into positions of leadership and in having long time members step down to make room for new leadership.

The offices or positions held by the respondents interviewed for this study are as follows: (Table 2).

Table 2

Rank order of offices, positions, or tasks held by lay leaders (N=12)

Position	n	%
Sunday School Teacher	5	41.7
Youth Ministry	5	41.7
Trustee	4	33.3
Official Board	4	33.3
Treasurer	3	25.0
Delegate to Annual Conference	3	25.0
Small Group Leader	3	25.0
Director of Christian Education	2	16.7
Adult Ministries Director	2	16.7
Strategic Planning Committee	2	16.7
Worship Team	2	16.7
Finance Committee	1	8.3
President of Women's's Organization	1	8.3
Director of Children's Ministry	1	8.3
Hospitality Committee	1	8.3

The most frequent positions held involved working with youth and teaching Sunday

School. The largest number of positions served by one person was eight and the smallest

number was one. All twelve of the respondents were married. In each of the four

churches the lay leaders were actively involved in at least one area of ministry.

Two of the respondents said there were no children living at home. Three

respondents indicated one child was living at home. The number of respondents having

two children at home was also three. The most frequent response as indicated by four of

the respondents was that 3 children were living at home. The lay leaders in each of these

churches were young enough to be involved in raising their families. These churches had

leaders usually between the ages of thirty and fifty, having successful brought new and

younger people into positions of leadership.

Five of the respondents said they had earned a Masters Degree. Two had earned a

Bachelors Degree and three of the respondents had earned an Associates Degree. Only

one of the lay leaders interviewed did not attend school beyond the twelfth grade

(Table 3). Each of the four churches had educated people in leadership. A correlation

can be identified between higher levels of education and involvement in leadership in

each of these churches.

Table 3

A Comparison of the Number of Years of Schooling Completed By the Respondents.

Highest Degree Earned	n	%
High School Degree	1	11.0
Associates Degree	3	26.3
Bachelors Degree	2	18.2
Masters Degree	5	44.5

Eight of the twelve lay people interviewed were school teachers. One of the

respondents was a homemaker, and the other three were, a postal worker, a secretary, and

a Librarian respectively. The lay leaders believed their best qualities and skills in

ministry to be giving leadership, caring for people, using their gift of music, and teaching

children (See Appendix 2).

Table 4

**A Comparison of the Most Positive Source of Influence
On the Lay Leaders Interviewed For This Study.**

Source of Influence	n	%
A Christian Author	18	64.5
A Church Leadership Seminar	1	3.5
A Christian Leader	5	17.8
Printed Resource Material	3	10.7
Personal Life Experience	1	3.5

The lay leaders in these churches were people who were interested in learning on a daily basis. These people read Christian authors for their own spiritual development as well as for the ability to learn new skills in Christian leadership. Resources which became available were highly valued and appreciated.

Profile of the Turnaround Pastors being interviewed

All of the pastors interviewed were married white males between the ages of thirty and fifty. Three of the four pastors were under the age of forty and one was over the age of forty. Two of the pastors said they had two children at home and two said they had three children at home. Each of the pastor were young enough to still be involved in raising their own families. Three of the pastors had a Master of Divinity Degree. The fourth pastor had two Bachelor Degrees. One of the pastors attended Asbury Theological Seminary. Another attended Trinity Theological Seminary. The other two schools attended by the Turnaround Pastors were Nyack College and Western Evangelical

Seminary. Each of the pastors had pastored full time for over ten years. The longest

time served was thirteen years and the shortest time was eleven years. All of the pastors

except one had served somewhere in a part time ministry position. One of the pastors

had been ordained for only four years. Another had been ordained for eight years. Two

of the pastors have been ordained for over ten years (Table 5). All of the pastors

interviewed were serving only one church. Each of the pastors is presently ordained as

an Elder in the Free Methodist Church.

Table 5

**A Comparison of the Number of Years Each Pastor Has Served In Part Time
and Full Time Ministry and the Number of Years Ordained.**

Pastor	Years part time	Years full time	Years ordained
Pastor Alpha	3	11	4
Pastor Beta	0	12	10
Pastor Gamma	1.5	13	12
Pastor Delta	3	11	8

The shortest tenure for any of the pastors was 5 years. The longest was 11 years.

The average tenure of the four pastors was 8.75 years. Three of the four pastors had

served in another church prior to coming to the church being studied (Table 6). The

length of the pastor's tenure at the church is a very important factor in the growth of the

church. Each of these churches were able to experience growth because the pastors were

willing to stay beyond the two or three years most other pastors average for tenure.

Table 6

**A Comparison of the Number of Churches Previously Served by the Turnaround
Pastors as Well as the Number Of Years They Served In the
Church Being Studied.**

Pastor	# of churches served previously	Years in church being studied
Pastor Alpha	1	5
Pastor Beta	0	11
Pastor Gamma	2	9
Pastor Delta	1	10

Strong leadership skills were possessed by each of the four pastors in the study.

Three of the four pastors listed preaching and communicating as a strength as well as

providing visionary leadership (Table 7). The four pastors brought personal strengths to

each of the churches that were instrumental in the turnaround and growth of the

churches. Reading was a very important for these pastors as well. Each of the pastors

were active readers of leadership and church growth books. Teachability was another

quality these pastors possessed. Fellow pastors or a superintendent often served as a

coach or a mentor for them (See Appendix 2).

Table 7

**Best Personal Qualities and Skill Listed By Pastors
In the Churches In the Study.**

Pastor's Best Qualities and Skills for Ministry	n	%
Empowering and motivating people	4	19
Preaching and communicating	3	14.3
Providing visionary leadership	3	14.3
Recruiting and training people for service	2	9.5
Being a people person and using people skills	2	9.5
Having a happy spirit and the ability to enjoy life	1	4.7
Listening to people and being in tune with their needs	1	4.7
Leading people to Christ	1	4.7
Writing drama and creative expressions for worship	1	4.7
Using the gift of music	1	4.7
Using the gift of faith	1	4.7
A strong sense of commitment and dedication	1	4.7

Operational Question 1

What age groups are represented in the church?

Cattaraugus has 80 percent of their adult population between the ages of thirty

and fifty, which means that the congregation consists mostly of Baby Boomers or people

having been born between the years 1946-1964. Only 12 percent of the congregation is

over the age of sixty. The smallest segment of the church's population is the group

between the age of twenty and thirty (Table 8).

East Williamson has 35 percent of the congregation between the ages of twenty and thirty. Only 20 percent of the congregation falls into the thirty to fifty year old group. They have a greater portion of the church over the age of fifty (35%) and 10 percent are over the age of sixty (Table 8).

Fredonia has the youngest congregation of the four churches since 70 percent of the congregation is under the age of forty. Only 20 percent of the congregation are Baby Boomers and even fewer, only 10 percent, are over the age of sixty (Table 8).

Liberty has the largest percentage of its congregation between the ages of thirty to fifty with 70 percent in that category. Only 10 percent of the adult congregation is under the age of thirty. The people over sixty make up another 10 percent of the congregation (Table 8). Each of the four churches were effective at reaching a younger group of people than they started out with.

Table 8

**A Comparison of Adult Age Group Representation
in the Churches In the Study.**

| Churches | Ages | | | | | |
	20-30	30-40	40 50	50-60	60-70	70+
Cattaraugus	5%	35%	45%	3%	10%	2%
E. Williamson	35%	10%	10%	35%	8%	2%
Fredonia	30%	40%	10%	10%	7%	3%
Liberty	10%	45%	25%	10%	5%	5%

Operational Question 2

What is the demographic profile according to gender?

Little difference exists in the comparison of the number of males and females in the four churches. Cattaraugus has the best balance with a 50 percent men and 50 percent women. The pastor at Cattaraugus was very effective at reaching men from the community and this might possibly account for the greater percentage of men in the Cattaraugus church than in the other three churches. East Williamson has the largest number of adult females at 58 percent and the smallest number of males at 42 percent. Liberty and Fredonia have the same ratio with 45 percent of the adult congregation being male and 55 percent being female (Table 9). These three churches most closely reflect the typical gender ratio of the general population.

Table 9

**A Comparison Of Adult Gender Percentages In
the Churches In the Study.**

Gender	Male	Female
Cattaraugus	50%	50%
E. Williamson	42%	58%
Fredonia	45%	55%
Liberty	45%	55%

Operational Question 3

What is the socio-economic make up of the congregation?

Of the four churches, Cattaraugus has the greatest percentage in a lower income

bracket with 95 percent of the congregation earning less than $30,000.00 each year.

Only 5 percent of the Cattaraugus congregation earns over $30,000.00 a year. The next

highest is the Fredonia congregation with 60 percent of the congregation earning less

than $30,000.00 a year. Liberty is the next highest with 65 percent of the congregation

earning over $30,000.00 a year. East Williamson has the highest income level with 72

percent of the congregation earning over $30,000.00 per year (Table 10).

Table 10

**A Comparison Of Income By Category In
the Churches In the Study.**

Churches	Dollars in Thousands				
	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50+
Cattaraugus	20%	75%	4%	1%	0%
E. Williamson	5%	20%	35%	35%	2%
Fredonia	20%	40%	30%	10%	0%
Liberty	15%	15%	30%	30%	5%

Operational Question 4

How many years have the people of the church been attending this Free Methodist Church?

The Fredonia church has the highest percentage (50%) of its adult congregation attending two years or less. Fredonia also has the smallest percentage of long time attenders with only 10 percent of the adult congregation having attended more than ten years. Liberty has the next highest percentage of new people in the past two years at 15 percent. The greatest percentage at Liberty are those adults who have attended between five and ten years. One fourth of the adult congregation has been attending for more than ten years. In East Williamson, 10 percent of the adult congregation is new to the church in the last two years. The number of people having attended between two and ten years represents 60 percent of the adult congregation. Those who have attended ten years or more represent 20 percent of the adult congregation. Cattaraugus is the church with the lowest percentage (5%) of adults having attended for two years or less. Those who have attended between two to five years represent forty-five of the adult congregation which is the highest percentage of any of the categories (Table 11). Each of the churches were growing younger as they grew larger. The growth of the church resulted in an increasing number of people having been a part of the church for a shorter period of time.

Table 11

A Comparison of the Length Of Time the People Of the Churches In the Study Attended Their Local Church.

Churches	Attendance Time in Years				
	0-2	2-5	5-10	10-20	20+
Cattaraugus	5%	45%	30%	15%	5%
E. Williamson	10%	40%	30%	15%	5%
Fredonia	50%	20%	20%	10%	0%
Liberty	15%	20%	40%	15%	10%

Cattaraugus had the greatest percentage (40%) of board members who had attended the church over twenty years. There was no one on the board at Cattaraugus who had attended five years or less. East Williamson was next with 10 percent of the board having attended for over twenty years. The board also had 10 percent of the board members attending for five years or less. Liberty did not have any board members that attended for over twenty years. The percentage of board members having attended for five years or less was 10 percent. Fredonia did not have any board members who had attended over twenty years. Fredonia also had the largest percentage of people on the board who had attended five years or less with sixty of the board attending under five years (Table 12). The churches with the greatest number of new board members were the churches that had grown the most. Turning over leadership to new people is instrumental in helping the church break away from tradition and the status-quo.

Table 12

**A Comparison Of the Length Of Time Board Members Have Attended
the Churches In the Study.**

Churches	Years attending			
	5 or less	10 or less	20 or less	over 20
Cattaraugus	0%	40%	20%	40%
East Williamson	10%	70%	10%	10%
Fredonia	60%	25%	15%	0%
Liberty	20%	60%	20%	0%

Operational Question 4

What is the current population in a ten mile radius of the church?

All of the churches included in this study listed themselves as being located in a

small town. Cattaraugus and East Williamson had a population less than 2,499. Liberty

was located in a slightly larger community with a population of less than 10,000. The

church located in the community with the largest population was Fredonia with a

population of less than 30,000. Cattaraugus and Liberty are both located in communities

that have experienced a slight decline (1%-5%) in the past ten years. Fredonia is located

in a community which is experiencing moderate decline (5%-10%). East Williamson is

the only church located in a growing community having shown a modest increase in

population over the last ten years (5%-10%) (Table 13). The number of people within a

ten mile radius did not seem to matter in relation to the growth of the church. Churches

in both larger populations and smaller ones were able to grow.

Table 13

A Comparison of Community Population At the Churches In the Study Based On 1990 Census Information.

Churches	Population size & current trend	
	Size	Trend
Cattaraugus	1,000 - 2,499	Slight Decline (1%-5%)
East Williamson	1,000 - 2,499	Moderate Increase (5%-10%)
Fredonia	10,000 - 50,000	Moderate Decline (5%-10%)
Liberty	2,500 - 10,000	Slight Decline (1%-5%)

Research Question 2

What are the ten year growth trends of these growing churches located in New York State?

Table 14 shows the composite growth of each of the four churches studied. The Cattaraugus church showed a net increase of thirty-six in the composite over the ten years examined. East Williamson did a little better with a net increase in the composite of eighty-two. Both the Fredonia and the Liberty churches showed a net composite increase of ninety-six over the ten year period. Church growth occurs in more than just one area. A healthy church will grow in attendance, Sunday School, and membership. An increase in the composite is an indicator of good health for a church.

Table 14

A Comparison Of the Composite Average Of Morning Worship Attendance, Sunday School Attendance, and the Number Of Full Members Per Year.

Churches	1985	1986	1987	1988	Year 1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Cattaraugus	49	47	46	46	46	74	72	84	80	85
E. Williamson	66	73	79	84	98	108	122	127	137	148
Fredonia	34	25	64	42	66	77	98	103	123	130
Liberty	43	44	63	87	107	122	127	138	136	139

Operational Question 1

How has the attendance changed over the last ten years in morning worship?

The Cattaraugus church showed an increase in morning worship attendance from fifty-seven in 1985 to 133 in 1994 for a net increase of seventy-six. This was the least amount of increase of any of the four churches. The church with the next largest increase was East Williamson. The average morning worship attendance went from eighty-one in 1985 to a high of 198 in 1994 for a net increase of 117. The increase in morning worship at the Fredonia church was even larger. Fredonia averaged forty-nine people in morning worship in 1985 and grew to a high of 186 in 1994 for a net increase of 137. The largest increase came at Liberty. The average attendance in 1985 was fifty-one and it grew to a high of 191 in 1994 for a net increase of 140 over a ten year period (Table 15). Morning worship was the front door for the growth of each of the churches

in the study. Each of the churches grew more in morning worship attendance than any

other category.

Table 15

**A Comparison Of the Growth In Morning Worship Attendance
At the Churches In the Study.**

Churches	1985	1986	1987	1988	Year 1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Cattaraugus	57	56	54	53	57	107	110	128	116	133
E. Williamson	81	92	104	113	141	154	170	180	182	198
Fredonia	49	40	88	70	107	122	149	169	190	186
Liberty	51	41	64	113	134	163	167	188	200	191

Operational Question 2

How has the attendance changed over the last ten years in Sunday School?

Cattaraugus had the least amount of increase averaging fifty-three in Sunday

School in 1985 and growing to an average of fifty-nine in 1994 for a net increase of six.

East Williamson had the next lowest increase growing from an average of fifty-four in

Sunday School in 1985 to an average of ninety-seven in 1994 for a net increase of forty-

three. Liberty had a much larger increase than the first two churches. The average

Sunday School attendance in 1985 was thirty-six and it grew to an average of 106 in

1994 for a net increase of seventy. Fredonia showed the greatest amount of increase in

Sunday School attendance of the four. In 1985 Fredonia only averaged twenty-one in

Sunday School. In 1994 the average grew to 103 for a net increase of eighty-two.

Fredonia had the largest increase of the four churches. Liberty had the largest total

number of people participating in Sunday School and also had the second largest increase

overall (Table 16). Cattaraugus did not really have any significant growth in Sunday

School. The pastor believed the reason for this to be a belief among the people of the

community that Sunday School was for women and children. The people of the

Cattaraugus church were unsuccessful in convincing them to believe otherwise.

Table 16

A Comparison Of Sunday School Attendance
At the Churches In the Study.

| | | | | | Year | | | | | |
Churches	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Cattaraugus	53	38	46	42	42	69	54	65	60	59
E. Williamson	54	64	70	73	85	81	90	90	94	97
Fredonia	21	17	76	24	47	66	82	90	105	103
Liberty	36	46	63	69	90	98	99	96	108	106

Operational Question 3

How has the attendance changed over the last ten years in the small group

ministry ?

The only church that had any record of small groups available was Liberty. The

small group ministry began with three groups in 1986 and grew to a high of fifteen

groups during 1992. After 1992 the number of small groups began to decline so that

there were only nine small groups meeting in 1994. When the number of small groups

stopped increasing at Liberty, the growth of the church leveled off and the church

plateaued. This helped the researcher to see the effectiveness of multiplying groups as a

strategy for the growth of a church trying to break the 200 barrier. When churches stop

multiplying groups, growth tends to stop. The other churches were not able to

successfully launch a small group ministry and keep it going (Table 17).

Table 17

**A Comparison Of the Number Of Small Groups At the
Liberty Free Methodist Church From 1985 Through 1994.**

Year	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
# of Groups	0	3	6	7	6	10	10	15	11	9

Operational Question 4

How has the giving changed over the last ten years?

Cattaraugus had the least amount of increase in giving of the four churches.

Cattaraugus is also the church with 95 percent of the congregation earning less than

$30,000.00 a year (Table 10). In 1985 the Cattaraugus church averaged $712.00 per

week. The average weekly giving grew to a high of $1,652.00 per week in 1994. The net

increase in average giving was $940.00 per week. The East Williamson church averaged

$1,038.00 per week in 1985. East Williamson has the largest percentage of people

earning over $30,000.00 a year with 72 percent of the congregation fitting into that

category (Table 10). In 1994 the average giving per week was $2,573.00 showing a net gain of $1,535.00 in giving per week. In 1985 the weekly giving at the Liberty church averaged $480.00 per week. Liberty has the second highest percentage of its congregation earning over $30,000.00 per year with 65 percent of the congregation fitting into that category (Table 10). In 1994 the Liberty church averaged $2,442.00 per week for a net increase in the average weekly giving of $1,962.00. Fredonia averaged $446.00 per week in 1985. Forty percent of the Fredonia congregation earns over $30,000.00 a year. In 1994 Fredonia averaged $2,836.00 per week for a net increase of $2,390.00 per week. This was the largest increase in average weekly giving of the four churches (Table 18). The dramatic increase in the giving in these churches was believed to be a factor for the growth of each of these churches. All four of the pastors taught and preached messages on the biblical concept of tithing. A building program also was planned and financed during the period studied. The capital campaign provided an opportunity to teach the people the biblical concept of stewardship.

Table 18

**A Comparison Of Average Weekly Giving Per Year In Three Year
Intervals At the Churches In the Study.**

Churches	Year			
	1985	1988	1991	1994
Cattaraugus	$712	$745	$959	$1,652
E. Williamson	$1,038	$1,269	$2,101	$2,573
Fredonia	$446	$1,004	$1,861	$2,836
Liberty	$480	$1,021	$1,574	$2,442

Operational Question 5

What has been the number of conversions each year over the last ten years?

Cattaraugus averaged nine conversions a year with ninety-four conversions

reported between 1985 and 1994. The highest number of conversions was twenty-two in

1992. East Williamson averaged sixteen conversions a year for a total of 163 reported

conversions between 1985 and 1994. The highest number of conversions was fifty-five

in 1993. Fredonia averaged nine conversions a year with a total of 94 reported

conversions between 1985 and 1994. The highest number of conversions was twenty-

eight which occurred in 1991. The Liberty church averaged twenty-five conversions per

year for a total of 255 reported conversions. The largest number of conversions was

fifty-six which occurred in 1988 (Table 19). The number of conversions on a consistent

basis is evidence that each of these church took the Great Commission seriously and

intentionally sought to bring people into a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Table 19

**Conversions Each Year At the
Churches In the Study.**

Churches					Conversions						
	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	Total
Cattaraugus	11	0	1	5	2	6	22	14	20	13	**94**
E. Williamson	1	3	11	14	9	17	40	8	55	5	**163**
Fredonia	0	0	2	5	9	9	28	3	22	16	**94**
Liberty	3	10	23	56	32	24	39	37	15	16	**255**
Combined Total											**606**

Operation Question 6

What has been the total number of full members over the last ten years?

In 1985 the Cattaraugus church had thirty-eight full members. The number of full members at Cattaraugus in 1994 had gone up by twenty-six for a total of sixty-four full members. East Williamson had sixty full members in 1985 and increased that amount by eighty-four so that there were 148 full members in 1994. Fredonia had only thirty-two members in 1985 but added sixty-seven members over the next ten years for a total of ninety-nine full members in 1994. Liberty had forty-two members in 1985 and increased that number to 120 in 1994 for an increase of seventy-eight additional full members (Table 20). The Free Methodist church requires people to abstain from the use, sale, and

manufacturing of tobacco and alcohol in order to become full members. This had a

tendency to keep some people who attended from becoming full members.

Table 20

**A Comparison Of the Total Number of Full Members
At the Churches In the Study.**

Churches	1985	1986	1987	1988	Total by Year 1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Cattaraugus	38	40	38	38	38	45	51	58	64	64
E. Williamson	64	63	62	65	69	89	106	111	134	148
Fredonia	32	20	29	31	45	58	65	49	82	99
Liberty	42	44	61	80	97	104	115	131	102	120

During the ten year period being studied, the Cattaraugus church took nine people

into full membership by transfer from another denomination, three people by transfer

from another Free Methodist Church, and twenty-three by confession of faith. East

Williamson took in three people by transfer from another denomination, three by transfer

from another Free Methodist church, and thirty-six by confession of faith. Fredonia took

twenty-three people into full membership by transfer from another denomination, four by

transfer from another Free Methodist church, and sixty-five by confession of faith. There

were ten people taken into full membership into the Liberty Church by transfer from

another denomination, eleven people by transfer from another Free Methodist Church,

and one hundred-thirteen by confession of faith. (Tables 21-23). The Free Methodist

church makes no distinction in its membership records between conversion growth and biological growth. In order to determine what percentage of the reported conversion growth in membership was actually biological growth, the researcher had to obtain more information from each of the four churches. The Cattaraugus church reported twenty-three members taken in by confession of faith. In reality nine of those people reported came into the church as a result of biological growth making the actual number of full members by conversion fourteen. The East Williamson church reported thirty-six people taken into full membership by confession of faith. Further inquiry discovered that seven of these could actually be classified as biological growth making the true number of full members by conversion to be twenty-nine. The Fredonia church reported sixty-five people taken into full membership by confession of faith. Eight of these were actually attributed to biological growth making the actual number of people taken into membership by confession of faith to be fifty-seven. Liberty reported 113 members taken in by confession of faith. Ten of these were actually biological growth bringing the actual number of people brought into to membership by confession of faith to 103. The greatest growth in membership in each of the churches studied came by confession of faith from new converts. Forty percent of the new members taken into the Cattaraugus church were new converts. Sixty-nine percent of the new members at East Williamson were new converts. Sixty-one percent of the new members were new converts in the Fredonia church. Seventy-six percent of the new members at Liberty were new converts.

Table 21

A Comparison Of the Number Of Members Taken Into the Churches In the Study By Transfer From Another Denomination.

Churches	1985	1986	1987	1988	Total by Year 1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Cattaraugus	0	2	0	0	0	5	0	2	0	0
E. Williamson	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Fredonia	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	6	0
Liberty	3	2	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	0

Table 22

A Comparison Of the Number Of Members Taken Into the Churches In the Study By Transfer From Another F.M. Church.

Churches	1985	1986	1987	1988	Total by Year 1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Cattaraugus	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
E. Williamson	0	3	0	0	0	11	0	1	2	0
Fredonia	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
Liberty	0	0	2	0	0	3	3	3	0	0

Table 23

**A Comparison Of the Number Of Members Taken Into
the Churches By Confession Of Faith.**

Churches	1985	1986	1987	1988	Total by Year 1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Cattaraugus	0	1	1	4	0	1	8	2	6	0
E. Williamson	0	0	2	6	2	4	2	8	10	2
Fredonia	0	0	10	2	14	1	8	5	25	0
Liberty	0	3	8	30	19	15	8	12	0	18

Research Question 3

What factors do pastors and lay leaders identify as being instrumental in the reversal of declining attendance patterns in their church?

The lay people interviewed believed the factor which was the most instrumental in turning around their local church was the leadership given by their pastor. They believed the pastor's leadership had a very positive effect on the church. Respondents also believed their churches had good leadership overall as well. The next most frequent response given by lay people as a factor in the turnaround of their church was a willingness on the part of the congregation to be open to change and to be willing to take risks (See Appendix 2). The combined factor of good pastoral leadership and a willingness to change on the part of the congregation resulted in a climate which was ideal for change and innovation.

The pastors interviewed believed the most instrumental factors in the turning around of their local church to be visionary leadership, quality worship and music, and a willingness to change (See Appendix 2). The willingness of the people of the church to accept change allowed the pastor to begin function as a rancher more than as a shepherd. This willingness to change also allowed the pastor to make changes the worship service, improving the quality as well as making it more contemporary. The combination of visionary leadership and a willingness to change on the part of the people resulted in positive changes making the ministry of the church one of higher quality as well as more contemporary.

The lay people being interviewed did not understand the difference between a mission statement and a vision statement. They were for the most part unaware of either in their church. The pastors also did not have a clear understanding of the difference between a mission statement and a vision statement. Many of the lay people said their church had some kind of mission statement but they did not know what it was (see Appendix 2). Having a formal mission statement or a vision statement did not seem to be a factor in the turnaround of the four churches.

When the lay leaders were asked what their church did best, their response was they were best at welcoming people and being friendly. This friendliness also helped the church to have great times of fellowship and to successfully let people know by their actions that they were in a caring church (see Appendix 2). The friendliness, resulted in good times of fellowship giving people the opportunity to get to know one another and to demonstrate Christian love and caring to one another as well. The pastor of these

churches were also convinced that loving people and being friendly was what their church did best. They were also quick to add their church also excelled in music and worship (see Appendix 2). All of these qualities helped to make the churches in this study attractive and appealing to newcomers.

Operational Question 1

What changes were made to bring about new growth?

The lay people interviewed believed the most effective change which occurred in the church was the arrival of the new pastor. It was after the change in pastoral leadership that other significant changes were made. One of the changes which occurred was the people of the church began to welcome new people. One change brought by the new pastors was a change in the structure of the church, most notably, a reduction in the size of the official board. In the past board meetings included up twenty-five people. These pastors reduced the size of their boards to usually ten or less. The lay people interviewed also believed that the additional social activities and opportunities for fellowship provided by the church had a very positive effect in the life of the church (see Appendix 2). In each of these churches new ideas brought new life and enthusiasm.

The changes thought to be most effective by the pastors being surveyed were improved congregational self-esteem and more positive and contemporary worship. The pastor worked intentionally to improve these areas early on during their tenure at these churches. The changes in these areas brought very positive results.

Each of the pastors said they personally had to make changes in their own life in order for the church to grow. The one change that all four of the pastors surveyed had to

undergo was to begin to train lay people and turn ministry over to them. They realized

they could not do everything themselves, nor was it their responsibility to do it all by

themselves. The pastor began to take seriously their responsibility to equip the body for

ministry (see Appendix 2).

Operational Question 2

What ministries or programs were started resulting in new growth?

The lay people interviewed at the four churches being studied indicated there were three

areas in which programs were begun which resulted in growth. The most frequent

response was the church started small groups. The next frequent response was the church

began to offer new programs for children. Another frequent response was the church

began new Sunday School classes. Each of these churches began to multiply groups

through the new programs and ministries which were started. Women's ministries were

started as well as ministries targeting families with children. Youth ministries were also

started in an effort to reach out to the youth in the community (see Appendix 2).

The pastors interviewed also mentioned programs that were started which resulted

in new groups being formed. They reported new small groups and Bible studies were

begun as well as new Sunday School classes which were outreach minded. Children's

ministries such as Vacation Bible School or a Kids Club were also mentioned as new

program started which resulted in new growth. Ministries were also started to meets the

needs of women in the church and the community. Sunday morning worship times were

also used to draw new people into the church and to provide the people of the church with

opportunities and occasions for inviting their friends to join them at church (see Appendix

2).

Operational Question 3

What were the obstacles which had to be removed in order for the church to begin

to grow?

The obstacle mentioned by lay people more than any other was resistance to

change. Each of the churches had become ingrown and self-serving. The resulting effect

was the churches were perceived as unfriendly towards newcomers. Another obstacle

mentioned by the lay people was a lack of unity within the church. Two other obstacles

were also mentioned, the first being a lack of vision or purpose in the church and the

second a lack of necessary finances to carry out the ministries of the church (see

Appendix 2). Each of these obstacles had to be removed in order for the church to begin

to grow. The pastors saw the number one obstacle to be the church facility . In two of the

four churches, the facility was over 100 years old, small, and run down. Two of the

churches had facilities which were less than thirty years old but were too small. Other

obstacles mentioned by the pastors were negative and defeatist attitudes, a general sense

of low self-esteem in the people, and power struggles and conflict existing within the

church. Pastors also saw the unfriendliness of the church as an obstacle. One other

obstacle was observed by the pastors, the church was functioning under an old paradigm

(see Appendix 2). They were trying to recreate yesterday and acting if tomorrow was

going to be 1955 all over again. The pastors worked to overcome this sense of nostalgia

and to bring the church into a new paradigm for ministry which would be more effective.

Some other observations were made by the lay leaders interviewed. The most

frequent of these responses were, the church needs to continue to be involved in

evangelism. They were concerned that their church might once again fall into the trap of becoming a self-serving organization. They also indicated that the desire to know everybody hindered the growth process. The single cell nature of the small church was something the churches could easily revert back to, and they sought to keep that from happening. The lay leaders realized good leadership would be required in order to prevent this from happening. The need for spiritual renewal, prayer, and a biblical purpose with specific goals was also mentioned. One other observation made was that the churches became more open to change as they witnessed the positive results achieved by the initial changes made in the church (see Appendix 2).

One pastor made the following observation. In a small church there are one or two people who control the church and block growth. They came to be in that position during a period when there was a vacuum in leadership and they were put into a leadership position. These people tend to be unwilling or unable to give up this power. Most new pastors are unable to get past this hurdle and are therefore unable to have a growing church. When this is the case, the church becomes one big unhealthy family with unhealthy traditions and habits, which become limiting factors.

One pastor added that the church was not just turned around solely by the pastor, it was turned around by the core group of people who decided to follow his leadership and who had also decided to work real hard.

A third pastor said he just loved the people and worked to change their attitude. He believed that was essential. He saw his role as helping the people to dream and to believe "We can do this"   Other suggestions offered were, keep the vision tied to the

Great Commission, the leader must be totally sold out on reaching pagans with the gospel of Christ, and start small and don't try to do everything. Lastly, the pastors commented on the difficulty of the task and pointed out that it is a spiritual battle. Their words of advice were to persevere and be patient because it does not happen over night (see Appendix 2).

When the lay leaders were asked what they would do differently, they said they would have built their new facility differently and spent more time developing leaders. None of the lay leaders were 100 percent satisfied with their new facility. As the churches grew they also came to realize the importance of training new people for leadership in order to prevent burnout and to help assimilate new people and have a continual influx of new ideas and energy.

The pastor's also indicated they wished they had systematically raised up new leaders. They also said they would be more careful to pace themselves so that they did not burn out.

<div style="text-align:center">Summary</div>

A variety of factors have been cited by the respondents of this study as being instrumental in the process of turning around what was once a small and declining church.

Human Resource Factors

All four of the turnaround churches used the resources they had wisely. The primary resource available to them was not found so much in the community as in the church itself. The churches discovered gifts, abilities and talents and began to use them together in service to God. They made wise use of the people with education and

leadership experience. Both men and women served in leadership positions and made a

difference for the kingdom of God.

Growth Trends

All four of the churches studied were involved in bringing people into a personal

relationship with Jesus Christ. As new people came in, they were loved and assimilated

as well as equipped for ministry and service. As morale improved, each of these churches

developed momentum for growth which helped them to become even more effective at

reaching new people. A case could easily be made for the primary role of the morning

worship experience in the growth of these churches.

Giving Trends

One sure sign of growth is when the people of the church begin to tithe and to give

sacrificially. Each of the four churches not only grew numerically, but also grew

spiritually as stewards of God's resources.

The Importance of Change

In order to grow, each of the churches had to identify the obstacles holding them

back and make strategic changes to overcome them. Each church came to a point where

they embraced change as a means to new life and fruitfulness. The most significant

change in all four of the churches involved a shift from functioning as a self-serving

organization to functioning as a church with a purpose, i.e. bringing people to Christ.

The Role of Leadership

The turnaround of each of the four declining churches required a pastor who was

gifted and dedicated. The leadership of the pastor was a central factor in the reversal of

the previous decline and the beginning of new growth. Lay leadership was also necessary

for the continued growth of each of the churches.

The Importance of Good Music

As each church grew, they began to make changes and improvements in their

worship and music ministry. Traditional worship began to give way to more

contemporary worship. The music ministry became very effective in reaching new people

at each church.

Relevant Messages

All of the churches said their pastor preached messages which were relevant,

helpful and practical. Their messages were biblically based and were able to meet

peoples felt needs.

Being Friendly

Each church began to work on being friendly to new people and welcoming them

into the fellowship. Every church interviewed followed up on new people with a basket

of baked goods or a small gift to express their appreciation to those who had worshipped

with them for the first time.

Biblical Guidance

None of the churches interviewed had a mission statement or a vision statement

which everybody new. What they did have was biblical guidance. Each church had made

it their goal to be obedient to the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19-20 and the

Great Commandment found in Matthew 22:37-38. These churches concentrated on

making disciples for Jesus Christ and on loving their neighbors.

Importance of the Facility

Each church discovered the need to improve their worship facilities and property in order to grow. They also were willing to step out in faith and take the necessary risks that are involved in building a new worship facility.

These are some of the essential elements a church must have in order to stop a period of decline and begin to grow once again .

Research Question 4

How do pastors and lay leaders differ in their perception of the factors behind the turnaround?

The pastors interviewed gave nine factors for the turnaround of their church. Lay leaders identified eleven factors. These findings will be discussed next.

Table 24

**A Comparison Of the Factors Cited By Pastors Of the Four Churches Studied
And Those Cited By Lay Leaders.**

Factors listed by pastors	Factors listed by lay leaders
1. The pastor's visionary leadership.	1. The pastor's visionary leadership.
2. Quality music & worship.	2. Quality music & worship.
3. A willingness to change.	3. A willingness to change.
4. Generate visitor flow & follow up.	4. Generate visitor flow & follow up.
5. Attend growth seminars together.	5. Attend growth seminars together.
6. Remove obstacles.	6. Remove obstacles.
7. Role of pastor as an equipper.	7. People involved in lay ministry.
8. *No factor listed.*	8. Intentional ministry.
9. The giving of the people.	9. Tithing.
10. *No factor listed.*	10. Spiritual renewal.
11. Additional staffing.	11. Additional staffing.

Comparison of Responses Given By Pastors and Lay Leaders

Pastors and lay leaders agreed upon the first seven factors listed but lay persons

mentioned two additional factors not listed by the pastor (Table 24).

The first factor mentioned by the lay people which was not mentioned by the

pastors was intentional ministry. The lay people spoke about how their church took a

strategic approach to ministry and began to identify who they were trying to reach. The East Williamson church specifically targeted Baby Boomers who attend church as children but had drifted away. They sought to minister to people under forty with children living at home. The Liberty Free Methodist Church discovered that 68 percent of the people living in their county had problems related to alcohol so they began a specific ministry to alcoholics. Perhaps pastors did not list intentional ministry because they were looking at turnaround from the perspective of a leader. Of the thirteen different initial responses by the pastors concerning turnaround factors in their church, five dealt with things pastors did. The perspective of the people was more of a participant observer. Because they were a bit farther removed, they could see more of the big picture.

Spiritual renewal was the second turnaround factor mentioned by the lay people which was not mentioned by the pastors (Table 24). The renewing of their inner spirit was such an obvious factor in the turnaround of their church because it was a personal renewal. As they were spiritually renewed they became more aware of the need for change and renewal in their lives and in the church. Perhaps one reason why the pastors did not cite this as a factor was because they may have been less aware of a need for spiritual renewal in their own lives. These pastors had already experienced renewal in their life as they sought the Lord through prayer and study. The pastors renewal and prayer for the church led to the renewal of the laity. Perhaps the excitement of the personal renewal in the lives of the laity caused them to mention this as a factor. Another possible reason for pastors not noting this as a factor might be their desire to see more people in the church experience spiritual renewal.

Conclusions

Most Free Methodist churches in the Northeast are not growing but becoming

older and smaller. The four churches studied by this researcher are thus by no means

typical Free Methodist churches. They stand out from the rest because of the change and

transformation which has occurred in each of them over the last ten years. The pastors of

these four churches are neither typical nor average. They are as distinctly different from

their peers as the churches they pastored are different from most Free Methodist churches.

These pastors are young and energetic and have a compelling vision from God for their

church. As pastors concerned about fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great

Commandment, these men have taken steps to help their church fulfill both of these

directives from our Lord. These four pastors have strategically introduced change into

their local church and have won people to Christ. With their people they have won

victories by God's grace and their ministries have borne fruit. Each of the four pastors

was willing to pay the price for growth. Most people will never know the personal

sacrifice and the difficulties which they endured. Each of the four pastors relied upon the

Lord for direction, strength and vision as they dealt with difficult people and worked to

remove the obstacles standing in the way of health and growth for the church they

pastored. More will be said in the pages which follow concerning the crucial role played

by the men God called to lead and pastor these turnaround churches.

Twelve Factors Identified

The pastors interviewed initially identified thirteen factors which were

instrumental in the process of turning around the church they led. These were condensed

into nine primary factors accounting for the turnaround in their churches. Lay leaders initially identified nineteen factors which they believed were responsible for the turnaround of the local church. These were condensed into eleven primary factors. Both lists were combined resulting in a list of twelve primary factors. These factors will now be discussed one at a time.

Visionary Pastoral Leadership

The most frequently mentioned factor by both pastors and lay leaders was the visionary leadership of the pastor. The turnaround began when the newly appointed pastored arrived on the scene. Each pastor brought with him a vision of a preferred future for the church. During the interviews with the lay leaders from each church, the people spoke about what a difference the new pastor made in their church. The pastor's gifts of preaching, teaching and leadership were mentioned frequently. All of the pastors studied and read church growth material and took their people to church growth seminars. A new building was erected under the leadership of each of the pastors. Each pastor loved the people of the church and was loved in return by the majority of the people. Every pastor had people who did not favor growth and the changes which growth brings. Each pastor went ahead with needed changes once the majority of the people were on board. A price was paid for the growth of the church by each of the pastors. This price was financial as well as personal. They were also continually learning as they sought to become more effective for God. Thus the primary instrument God used to turnaround these four churches was a new pastor who gave visionary leadership to the church. Churches which are presently small and declining or plateaued need to give serious thought to who their

next pastor will be and what gifts and qualities they are looking for. Our study results suggest they should be visionary leaders with gifts in preaching, teaching and leadership.

Quality in Music and Worship

Improving the quality of music and worship was repeatedly mentioned by both pastors and lay leaders as being very instrumental in making their church attractive to new people. Three of the four churches interviewed developed their musical gifts so that they became a primary topic of conversation in the community as people visited the church. Some of the churches sent lay people to seminars to learn how to offer a quality worship experience. Just as the music improved, so did the preaching. All four of the pastors worked diligently to prepare meaningful, encouraging and relevant messages for their people week after week. One pastor spoke about taking the time to listen to the people of the congregation so that he would be able to know what was important to them and what hurts and needs he needed to address. All of the pastors listened to tapes of contemporary messages from gifted communicators in order to facilitate their own learning and preaching skills. Reading was a regular practice as was attending growth seminars on a regular basis. Emphasis was placed on quality in both preaching and music in worship. Thus small churches which are seeking to grow should understand and be aware of the necessity of quality music and quality preaching on relevant topics.

A Willingness to Change

John Maxwell, a well known seminar speaker among church growth pastors, has a favorite saying: "If we always do what we've always done, we will always get what we've always gotten." The point is, change is necessary if we desire a different outcome from

what we now have. Lyle Schaller said there is no task more difficult for a pastor than to design and implement a strategy that will move the long-established congregation off a plateau in size (*44 Steps* 12). Schaller also says the number one issue today for most congregations is to implement planned change from within (*Strategies For Change* 10). Each of the four churches studied implemented planned change from within. These churches changed the manner in which they greeted and welcomed visitors. They also changed from offering only one worship service to offering people a choice between two different times for worship. Risk taking and stepping out in faith became the normal practice of these churches. New programs and ministries were tried and some were successful. New classes were offered for newcomers as well as for long time members of the church. Change was no longer feared but was embraced as a means to more effectively reach people for Christ. The pastor's role also was allowed to change as the church began to develop more realistic expectations of their pastor. The focus of the church was also changed, the church no longer existed for itself, but rather existed to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. Low self-esteem was no longer a problem and the church became more positive. Morale improved, facilities were improved, and even negative attitudes were changed.

Pastors also had to make changes in their own lives in order for their churches to grow. The most frequently mentioned personal change they had to make was to begin equipping lay people to do ministry rather than trying to do it all themselves. Pastors interested in helping their church to grow need to begin to function as ranchers, training and equipping lay people for ministry, instead of solely being shepherds who do all the

ministry by themselves. Thus churches desiring to grow must embrace purposeful change and become willing to let go of the status quo.

<u>Visitors Are Warmly Received</u>

Each of the four churches had implemented a plan to both greet and follow up on first time visitors and present them with a gift such as baked goods. Visitor flow was generated by special activities and worship events. These churches offered musical and dramatic productions, Christian concerts, special events and services throughout the calendar year. As the morale of the church began to increase, people started to have a sense of pride about their church and about what God was doing in their church. The people of the church began to invite their friends to worship, Bible studies, small groups and church sponsored social activities. New people came, were welcomed, and in turn invited their friends to join them. Pastors offered classes designed to welcome new people and to help them learn about the purpose of the church as well as to provide them with an opportunity to invite Christ into their lives. These churches gave the impression that the most important persons in church on Sunday were the visitors. The people of the church introduced themselves to new people and worked at befriending them. Churches desiring to grow need to develop visitor flow and then follow up on those visitors in such a way as to make them feel both welcomed and loved.

<u>Attend Growth Seminars</u>

All of the pastors interviewed had been to a church growth seminar by Dr. John Maxwell. Seminars by Conrad Lowe, Stan Toler, Bill Hybels and Fuller's Church Growth Institute were also on the list of seminars these churches attended. The pastors took the

initiative not only to attend these seminars, but to also take some of their lay leaders with them. The result was fresh ideas as well as enthusiasm for continued growth in the church. Churches began new programs and ministries as a result of the training they received at these seminars. They were willing to take risks and invest time and money in order to see their church turn around. Pastors and lay leaders interested in the growth of their church should give serious consideration to attending a growth seminar taught by John Maxwell, Bill Hybels or any of the others seminar speakers dealing with appropriate topics for churches seeking to once again begin to grow.

Remove Obstacles

Daniel Reeves compares the small church to a hot air balloon. No matter how pretty the balloon is it will not begin to soar until the ropes that are holding it down are released and the sandbags weighing it down are cast off (*Preparing Congregations for The 21st Century* 15). Small churches, particularly old small churches, have accumulated significant obstacles over the years that are presently holding them back from effective ministry and new growth. What are these obstacles? Lay people mentioned resistance to change as an obstacle more frequently than any other response. A prerequisite for growth is a desire for growth. Desire for growth, and our love for God, as well as our desire to be obedient to Him becomes the motivating factor behind this change. Growth does not occur without change. Change in and of itself does not guarantee growth. Making the correct changes at the right time can produce growth, which in turn produces more change. Other obstacles mentioned were, unfriendly people, a lack of vision, a lack of unity in the body and a desire to be a self-serving organization.

Negative attitudes were the second most frequent obstacle to growth mentioned by the pastors interviewed. Other obstacles mentioned were the low self-esteem of the church, power struggles, conflict, and organizational structures. The obstacle mentioned most frequently by pastors was the aging facility. They expressed frustration at not having enough room for fellowship, worship, parking and classes. All four of the churches built new structures to assist them in their plans for growth and outreach into their communities. Occasionally a pastor would speak of a person or a group of people who had become an obstacle to the growth of the church. They had become an obstacle by causing a lack of unity or by attempting to control the pastor and the church. In order for the church to grow these people had to be dealt with by the pastor and members of the church. This usually resulted in a few people leaving the church. Churches interested in turning around a period of stagnation and decline need to identify the obstacles holding them back and begin the task of removing them one by one.

Equipping Lay People for Ministry

Once a church grows beyond 100 people in average attendance it becomes very difficult for a pastor to care for all of the people. When pastors try to do everything by themselves, they become frustrated and people begin to fall between the cracks. Important work is left undone and families are neglected. The pastors interviewed indicated that the personal change most required of them to turn around their church was intentionally choosing to equip people for ministry instead of doing it by themselves. This represented a major change in their approach to ministry in the local church. Each of the four churches studied had begun to equip and train lay people for ministry. Spiritual Gifts

Inventories were used to help the people of the church begin to understand their own gifts. Pastors preached on the various spiritual gifts and also the importance of lay people having a ministry. Passages like Ephesians 4:11-13 were used as sermon texts until people began to catch the vision for lay ministry. One of the benefits experienced by these churches occurred as new people came into the church and were invited to participate in lay ministry. The result of this involvement was their assimilation into the church. They began to feel they belonged. Churches desiring new growth are thus encouraged to train lay people for ministry and to ask pastors to train them to do the ministry rather than pastors doing it all by themselves.

Prayer

Prayer was mentioned by at least one person from each church as being a vital factor of the turnaround of the church. One person interviewed told of how the people of the church began to take prayer seriously even before they received their new pastor. They had made a point of asking God to send the right person to lead them into the future. Another person spoke about praying for the lost in their community, asking the Lord to use their church as a life-giving instrument for the people of their community. Every person interviewed indicated prayer was an important part of the life of their church. The people willingly gave credit to God for answering their prayers and making their church a life-giving station. The people interviewed were aware of the fact that turning around a declining church is a spiritual battle. They did not look to gimmicks or techniques, instead they looked to God. Churches which understand the importance of prayer and begin to pray are taking a step which is crucial in turning around their church.

Tithing

The people who gave leadership to these four churches learned to tithe and to give

to God and the church generously. As the people prayed and sought the Lord's help in

reaching their communities for Christ, God called them to be obedient to His word. God

promises to bless His people when they tithe (Malachi 3:10). He also promises to bless

our obedience and to allow us to be under a curse when we are disobedient. One obstacle

which was removed in each of these churches was the sin of robbing God by not

practicing tithing. Dramatic increases were seen in the average weekly giving in each of

these four churches. Without the practice of tithing and sacrificial giving the churches

would not have experienced God's blessing nor would they have been able to build the

new facilities which assisted their continual growth. The practice of storehouse tithing

allowed these churches to hire the necessary staff and to begin the programs and

ministries that assisted them in their growth. God blesses our obedience. Churches are

not able to be turned around without the blessing of God. Those who seek to help their

church to begin to grow would be wise to teach and to practice storehouse tithing as

taught in Malachi 3:10.

Spiritual Renewal

When the people of the church began to pray, hear the word of God proclaimed in

a way that was easy for them to understand, and to obediently tithe, the result was spiritual

renewal. God began to move among them and to do great things in their lives and in the

church. As a result, people from the community were drawn to the church and came to

the Lord. A total of 603 people were brought into the kingdom through the ministry of

these four churches in the ten years studied. As a result of spiritual renewal, the churches

were also able to become service-oriented instead of being self-oriented as they had been

in the past. Decisions were made according to what would please the Lord and help the

church bring people into the kingdom. This spiritual renewal also helped the leaders of

the church become open and willing to accept change. One church began a ministry to

alcoholics, winning many of them to the Lord and assisting them in the process of become

free from alcohol addiction. Pastors offered worship services for the healing of human

hurts where both people and relationships were healed. The spiritual renewal also

brought an awareness of the presence of God in the worship celebrations. Unity was

experienced in the churches. People began to forgive one another and to obey God's word

in their daily lives. Churches which are in decline are in great need of spiritual renewal.

Church turnarounds will not occur without spiritual renewal.

Addition of Staff

Each of the four churches hired at least a secretary on a part time basis. Three of

the four churches hired an assistant or associate pastor to assist in the equipping of the

people for ministry. The churches had already begun to grow by the time they hired

additional staffing. Pastors no longer carried the load alone. Secretaries took over office

responsibilities and some administrative responsibilities so that the pastor could be freed

up for other responsibilities. The churches that grew past 200 in average Sunday morning

worship attendance had hired a second pastor to help with the equipping and training of

lay people before the church grew to 200 people. The responsibilities assigned to the

newly hired pastors were to oversee small group ministry and the training

and equipping of lay people for ministry. Churches that are serious about growing and who are seeking continual growth need to hire additional staff to assist in the training of lay people for ministry.

<u>Intentional Ministry</u>

The Great Commission and Great Commandment functioned as the informal mission statement of the four churches studied. The turnaround churches identified what groups of people lived within their ministry area and then made plans to reach them for Christ. One pastor befriended a high school coach. Through the relationship he established with the coach he was able to get to know more people in the community and the students in the school. Those relationships in the community resulted in neighbors and friends coming to know Christ. Another pastor used his creative gifts and wrote original dramas and musical productions and invited the community. Alcoholics were targeted by another church. The fourth church used the pastors musical ability to make inroads into the State College next door to them. They were very successful at reaching educated people as well as musicians. Ministry became intentional. People were targeted and reached for the kingdom of God. Churches desiring to turn around will identify who they are best able to reach and then concentrate on reaching them.

CHAPTER 5

In this chapter the researcher seeks to integrate what was discovered from the

survey of the literature with the findings of the turnaround survey.

Comparison and Contrast with the Literature

Table 25

**A comparison of the findings in the literature with the findings from the
Turnaround Survey listed according to similarities.**

From the Literature		Turnaround Survey	
1.	A desire for growth & change.	1.	A willingness to change.
2.	Remove obstacles.	2.	Remove obstacles.
3.	Identify the church's purpose.	3.	*No similarities listed.*
4.	Pastor & people must pray.	4.	Prayer
5.	Become outreach focused.	5.	Practice intentional ministry.
6.	Discover the communities needs.	6.	*No similarities listed.*
7.	Do a few things well.	7.	Quality in music & worship
8.	Generate visitor flow & follow up.	8.	Visitors are warmly received.
9.	The pastor must lead.	9.	Visionary pastoral leadership.
10.	Equip and train lay people.	10.	Equip lay people for ministry.
11.	*No similarities listed.*	11.	Practice Tithing.
12.	*No similarities listed.*	12.	Seek spiritual renewal.
13.	*No similarities listed.*	13.	Attend growth seminars.
14.	*No similarities listed.*	14.	Add additional staff.

In Chapter two we sought to identify the key factors in the turnaround of small churches based on church growth literature. The first factor listed was a desire for growth and change. The Turnaround Survey findings also indicate the people of the church need to have a willingness and openness to change. Both agree that change is required and the turnaround will not begin until there is both a desire and a willingness to change (Table 25). This change is fostered by a repentant spirit which acknowledges the sins and failures of the past, and desires for God to begin a new work in the lives of the people as well as in the life of the church.

Removal of the obstacles was the second factor discussed in Chapter 2. The results from the Turnaround Survey also indicated the obstacles in the church had to be removed first before the church could be turned around (Table 25). In order for a small or declining church to grow, it must first deal with those things which make it unhealthy. The most common obstacles found in small churches are a lack of vision, a desire to preserve the status quo, and a self-serving mind set. Many times this requires self-examination and confession to God for sin in the church. Churches with no vision for their future need to repent and confess to God that they have lost their first love like the church at Ephesus had (Rev. 2:1-7). The first love of the New Testament church was reaching lost people for Christ. Healthy churches grow, unhealthy churches do not.

The third factor listed in Chapter 2 is for the church to begin to identify its purpose and mission. The results from the Turnaround Survey did not specifically list this as a

factor (Table 25). One of the characteristics of a small church is that they have two

structures. The first structure is formal and can be seen in committees and boards. The

second structure is informal and can be seen in conversations between members in the

parking lot and over the phone. In the small church, the informal structure is more

important than the formal structure. The churches studied in the Turnaround Survey

typically did not have a formal mission or purpose statement. This researcher observed

that an informal mission or purpose did exist. These churches were informally following

the instructions of Jesus given through the Great Commission and the Great

Commandment. One pastor's response when asked about the purpose of their church

simply responded, "The Great Commission and the Great Commandment."

The fourth factor listed in Chapter 2 was prayer both of the pastor and the people.

The results of the Turnaround Survey also found that prayer was an important factor in

any attempt to turn around a declining church (Table 25). In the Theological Reflection

in Chapter 1 we also stressed the importance of prayer: "The new birth of life for the old

and dying congregation will begin when a person or a group of people begin to pray and to

seek God's direction and leading for their church." Both sources agree that prayer is not

only a source of new life but also is foundational for direction and vision.

Developing an outreach mind set was listed as a factor in Chapter 2. Some

similarities exist between having an outreach mind set and practicing intentional ministry

as listed in the Turnaround Survey (Table 25). Intentional ministry is the result of an

outreach mind set. Once a church is able to forget about being a self-serving organization

and begin to think strategically about reaching the needs of other people, the next step is

to develop an intentional plan to reach those people. A church becomes outreach focused when they make decisions based on what will help the church to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. This is not a natural thing for churches to do. It involves an intentional choice.

Discovering the community's need was the sixth factor listed in the ten steps to new life found in Chapter 2. No direct similarities were found in the results from the Turnaround Survey. The author would suggest however that discovering the needs of the community was a prerequisite to developing an intentional plan for ministry. Though this was not listed as a factor, this researcher believes it was a part of the process of such a plan.

Doing a few things well is the seventh factor listed in Chapter 2. The Turnaround Survey listed quality in music and worship as being instrumental factors (Table 25). The two factors are not identical, yet they are similar. The four churches interviewed concentrated on doing worship, preaching, and music well. They testified to the effectiveness of this approach in their efforts to reach new people. They invested time, practice, money and energy into the development of these areas. This researcher believes that this effort was largely responsible for the results the four churches were able to achieve in reaching new people for Christ.

The ability to generate visitor flow and to follow up on visitors was the eighth factor listed in Chapter 2. The results of the Turnaround Survey also listed the warm reception of visitors as being a factor in the process of turning around the churches. Each of the four churches had trained greeters who welcomed people as they came to the

church for the first time. All of the churches followed up on first time visitors with a basket of fresh baked goods and a card expressing appreciation to the visitor for coming to the church. This was very instrumental in encouraging people to return to the church for a second visit. Each of the churches planned special events and activities and encouraged the members of the congregation to invite friends. These people were then warmly received and follow up was done as well. To generate visitor flow but then to not follow up on visitors would not result in much growth. The two must be done together in order to be effective.

Pastors must be leaders and they must lead. The results of our Turnaround Survey indicated that the most important factor in the turnaround process of their church was the visionary leadership of the pastor. As a leader the pastors are responsible for educating the congregation as to the mission and purpose of the church according to God's word. Training and equipping lay people for ministry was another of their responsibilities. The pastors of the four churches interviewed did not shy away from their role as a leader. Three of the pastors had very strong gifts in the area of leadership and used those gifts to point the way forward. One pastor had a charismatic leadership style. He was winsome and drew people to himself. His gift of leadership was coupled with the gift of evangelism, He personally led 100 people to the Lord in the five years he pastored that church. All four pastors read and studied leadership principles. They also worked to develop leaders. Visionary leadership was thus a crucial factor in the turnaround of the four churches.

The tenth factor listed in Chapter 2 was equipping and training lay people. Our Survey results also indicated that training and equipping lay people for ministry was an essential part in the process of turning around the small and declining church. As pastors equip lay people for ministry , they imitate what Jesus did with the 12 disciples. Jesus taught and trained them and sent them out to do the work of the kingdom. He entrusted His ministry and mission to them and to their disciples. Effectiveness in ministry is often the result of training co-laborers. The task of pastoral ministry is certainly difficult. The burden can be shared as lay people are trained for ministry. As the old adage says: "Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day; teach a man to fish and he will eat for life." Turnaround pastors are convinced that training lay people for ministry is one of their primary responsibilities. They do not try to do everything by themselves. They see their task as equipping and supporting lay people in their ministry. At Maxwell's conference on leadership, he often tells pastors that "Your level of success in ministry is not dependent upon your gifts for ministry so much as it is based on how well you surround yourselves with competent people to assist you in achieving your God given goals."

The Turnaround Survey results listed four factors not included in the list from Chapter 2 (table 24). The four factors are practicing tithing, seeking spiritual renewal, attending growth seminars and adding additional staff. One might think it strange that tithing was a factor in turning around a small and declining church. The people interviewed did not share this opinion. They were convinced that their act of obedience in giving their tithes and offerings to God through their local church was instrumental in the turnaround of their church. The pastors taught from God's word concerning the

importance of tithing and the blessings that would result. Three of the four pastor's interviewed studied messages on tithing from Maxwell and adapted them for use in their own congregations. The people responded and God blessed their church. The churches also taught about stewardship, particularly during the time when each church was working to raise the money to build a new facility. As they raised the money for the building program, the amount of money for the regular offering also increased. People got into the habit of giving and tithing. The result was the continued blessing of God.

The second factor listed by the people interviewed in the Turnaround Survey which was not listed in Chapter 2 was seeking spiritual renewal (Table 25). Although it was not mentioned in Chapter 2, it was mentioned in the Theological Reflection in Chapter 1 where it was stressed that people must embrace God's word afresh and seek new life only He can bring. Ezekiel 37:5-6 says: "This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. . .I will put breath in you and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord." The people in the four churches surveyed indicated that God had breathed new life into their churches and into themselves. A case could be made that part of removing the obstacles in the way of growth would be to seek spiritual renewal. As churches begin to pray God is able to reveal obstacles which stand in the way of renewal. When churches begin to search the scriptures looking for God's direction for their church, He is able to reveal areas of disobedience and neglect. The result of their repentance will be the removal of obstacles and sins holding the church back. The third factor in our Turnaround survey but not in the literature review in Chapter 2, involved the pastors and lay leaders attending church

growth seminars together (Table 24). Both pastors and lay leaders indicated that

attending these seminars was instrumental in the planning and process of turning the

church around (Table 25). The seminars mentioned most often were those offered by

Maxwell of Injoy Ministries. The seminars dealt with topics such as Breaking the 200

Barrier, Leadership, Lay Ministry and Successful Stewardship. Injoy ministries also

offered the Model Church seminar which was very instrumental in helping at least one of

the churches put together a plan to generate visitor flow and to follow up on visitors.

A fourth factor listed in the results of the Turnaround Survey that was not included

in the list compiled in Chapter 2, was the addition of staff. Not only did these churches

train and equip lay people, but they also added staff to one degree or another. The first

addition was a part time secretary. Later on a second pastor was hired. This addition of

staff was mentioned by both lay leaders and pastors as being instrumental in the processes

of turning around the church. One church in particular spoke about team ministry. They

saw the church as a team of pastors and lay ministers who worked together to achieve

results for the kingdom of God. The pastors were seen as player coaches who worked side

by side with the lay people to train, encourage and equip them for the task of ministry.

The testimony of the pastors and lay leaders interviewed would suggest these four

factors are significantly different from the ten factors listed in Chapter 2. A case could be

made to demonstrate tithing, spiritual renewal and adding additional staff are just methods

to remove significant obstacles. The same could also be said of many of the ten items

listed in Chapter 2. A case also could be made to include attending growth seminars

under equipping laity for ministry. Having stated this, the author contends the evidence of

the Turnaround Survey suggests these four factors are significant and should thus be viewed as crucial factors in the process of implementing planned change from within resulting in the turn around of the small declining church.

Obedience is the issue addressed by tithing and spiritual renewal. God blesses obedience. When a small declining church repents of sin and lack of vision, sets their hearts and mind upon being obedient to the Word of God, then God is able to bless their local church. Attending growth seminars and adding staff are practical steps which churches can take to facilitate the turnaround process. As small churches take these steps they receive new insight and coaching for the turnaround process. The additional staffing, such as hiring a part-time secretary, allows the pastor more time to initiate planned change from within.

Unexpected Findings

Two unexpected findings were discovered by the author as the results of the Turnaround Survey were examined. The first surprise was the lack of a formal statement of purpose in three of the four churches. Each of these churches has since began a formal process of putting together a written statement of purpose.

The second surprise was what the lay leaders said about the role of tithing in the turnaround of their church. As this researcher read widely in the area of church growth, understanding the small church and turning around declining churches, no author mentioned tithing as a factor in the turnaround process.

Practical Suggestions

The pastors and lay leaders were asked: "What, if anything, would you do differently knowing what you now know?" Some of their responses will be the subject of this section.

Comments from Lay Leaders

Several of the lay leaders wished that their churches could have done more than they had in fulfilling their new found mission. Many of the comments related to the new building and the process the church went through to obtain the new facility. No one interviewed was completely satisfied with their new facility. Some wished they had built differently. Others wished the church had not gone so far into debt. Only one of the churches interviewed had a large mortgage to service, the other churches had mortgages at manageable levels for the church.

Comments from Pastors

The pastors wished they had done a better job of raising up new leaders. They believed they could have raised leaders up sooner and done a better job at equipping them for ministry. Other pastors mentioned a need to pace themselves better. They expressed regret that they were not more careful to do so during the turnaround process. Each of the pastors moved on to another church within eighteen months of the dedication of the new building.

Appraisal of the Four Churches

Cattaraugus was very effective at reaching new people and adding to their number during the tenure of pastor Alpha. Once he was relocated by the conference the church

plateaued and made some choices which favored the status-quo more than growth. One example was the decision the church made to go back to one service. A decision to return to one service reinforces the tendency to function like a small church. It is the belief of this author that the decision was based more on preference than upon purpose. In order for the Cattaraugus church to finish what was begun under pastor Alpha, they need to rediscover their biblical purpose and begin the process of becoming a purpose driven church rather than a preference driven church.

East Williamson did well at first under the leadership of pastor Beta. One thing which held the church back and caused the growth to level off was the leadership style of the pastor. The pastor became very powerful and made some decisions without the support of key lay persons. The church became divided over staffing issues as well as other issues. Pastor Beta left the church and the attendance average fell below 200 in morning worship. The 200 barrier has not yet been broken at East Williamson. A strategy needs to be developed which will chart out the steps necessary for the church to move through the 200 barrier. Renewing the churches commitment to reaching the lost and being a purpose driven church should be essential parts of the strategy. The newly appointed pastor is being effective at restoring unity and vision in the church. East Williamson has begun to grow once again and is now averaging over 200 in morning worship attendance.

The Fredonia church did very well under the leadership of pastor Gamma. While he was at Fredonia he spent time preparing the people for leadership so that the ministry and outreach would continue after he left. Pastor Alpha, from Cattaraugus became the

new pastor and has given strong leadership at Fredonia so that they are now averaging over 300 in morning worship attendance. They have done a good job at persevering with small groups until they were able to multiply groups effectively. They have started a third service and are discussing starting a fourth. Of the four churches studied, Fredonia has grown the most and continues to grow.

Liberty is a church with divided allegiance. Under the leadership of pastor Delta, they were motivated to reach the lost for Christ. Reaching and winning the lost started out as their first priority. When a Christian school was started, reaching people for Christ was no longer the number one priority. The well being and the growth of the school became a higher priority than reaching and winning the lost. This has caused division in the church and has contributed significantly to a widespread sense of burnout among the leadership of the church. In order for continued growth at Liberty, the Christian school needs to become separate from the church and possibly even find separate facilities. Currently Liberty is suffering under a very heavy load a indebtedness. More time and effort needs to be put into leadership training and development so new people can be brought into positions of leadership. Lastly, the people in leadership need to let go of many of their unrealistic expectations for their pastor. The pastor needs to be free to become a rancher and the people need to begin to learn how to love and care for each other. Until this happens, Liberty will continue to extract great amounts of time and energy from the pastor.

Future Research

Future research could be done as a follow up on the four churches to see if the growth continued or stopped after the turnaround pastors moved on to another church. Another possible study would be to look at the churches which are presently being pastored by the turnaround pastors interviewed in this study to see if they are still leading a growing church. A comparative study might also be done to see if the churches led at present by the turnaround pastors are growing because of the same factors or if there are new factors involved. A fourth possible study could target churches over 200 in morning worship attendance which have declined and then began to grow once again in order to identify the factors responsible for that turnaround. The factors discovered could then be compared to the factors found in this research project. Another possible study would be to interview new people in these or similar churches rather than the interviewing the leaders of the church to find correlating factors for the growth of the church.

TURNAROUND CHURCH SURVEY

Information From the Current/Former Pastor (Circle one)

A. **General Information On The Church**

1.11 Name of Church: _____

1.12 Telephone Number: _____

1.13 Address (Street or PO Box) _____

1.14 City_____ 1.15 State_____ 1.16 Zip_____

1.17 County_____

1.18 Number of years at present location:_____

1.19 Has the church remodeled or relocated in the last 10 years?

Yes_____ No_____

If so, what changes occurred and how extensive were they?

1.20 What percentage of your adult congregation fits into the following age categories?

Age 20-30 _____ 30-40 _____ 40-50 _____ 50-60 _____

60-70 _____ 70+ _____

1.21 What percentage of the congregation is: Male_____ Female_____

1.22 What percentage of the congregation fits into the following income categories?

10,000-20,000_____, 20,000-30,0000_____, 30,000-40,000_____

40,000-50,000_____, Over 50,000_____.

1.23 What percentage of the congregation has attended: 2 years or less_____,

5 years or less_____, 10 years or less_____, 20 years or less_____,

Over 20 years_____

1.24   What percentage of the Official Board has attended the church:

less than 5 years_____, less than 10 years_____, less than 20 years_____,

Over 20 years_____

1.25   When was the last pastoral change made?

B.   **General Information On the Community**

1.26   What is the population of the community in which this church is located?

1_____Rural or open country   6_____10,000 to 50,000 persons

2_____25 to 499 persons   7_____50,000 to 250,000 persons

3_____500 to 999 persons   8_____250,000 to 500,000 persons

4_____1,000 to 2,499 persons   9_____500,000 and above

5_____2,500 to 10,000 persons

1:30   Which of the following best describes your church setting or neighborhood?

1_____Open country   5_____Older suburb

2_____Small town   6_____Newer suburb

3_____Central city or downtown   7_____Rural becoming urban

4_____County seat   8_____In transition culturally

1:40   What has been the population trend in the area served by your church in the last five years?

1_____Sharp decline (10%+)   5_____Slight increase (1%-5%)

2_____Moderate decline (5%-10%)   6_____Moderate increase (5%-10%)

3_____Slight decline (1%-5%)   7_____Sharp increase (10%+)

4_____No noticeable change   8_____I couldn't say for sure

C. **Statistical Information On the Church**

Year	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
1.50 Attendance in AM worship										
1.51 Sunday School										
1.52 Small Groups										
1.54 Attendance Composite (Average Of A.M., SS, and Membership)										
1.55 # of Conversions										
1.56 Total # of Full members										
1.57 Members Taken In By Transfer From Another Denomination										
1.58 Members Taken In By Transfer From Another Free Methodist Church										
1.59 Members taken in By profession of faith										

1.60   What is the average giving per week over the past 10 years?

Year	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Avg/Wk									

D. **Personal Information**

1.70 Name_____ 1.71 Phone_(___)_____

1.72 Address (Street Or PO Box)_____

1.73 City_____ 1.74 State_____ 1.75 Zip_____

1.76 Age 20-30_____, 30-40_____, 40-50_____, 50-60_____, 60-70_____,

70+_____

Sex: Male_____, Female_____

1.77 Married_____, Single_____ 1.78 Number of Children at Home_____

1.79 Highest level of education completed: (Grade)_____ (Degree)_____

E. **Professional Information**

1.80 What is your highest theological degree? _____ 1.81 School/Seminary_____

1.82 Years in part-time pastoral ministry_____ 1.83 Years full-time ministry_____

1.84 Years ordained_____ 1.85 Number of churches presently serving_____

1.86 Number of churches previously served_____ 1.87 Years serving this church_____

1.88 Official status with your denomination (which one best describes you)?

1_____non-ordained lay pastor   4_____student pastor

2_____ordained deacon   5_____probationary status

3_____ordained elder   6_____associate status

7_____Other (explain)_____

F. **Ministry Perspectives**

1.90 What changes did the church make in order to bring new growth?

1.91 What ministries were started to reach a target group that resulted in growth?

1.92 What programs were started that resulted in growth?

1.93 What were the obstacles which had to be removed for the church to begin to grow?

1.94 What factors would you list that were most instrumental in bringing about the turnaround of your church?

    1.

    2.

    3.

    4.

    5.

    6.

1.95   What changes did you personally have to make in your own life in order for the church to grow?

1.96   If this church has an intentional mission statement and/or plans for church growth, please describe it or attach a copy.

1.97   If this church has a vision statement or a core values statement, please describe it or attach a copy.

1.98   What does this congregation do best?

1.

2.

3.

4.

1.99   What are your own best qualities and skills in ministry?

1.

2.

3.

4.

What persons, authors, experiences or published resources have most positively influenced your ministry the last few years?

        1.

        2.

        3.

        4.

2.11   Are there any other observations or comments related to turning around the small church which you would like to make?

2.12   What, if anything, would you do differently knowing what you now know?

Information From Lay Leaders   Church_____

A.   **Personal Information**

3.10   Name_____   3.11   Sex: Male_____

                                                                     Female_____

3.12   Age: 20-30_____, 30-40_____, 40-50_____, 50-60_____, 60-70_____,

                 70-80_____, 80+_____

3.14   What special offices/positions/tasks do you <u>now</u> assume responsibility for?

        1_____   4_____

        2_____   5_____

        3_____   6_____

3.15   What other offices/positions/tasks have you had over the last 5 years?

        1_____   2_____

3.16   Married_____, Single_____
                         (widowed_____, never married_____, divorced_____, separated_____)

3.17   Number of children living at home_____

3.18   Highest grade completed in school_____ Degree_____

3.19   Area of employment and/or training_____

B.   **Perspectives On the Church**

3.20   What changes did the church make in order to bring new growth?

3.21   What ministries were started to reach a target group that resulted in growth?

3.22   What programs were started that resulted in growth?

3.23   What were the obstacles which had to be removed for the church to begin to grow?

3.24   What factors would you list that were most instrumental in bringing about the turnaround of your church?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

3.25   If this church has an intentional mission statement and/or plans for church growth, please describe it or attach a copy.

3.26 If this church has a vision statement or a core values statement, please describe it or attach a copy.

3.27 What does this congregation do best?

  1.

  2.

  3.

  4.

3.28 What are your own best qualities and skills in ministry?

  1.

  2.

  3.

  4.

3.29 What persons, authors, experiences or published resources have most positively influenced your ministry in the last few years?

  1.

  2.

  3.

  4.

3.30 Are there any other observations or comments related to turning around the small church which you would like to make?

3.31 What, if anything, would you do differently knowing what you now know

Appendix 2

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE CHURCH

List of Responses

I.   Information from the Turnaround Pastors:

1.90   What changes did the church make in order to bring new growth?

1.   The pastor worked to raise self-esteem. (5)
2.   The worship became more positive and contemporary. (5)
3.   The church did a good job of welcoming and befriending people. (2)
4.   The church worked to improve it's community image. (2)
5.   The church concentrated on excellence and doing a few things well. (2)
6.   The church pursued a fresh vision. (2)
7.   The new facility assisted the church's growth. (2)
8.   The pastor provided the necessary leadership. (1)
9.   The church defined it's mission. (1)
10.   The church clarified the role of the official board. (1)
11.   The pastor's messages were relevant and easy to understand. (1)

1.91   What ministries were started to reach a target group that resulted in growth?

1.   The church started ministries designed to reach women. (3)
2.   The church used worship and celebrations to draw new people. (3)
3.   The church began ministries for children. (3)
4.   The church began Bible Studies for a specific group of people. (2)
5.   The church began a youth ministry for teens. (1)
6.   The church allowed outside groups to use their facility. (1)
7.   The church targeted alcoholics as a group to reach. (1)

1.92   What programs were started that resulted in growth?

1.   We began a small group and Bible study ministry. (3)
2.   The church began new outreach minded Sunday School classes. (2)
3.   The church began a Vacation Bible School or a Kids Club. (2)
4.   We started a men's breakfast. (1)
5.   The church began a follow-up program for first time visitors. (1)
6.   The church began a pastor's welcome class. (1)
7.   Our worship service was our most effective means of outreach. (1)
8.   The church began a non-traditional choir. (1)

1.93   What were the obstacles that had to be removed for the church to begin to grow?

1. The facility was an obstacle to growth. (6)
2. The church suffered from negative and defeatist attitudes. (5)
3. The church suffered from low self-esteem. (4)
4. The church was troubled by power struggles and conflict. (4)
5. The church was not friendly towards new people. (3)
6. The church was functioning in an old paradigm. (3)
7. The church was ingrown and self-serving. (2)
8. The organizational structure was a hindrance to growth. (1)
9. The church had a problem with sin. (1)
10. The church saw the pastor as a chaplain instead of a leader. (1)
11. The neighborhood was changing around the church. (1)
12. The Christian school began to drain the people of the church. (1)

1.94   What factors were most instrumental in bringing about the turnaround of your church?

1. The pastor's provided visionary and healthy leadership. (4)
2. The church provided quality worship and music. (3)
3. The pastor began functioning as a rancher. (3)
4. The people became willing to change. (2)
5. The pastor was a change agent. (2)
6. The church did the right things at the right time. (1)
7. The pastor personally reached people for Christ. (1)
8. The church began a follow-up ministry for visitors. (1)
9. The church hosted special events and concerts. (1)
10. The church built a new worship facility. (1)
11. The church hired additional staff. (1)
12. The people of the church gave generously. (1)
13. Pastor and lay leaders attended growth seminars together. (1)

1.95   What changes did you personally have to make in your own life in order to grow?

1.   I had to train lay people and turn ministry over to them. (7)
2.   I had to become evangelistic and model evangelism. (1)
3.   I had to learn to be positive in all situations. (1)
4.   I had to learn when was the correct time for change. (1)
5.   I had to learn and develop new skills as we went along. (1)
6.   I had to be willing to pay the cost personally. (1)
7.   I had to become willing to let other people take the credit. (1)
8.   I had to let the Lord break my heart for the lost. (1)
9.   I had to learn to be flexible on negotiable items. (1)
10.   I had to deal with feelings of resentment from being hurt. (1)
11.   I had to learn how to respond to unrealistic expectations. (1)

1.96   If this church has an intentional mission statement and/or plans for growth, please describe them or attach a copy.

1.   The church never formulated a mission statement. (2)
2.   The pastor was able to tell the church's mission statement. (2)
3.   The pastor was able to give me a specific plan for growth the church followed. (1)

East Williamson's Mission Statement:

"We kick the ball into the net when someone with a church background who is not currently attending church:
*   has invited Christ into their life.
*   has been discipled.
*   has a regular ministry involvement.
*   is a part of a face-to-face group.

Fredonia's Mission Statement:

To win people to Christ.
To build them up in Christ.
To send them out for Christ.

The Liberty Growth Plan:

a.   Utilize the church property to the fullest.
b.   Hire a cite planner and expand the church parking.
c.   Follow the recommendations found in the church growth consultation document.
d.   Develop the integral excitement and build up the morale of the people of the church.
e.   The Christian Education Department became critical to the growth of the church and training of leaders.
f.   The church made plans to build following the recommendations of Dwight Gregory who served as their church growth consultant.

1.98   What does this congregation do best?

1.   Loving, caring, and accepting people. (3)
2.   They excelled in music and worship. (2)
3.   The people gave well. (2)
4.   Having fun and fellowship. (1)
5.   Helping people to see and experience Jesus. (1)
6.   Involving lay people in ministry. (1)
7.   The MOPS ministry was done well. (1)
8.   They did a good job at strengthening young families. (1)
9.   The church was blessed with good teachers. (1)
10. The people accepted change readily. (1)

1.99   What are your own best qualities and skills in ministry?

1.   Empowering and motivating people. (4)
2.   Preaching and communication. (3)
3.   Providing visionary leadership. (3)
4.   Recruiting and training people for service. (2)
5.   Being a people person and using my people skills. (2)
6.   Having a happy spirit and the ability to enjoy life. (1)
7.   Listening to the people and being in tune with their needs. (1)
8.   Leading people to Christ. (1)
9.   Writing drama presentations and using creative expression in worship. (1)
10. Using the gift of music. (1)
11. Using my gift of faith. (1)
12. A strong sense of commitment and dedication. (1)

2.10   What persons, authors, experiences or published resources have most positively influenced your ministry in the last few years?

1.   A fellow pastor. (8)
2.   John Maxwell (4)
3.   My superintendent (3) {Roger Haskins (2), Dwight Gregory (1)}
4.   A professor at school. (2)
5.   Working for Youth for Christ. (1)
6.   George Hunter III (1)
7.   Rick Warren (1)
8.   Stephen Brown (1)
9.   Frederick Buekner (1)
10. The Model Church Seminar (1)
11. The Leadership Communication Workshop. (1)
12. Lyle Schaller (1)
13. Leith Anderson (1)
14. Bill Hybels (1)
15. Carl George (1)
16. My Bishop Richard Snyder (1)

2.11   Are there any other observation or comments related to turning around the small congregation which you would like to make?

1. No comment was made. (1)
2. In a small church there are one or two people who control the church and block growth. How they came to be in that position was during a period when their was a vacuum in leadership the were put into a position of leadership. These people tend to be unwilling or unable to give up this power. Most new pastors are unable to get past the hurdle which that represents and are therefore unable to have a growing church. When this is the case, the church becomes one big unhealthy family with unhealthy traditions and habits which become limiting factors. (1)
3. The church was not just turned around by the pastor, it was turned around by the core group of people who decided to follow me and decided to work real hard. (1)
4. I just loved them and worked to change their attitude. This is essential. One needs to help them to dream and to believe "We can do this." (1)
5. The vision always needs to be tied to the Great Commission. (1)
6. The leader must be totally sold out on reaching pagans with the gospel of Christ. (1)
7. Start small and don't try to do everything. We didn't add something until we could do it well. (1)
8. Find something in your own community that you can do that becomes your niche. (1)
9. He loves the task of turning around the small church. It is his passion. (1)
10. To turn around the small church a pastor must have a high pain tolerance. (1)
11. One needs to remember that it is a spiritual battle. (1)
12. You need to be aware that you will get your nose bloodied. (1)
13. One must learn to be patient, it does not happen over night. (1)
14. Learn to work smarter, not just harder. (1)

2.12   What if anything would you do differently knowing what you now know?

1.   I would have systematically raised up new leaders. (3)
2.   I would pace myself so that I did not burn out. (2)
3.   I would involve more people in the decision making process. (1)
4.   I would have strengthened the official board. (1)
5.   I would have added staff differently. (1)
6.   I would have hired a secretary from the community. (1)
7.   I would make myself more accountable to others. (1)
8.   I would se more things as teaching opportunities. (1)
9.   I would deal with problems immediately without waiting. (1)

Information from Lay Leaders:

3:20   What changes did the church make in order to bring new growth?

1.   A gifted new pastor brought change and improvement. (9)
2.   The church began to welcome visitors. (5)
3.   The church structure was changed in order to foster growth. (4)
4.   The church offered social activities and concentrated on fellowship. (4)
5.   The people stepped out in faith and took risks. (3)
6.   The church began to reach out to their community (3)
7.   The church offer two worship services. (2)
8.   The church hired staff. (2)
9.   The quality of the worship was improved and became positive. (2)
10. The church began to use contemporary music. (2)
11. The church began new Sunday School classes. (2)
12. The church began small groups. (2)
13. The church became very loving. (1)
14. They developed a much deeper prayer time. (1)
15. The church built a new facility. (1)
16. The church added and improved the parking. (1)
17. The church developed a new vision. (1)
18. The church developed a more positive attitude. (1)
19. The church defined it's purpose. (1)
20. The church began to emphasize discipling people. (1)
21. The church did a study of their community. (1)
22. The church established a church growth task force. (1)
23. The church allowed new people into positions of leadership. (1)
24. The people of the church became lay ministers. (1)

3.21   What ministries were started to reach a target group that resulted in growth?

1.   The church began a woman's ministry. (4)
2.   The church began ministries for families with children. (4)
3.   The church began a youth ministry. (4)
4.   The church began to plan more activities. (3)
5.   The church began Bible studies or support groups to meet specific needs. (3)
6.   The church began new Sunday School classes. (1)
7.   The church used drama presentations to reach the community. (1)
8.   The church began a befriending ministry. (1)
9.   The church offered a program for preschool children. (1)

3.22   What programs were started that resulted in growth?

1.   The began a small group ministry. (6)
2.   The church began to offer children's ministries. (5)
3.   A new Sunday School class for adults was begun. (3)
4.   Programs were started to meet felt needs. (2)
5.   The church began a follow up ministry for first time visitors. (2)
6.   The church began training and equipping programs. (2)
7.   The church used fellowship activities to intentionally build relationships. (2)
8.   The church allowed outside programs to use their facilities. (1)
9.   The church began a church growth task force. (1)

3.23   What were the obstacles which had to be removed for the church to begin to grow?

1.   The church had become ingrown and self serving. (4)
2.   The people of the church were legalistic. (2)
3.   The church was unfriendly. (4)
4.   The church facility was old, run down, and not big enough. (2)
5.   The church did not have enough off street parking. (2)
6.   The church had do deal with sin in the body. (1)
7.   There was resistance to change. (11)
8.   The church had a lack of unity. (4)
9.   The church had no vision or purpose. (4)
10. The church lacked the necessary finances. (4)
11. The church had a problem with negative thinking and attitudes. (2)
12. The church had a poor self image and low self-esteem. (1)
13. The organizational structure of the church limited the possibility of growth. (1)
14. The church began a Christian school which hurt the growth of the church. (1)

3.24   What factors were most instrumental in bringing about the turnaround of your church?

1.   The new pastor was very effective. (9)
2.   The church had good leadership. (7)
3.   The church became open to change and to taking risks. (7)
4.   The church began to experience a sense of unity. (3)
5.   The church developed a vision for their future. (3)
6.   People were able to sense the love of God in the church. (2)
7   The lay people began to invite their friends. (2)
8.   The church began to make worship more contemporary. (2)
9.   The church selected a target group of people to minister to. (2)
10.   The pastor and lay leaders attended church growth seminars. (2)
11.   The church began caring for people through small groups. (2)
12.   The church improved the quality of its music. (2)
13.   The church became serious about praying. (2)
14.   Lay people were trained for ministry. (2)
15.   The church began a church growth task force. (1)
16.   The people learned to tithe and give generously. (1)
17.   The church experienced revival. (1)
18.   The church hired a second pastor. (1)
19.   The church built a new facility. (1)

3.25   If this church has an intentional mission statement and/or plans for growth, please describe them or attach a copy.

1.   The church had a mission statement but they could not recall it. (5)
2.   The church did have a plan for growth. (5)
3.   The church did not have a clear mission statement. (3)
4.   The person was able to describe the mission statement. (2)
5.   The church used the Great Commission and the Great commandment to guide them. (1)

3.26   If this church has a vision statement or a core values statement, please describe it or attach a copy.

1.   The church did not have a vision statement. (5)
2.   The people were able to list some of the core values of their church. (4)
3.   The person was able to state the church's vision statement. (2)
4.   The people did not understand the difference between a mission statement and a vision statement. (1)

3.27   What does this congregation do best?

1.   The church is good at welcoming people and being friendly. (11)
2.   The church is good at caring for people. (10)
3.   The church is good at fellowship. (7)
4.   The church is good at using the gifts for music in worship. (7)
5.   The church is good at developing lay ministers. (4)
6.   The church is good at praying. (3)
7.   The church has good leadership. (2)
8.   The church is good at follow-up and assimilation. (2)
9.   The church is good at small groups and Bible studies. (2)
10.   The church is good at accepting change and taking risks. (2)
11.   The people are good at giving. (1)
12.   The people are good at persevering in difficulty. (1)
13.   The church is good at Christian Education. (1)
14.   The church is good at inviting their friends. (1)
15.   The church is good at loving and supporting their pastor. (1)

3.28   What are your own best qualities and skills in ministry?

1.   Leadership skills. (13)
2.   Caring for people. (6)
3.   Using my gift of music. (3)
4.   Working with children. (2)
5.   Dealing with church finances. (2)
6.   Being a good teacher. (2)
7.   Being a person of prayer. (1)
8.   Using my gift of craftsmanship for the church. (1)
9.   Working with teens. (1)
10.   Being available to serve. (1)

3.29   What persons, authors, experiences or published resources have most positively influenced your ministry in the last few years?

1.   Christian Training Seminars. (6)
2.   My pastor. (4)
3.   Another lay person in the church. (4)
4.   Dr. John Maxwell and Injoy Ministries. (3)
5.   A family member. (2)
6.   Max Lacado. (2)
7.   Chuck Swindoll. (2)
8.   Frank Perretti. (2)
9.   Kevin Leman. (2)
10. My own personal life experiences. (2)
11. The Bible. (2)
12. A conference superintendent. (2)
13. Dr, James Dobson. (2)
14. Chuck Colson. (2)
15. C.S. Lewis. (2)
16. Josh McDowell. (2)
17. Today's Christian Woman Magazine. (1)
18. Janet Oke. (1)
19. Francis Shaeffer. (1)
20. Pat Williams. (1)
21. Dr. John MacArthur. (1)
22. Dr. Billy Graham. (1)
23. Kay Arthur. (1)
24. George Barna. (1)
25. Rick Warren. (1)
26. Maxwell Banar. (1)
27. Jesus Christ. (1)
28. Philip Yancey. (1)

3.30   Are there any other observation or comments related to turning around the small congregation which you would like to make?

1. Continue to be involved in evangelism. (4)
2. The desire to know everybody has hindered the growth process. (4)
3. A turnaround requires good leadership. (4)
4. The church needs to experience a spiritual revival. (3)
5. The result of our growth is we are more open to change. (2)
6. The church needs to have a purpose with specific goals. (2)
7. Prayer is vital to the turnaround process. (2)
8. We need to make the most of what God has given us. (1)
9. We can not rest, we need to ask God what is next. (1)
10. Communication is essential to the growth process. (1)
11. The church leaders need to be open to change and the Spirit's leading. (1)
12. Growth means learning to care for each other. (1)
13. The people need to be like minded. (1)
14. If it isn't working, let it go. (1)
15. The people need to believe a turnaround can happen. (1)
16. Be careful not to go too far into debt. (1)
17. Do not forget to train lay leaders. (1)

3.31   What if anything would you do differently knowing what you now know?

1. I would have built differently. (5)
2. I would spend more time developing leaders. (4)
3. I would ask more questions and speak up more often. (3)
4. I wish we had done the fund raising on our own. (2)
5. I wish I would have prayed more. (2)
6. I would work harder to communicate the vision and obtain ownership. (2)
7. I wish we had hired a clerk of the works to oversee the building process. (1)
8. I wish we had spent our money more carefully. (1)
9. I wish we had started sooner reaching people for Christ. (1)
10. I would balance church and home better so my family did not suffer. (1)
11. I would work to end unresolved conflicts and have unity. (1)
12. I would have relocated before building. (1)
13. I would set term limits for those in leadership positions. (1)
14. I would have handled the church split more lovingly. (1)
15. I would of hired a second pastor sooner. (1)
16. I would place people in areas of the giftedness more faithfully. (1)
17 I would remember to be an encourager. (1)
18. I would remember the shut-ins and retired people. (1)
19. I would go out of my way to make new people feel welcome. (1)
20. I would not have gone so far into debt. (1)